



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Students honor veterans with program



High School students who plan on entering the military read the roll call at last Thursday's Veteran's Day program. -Photo by David Sykes.

Heppner students honored the local veterans again this year at a program last week at the Gilliam Bisbee building. The program is normally held at the high school but because of COVID-19 concerns this year it was moved downtown. There was no program held last year.

As part of the program, the junior-senior band provided music including the Star-Spangled Banner and America the Beautiful. The school choir sang God Bless America and John Lindsay played taps for the crowd. The roll call, where



The junior-senior band provided the music at last Thursday's Veteran's Day program. -Contributed photo.

veterans in attendance are announced by their branch of service, rank and places

served, was done by three students who plan on entering the military. Kason

Cimmiyotti, Brian Lindsay and Kegan Steagall read the roll call (see above picture).

Finley Buttes owners buy Hermiston Sanitary Disposal

By David Sykes

Long-time waste collection company Sanitary Disposal of Hermiston has sold its company to the larger Waste Connections of Oregon, owner of the Finley Buttes Landfill in Morrow County. The sale is expected to be completed by the end of the year, and the Morrow County Commission last week gave its approval to transfer the county's solid waste collection franchise to the new owner. They plan on keeping the same name for the business.

Before voting unanimously to approve the franchise transfer, commissioners held a general discussion about garbage collection, agreements and the fees charged for garbage pickup in the county at large. The county has a five-year franchise agreement with Sanitary Disposal which will now be transferred to Waste Connections. The company does not deal directly with the county commission when asking for periodic rate increases, but instead goes to the Solid Waste Advisory board, whose members are appointed by the county commission. That board then makes recommendations, most often followed, to the commissioners.

Commissioner Jim Doherty wanted to know since the county and solid waste company have a five-year perpetual lease, is the county still allowed to "just



Waste Connections of Oregon, owners of the Finley Buttes landfill (pictured above) in Morrow County, have bought out the north county hauler.

open it up to other companies and their proposals?" Jason Hudson of Waste Connections, who attended last week's meeting, said without egregious service problems the county probably cannot open up the contract to other operators.

Currently the county is divided into two waste disposal zones, one roughly in the north end and one in the south end. Miller and Sons out of Heppner is the franchise holder with the county in the south end, and Doherty wanted to know if the county can adjust the size of the franchise zones. He was told by Public Works Management Assistant Sandi Pointer the county commission could adjust the zone boundaries if it desired.

Doherty also wanted to know if owning both the Finley Buttes landfill where the garbage is dumped, and the disposal company that picks up the garbage, would now mean lower rates for customers of the new owner. "I would think having both the landfill and collection would kind of drive down the cost and we will be able to go back to our constituents with lower rates?" he asked Hudson. Commissioner Don Russell, who has also served on the county solid waste committee said with the current rate of inflation he doubted that. "With the rate of inflation, I would be surprised if Sanitary Disposal

hasn't already primed the pump for a rate increase this year," he speculated. "Generally, they come before the solid waste advisory committee and if they need a rate increase, they will ask for a rate increase and give a reason, like the price of fuel that has gone up \$1.40 a gallon the last year," Russell added.

Russell also said Sanitary Disposal would generally come to the advisory board yearly to discuss where their customer pricing is. "My experience on the solid waste advisory committee has been that Sanitary Disposal has been pretty good coming in annually and discussing where they are at and request a rate review showing the reason for the request and what they think they need to keep their business in operation," Russell said. "They ask for small periodic rate increases where Miller and Sons, the other franchise in the county, will last close to 10 years without a rate increase and then they ask for a fairly large one. My preference is to ask for small ones as you go along, that way if you get a small increase in your disposal bill it's kind of expected, but if you get a large one then you start to wonder what happened," Russell explained.

Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said perhaps it was time the county looked at updating its solid waste

contracts. "It's a county ordinance and maybe there are a lot of reasons to update the ordinance," she said. "When we are talking costs, maybe we should look at the zones, and service people better to keep costs down. I hope we take a look at this," she added.

The new company will also take over collection of garbage in Boardman, Irrigon and Ione as well as Morrow County at large, however, those cities will authorize transfer of their own franchise agreements. "I would like to thank the Jewett family (company owners) for 50 years of service," Commissioner Don Russell said of the sale, "I have been a customer of theirs for 40 years and I can count on one hand the times they were late and that was probably weather related," he said about the company.

In other business at an earlier meeting, the county recognized three employees who were retiring. Bill Morris was hired in 1987 as a light equipment operator and in 1989 was promoted to tandem operator. Upon retirement Morris was a Senior Maintenance Specialist. His retirement date was Nov. 4. Ross McKinley retired on Nov. 11 from the

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Doernbecher Hospital receives donations from HJSHS



Donations for children at Doernbecher were delivered to the hospital recently.

For the past ten years, students at Heppner High School, FFA members, community members and churches have been gathering donations for Doernbecher Hospital. Usually, the collections are gathered every other year and delivered to the hospital, but due to Covid, they were not collecting donations last year.

Last year, donation boxes were placed at Murray Drug in Heppner and in several local churches. FFA students worked with area seamstresses in the community to make 75 blankets to donate. The project allowed students to learn or polish their sewing skills.

Boxes were stuffed full, taped shut and stored in Heppner teacher Troy Morgan's classroom for

the past year and a half, before being delivered to Doernbecher recently. The items delivered were valued at approximately \$11,000 this year, bringing the total donation value to about \$35,000 in ten years. Items donated included games, toys, electronics, school supplies and blankets for the children at Doernbecher.

A post on the OSU Doernbecher Instagram page noted, "For three years, Heppner Jr/Sr High School has donated art activities and toys to help patients feel more comfortable in our hospital. They recently dropped off two bins full of goodies and we're very grateful for their continued support."

Racoons bite Mojo, then bite the dust

An Irrigon woman says when racoons in the neighborhood started attacking pet dogs, something needed to be done about it. Sunday night she and her husband acted and now there are two less racoons out there biting people's pets.

Judy Yeigh and her husband Raymond were at home on Oregon Street around 10:30 p.m. when they heard a commotion and went outside to see two racoons attacking their pet dachshund, Mojo. Raymond got his gun, and using a flashlight to spot the assailants, took aim and killed them both. The couple then called the sheriff who came to the home to check things over and talk

to the neighbors. "We were concerned the neighbors might be worried about the shooting," Judy said of the incident.

And is Mojo okay? "They bit him pretty good on his hindquarters," Judy relates, but "the next day we took him to the vet, and he spent most of the day there. He's eating and drinking now, and we have him on antibiotics. I think he's going to be okay," she told the Gazette.

Judy says her husband "did a good job" using his flashlight in the dark to spot and dispatch the two racoons. "When they start attacking animals that's it," she said of the incident.

G-T closed for Thanksgiving

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday and Friday, November 25 and 26. Normal business hours will resume Monday, November 29.

The G-T wishes ev-



eryone a happy and safe Thanksgiving weekend.

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