



Port board members not to be fined by Ethics Commission

'Letters of education in lieu of civil penalty'

By David Sykes

The Oregon Government Ethics Commission has chosen not to levy fines

on each the Port of Morrow Commissioners for violations of the open meetings law, President Rick Stokoe told the Heppner Gazette-Times last week.

Following an article in last week's paper saying \$2,000 fine would be levied against each of the five Port commissioners, Stokoe contacted the Gazette to say this was incorrect. Although the Ethics Commission was authorized to assess the civil penalties, it gave several reasons why it would not.

In a forwarded email to the Gazette the Ethics Commission stated that the Port board would be relieved of any fines for the following reasons: "The stipulations that you (all port commissioners) signed did identify two violations, which under the statute could qualify for a civil penalty of \$1,000 each (totaling \$2,000). We did not, however, impose any civil penalty. Instead, because this was your first offense, you cooperated, and you were receptive to being educated, the Commission approved issuing Letters of Education in lieu of any civil penalty." Susan Myers, an investigator with the Ethics Commission, wrote to Stokoe, who forwarded the email to the Gazette-Times last Thursday. The G-T did not receive this information until after last week's article had already been published.

The Ethics Commission posted its investigation results on its website Monday June 14, which revealed that the Port had, on two occasions last year, violated the Oregon open meetings laws by announcing an executive session for one reason, and then discussing a different topic once the public was excluded from the session.

Stokoe responded to the ethics report and violations with an email to the Gazette-Times. "The Port Commissioners acknowledge that notice of executive session was published incorrectly in March 2020. This was a technical advertising error and was unintentional. The topics discussed were allowable under executive session laws with citing of ORS statute, but we did not list the proper sub section of the statute. This first attempt at a video meeting due to building closures occurred at a time when there was tremendous stress with the early COVID-19 pandemic announcement. Our goal was to figure out how to continue to operate as essential workers for water, wastewater and freezer

an active member of the community who is involved in the historical society, farmer's market and Heppner Day Care.

Madelyn Nichols and Roy Collins were named as the recipients of the annual Youth Recognition award. Both high school seniors were described as mature, tough, smart, hardworking, role models, thoughtful, respectful, positive, athletic, dependable, humble, a leader, cooperative, a problem solver, self-motivated, creative, committed, diligent, charismatic, generous, honest, trustworthy and compassionate. They are involved in student council, honor society, 4-H, sports, youth groups, class officers, FFA, drama, TSA and FBLA. Between the two of them they have more than 600 hours of community service.

The Business of the Year honors went to the Morrow County Public Health Department. The group poured their heart and soul into the communities of Morrow County during the past 15 months of the COVID pandemic. The magnitude of effort the team put in shows in the leadership role this entity took to manage all aspects of the pandemic, communicating with community-based organizations, schools and businesses while continuing to perform all of their regular duties. Their commitment to the health, success and safety of the community is exceptional.

The recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement award was Matt Combe, who was described as being strong, conscientious, supportive, hardworking, patient and compassionate with strong leadership skills. He is active in many organizations that support the community, including Little League and youth basketball. He can be found at community and sporting events coaching, cheering from the sidelines or barbecuing for the booster club. He believes in accountability, hard work, dedication and excellence in his job at the Morrow County School District.

DEADLINE:
MONDAYS
AT 5PM

-See ETHICSPAGE TWO

Heppner holds Town and Country awards event

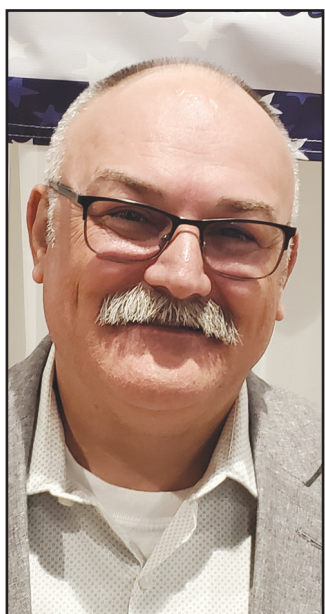
Locals recognized for achievement, contributions to the community

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce's Town and Country Awards took place last Thursday, June 17, 2021, at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building in Heppner. The event was postponed from an earlier date due to COVID.

During the event, themed "An Evening with the Stars," several locals were recognized for long-standing contributions to Heppner and the surrounding area. Winners of the prestigious awards were Melissa Lindsay, Woman of the Year; John Bowles, Man of the Year; Andrea Nelson, Citizen-Educator of the Year; Madelyn Nichols and Roy Collins, Youth Achievement Award; Morrow County Public Health Department, Business of the Year; and Matt Combe, Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Woman of the Year, Melissa Lindsay, was described as being involved in numerous organizations in the community since she returned home to work and raise her family. Melissa was instrumental in keeping Heppner Day Care up and running, helps at St. Patrick's, assists the lady Elks with dinners and other tasks, is a proponent of Willow Creek Valley Economic Development and is tireless in her role as Morrow County Commissioner.

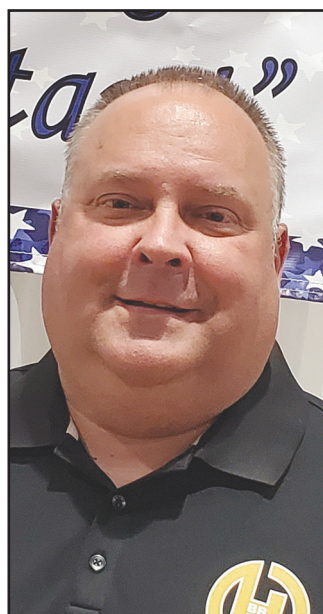
Man of the Year, John Bowles, was selected be-



John Bowles



Melissa Lindsay



Matt Combe



Madelyn Nichols



Roy Collins



Andrea Nelson

cause he is considered a man of action, listening to his community and genuinely caring about their opinions and concerns. He is considered a pillar of the community, demonstrating dedication, hard work, commitment and dependability, not only in his job with the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, but also in

his involvement in the community. He is a member of the Heppner City Council and Heppner Elks Lodge, always helping out with parades, fund raisers and other local events.

This year's Citizen-Educator of the Year award was presented to Andrea Nelson. Andrea is a union representative and a profes-

sional learning community leader, who is always trying to improve herself and push her peers to do the same. Besides teaching, she has started two extracurricular groups that reach a wide range of students, giving them opportunities to gain valuable skills that will help them in their futures. She also finds time to be



Morrow County Health Department employees (L-R): Diane Kilkenny, BSN, RN, COVID vaccine PODs, Susie Thompson, RN, COVID vaccine PODs, Elizabeth Schultz, emergency management intern, Erin Anderson, RN, immunization and reproductive health, Yvonne Morter, RN, CACOON and Ione SBHC immunization, Ana Pineyro, CD contact monitor and tracing preparedness, Nazario Rivera, public health director, Deb Green, office assistant, Darrel Green, Morrow County administrator, Vickie Turrell, office manager and immunization coordinator. Not pictured are Patricia Ortiz, CARE coordinator contact monitor and tracing, Ian Murray, RN, contact monitor and tracing, school CARE, Michelle Quiriconi, RN, reproductive health coordinator and Yuritzi Pagan.

Irrigon starts work on new multi-purpose pedestrian and bike path

Safe area for bicyclists and pedestrians

The city of Irrigon has started work on a new 10-foot-wide multi-purpose paved path along the west

side of Division between US 730 and SE Wyoming Avenue. The path will be a clear and safe area for bicyclists and pedestrians and a needed safe zone especially for children going to and from school, according to a city news release.

"For several years, the city has been working to secure funding for much needed public and safety improvements," a city spokesperson says.

Also, in the works are plans to pave SE Idaho Avenue from SE Division Street down to SE Fourth

and up to US 730. This will take place during the month of August. The project will include a shared bike and pedestrian path and will be in preparation for the future US 730 sidewalk project in 2022. A Small City Allotment (SCA) grant was awarded by ODOT for this project.

City Manager Aaron Palmquist urges anyone with questions about either of these projects to please contact him at city hall. Call 541-922-3047 or email him at manager@ci.irrigon.or.us.

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