



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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## New Lexington councilmember sworn in

By David Sykes

The Town of Lexington gained a new councilmember last week when Katie Imes was sworn in by Mayor Juli Kennedy. Imes replaces Curtis Thompson who resigned last month to take the town maintenance job.

Imes, who is employed as the county transportation coordinator, lives in Lexington with her husband Eric, assistant road master for the county, and their three children. She also does volunteer work serving on the Heppner Jr./Sr. High School site council which is responsible for formulating the school improvement plan.

"I have been in Lexington long enough now to see that there are challenges and opportunities ahead. I ask to serve this council for the way of life so many of us appreciate having in Lexington and to seek opportunities to help bring our community together," she said in her application letter to the council. The council voted unanimously to appoint Imes to the position.

In other action the council held a public hearing on a request from Ivan and Karen Dike to partition three residential lots out of



Lexington Mayor Juli Kennedy (left) swears in new councilmember Katie Imes (right), as councilmember Will Lemmon looks on. -Photo by David Sykes.

one 16-acre parcel located near the south edge of town. There was no public comment and the council voted to approve the preliminary application and for the Dikes to proceed. There is power and water service available in the area for the new building lots, however the Department of Environmental Quality will have to approve any new septic systems on the properties.

In other business the council heard a report from town recorder Janette Eldrige who said she has been working on, among

other projects, updating the town's billing system, putting together information for a water and sewer feasibility study grant application through the town's engineering firm Anderson Perry and doing the above land partition work. She also reported the city received a \$41,000 infrastructure grant from the county and a \$26,000 American Rescue Plan grant to pay for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The town expects to receive a similar amount next year.

In a report from the fire department, it was noted that it had been a quiet summer with only one medical call and one mutual aid grass fire during August. It was also reported the town took three fire engines and five firefighters to Heppner for the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb. Money raised from the stair climb activities will be divided evenly among the three south county fire departments, and two Lexington firefighters will serve on the planning committee for next year's memorial event.

## Youth reporter joins Gazette-Times staff



Hannah Finch

Hannah Finch will be interning as a reporter at the Heppner Gazette-Times through the 2021-2022 school year and will be covering youth activities in the community. The internship program is sponsored by the Intermountain ESD and Morrow County School District and administered by the Port of Morrow workforce development.

Hannah is the daughter

of Tripp and Julia Finch, and older sister to Jacob, Lizzie and Rebecca Finch. She is from North Carolina and has lived in Heppner for six years. Hannah is a senior at Heppner High School and runs cross country and track and plays basketball.

She is also the Oregon State president for the Technology Student Association. Hannah participates in Heppner High School's drama program and played the narrator in last spring's production of "Matilda." On the weekends, Hannah works at the local bookstore and plays saxophone and flute in Heppner's pep band. She also plays percussion at Willow Creek Baptist and is a member of the youth group.

## Heppner TSA builds ramp



Pictured front: Jacob Finch and Madison Palmer. Back: Saul Lopez, Joe Sherman, Jacob Haugen, Trevor Nichols and teacher Dave Fowler. -Contributed photo.

The Heppner TSA Chapter (Technology Student Association) recently built an access ramp for a local woman. Students in Dave Fowler's Woods Manufacturing class re-

searched, designed plans and built models of the ramp and railing. They then built the ramp and railing at school in sections for transport. Lastly they went on site to install all of the parts.

## County commissioners hear funding request for Umatilla homeless facility

By David Sykes

Organizers seeking to establish a new homeless facility in Umatilla County have approached Morrow County for help with its funding. Representatives from the nonprofit Stepping Stones of Hermiston told the commission last week they are looking at a site between Hermiston and Umatilla on which to locate the new facility, which would feature small shelters for both temporary and more permanent housing of the homeless.

According to Stepping Stones representatives the new center would be modeled after one in Walla Walla and would offer different types of temporary housing. The ultimate goal, however, is not so much long-term housing but to help people get on their feet, become self-sufficient and find a more permanent place to live.

Stepping Stones board chair Cathy Lloyd presented the commissioners with photos of a couple different housing structures, including the 6-ft by 10-ft Conestoga hut that cost around \$2,000 and would be available for one resident, one



One type of shelter that may be deployed at the Umatilla homeless facility is the Conestoga hut.

couple or parent and child, and another shelter called a pop-up or Pallet hut costing between \$4,500 and \$7,000 each. Lloyd said in addition to the living huts the homeless area would also include common laundry and shower facilities.

Commissioners were told Hermiston currently offers warming stations for the homeless, but only for one hundred of the colder nights of the year. And facilities are bare bones, with people sleeping on cots or the floor with no personal space. The warming stations are also only open during the nights, and people must take all their belongings with them when they leave in the morning. "We need to offer more," she told the commissioners

in asking for the county's support. With the new facility she said, "We are offering something much more humane and suitable. Basic needs like food, water and warm shelter are a necessity," Lloyd emphasized. "We are trying to help people get to where they can progress and begin to take care of themselves," she explained. She said under the rules of the new facility residents could earn the right to live in one of the upgraded individual huts by working, attending school or going to counseling to show they are improving themselves.

Lloyd said eventually Stepping Stones would like to offer homeless people the opportunity to connect with counseling, then dental and medical help, as well



as beauty and grooming services. To move up and be self-sufficient the homeless need haircuts, a laundry, showers and basic needs in one spot so they can progress.

"It is hard to get a job when you show up with all your belongings or you smell so strongly or your clothes are so stiff that people don't want to get within

20 feet of you," she said.

With the facility located in Umatilla County, however, Lloyd admitted Morrow County would have to provide transportation for its homeless people to be able use it. Most of the users would most likely be coming from the north end of the county at Boardman and Irrigon. "They (homeless) are not going to walk from Heppner to Umatilla or Hermiston. We are open to making this a regional facility that will be of benefit to the area. We are rural so it is hard for each little town to provide for those needs," she said. "We are currently partnering with the cities of Umatilla and Hermiston and Umatilla County. Is this something Morrow County would be interested in?" Lloyd did not mention a specific amount of money she was asking the county for.

Stepping Stones originally looked to locate within the city limits of Hermiston, but after that city

-See NEW HOMELESS FACILITY / PAGE SIX

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