

# CREZ to disburse \$191 million over next 16 years

Most will come from Amazon data centers

Estimated CREZ II Revenue 2022-2037

Year	Amazon 1	Amazon 2	Amazon 3 (Est.)	Amazon 4 (Est.)	Amazon 5 (Est.)	Col. Riv. Tech.	Lamb Weston	WOF PNW	Totals
2022	\$804,810	\$791,870	\$4,450,000	\$4,580,000	\$0	\$875,000	\$950,000	\$30,000	\$12,481,680
2023	\$296,620	\$407,430	\$4,465,000	\$4,600,000	\$2,350,000	\$1,000,000	\$950,000	\$30,000	\$14,099,050
2024	\$0	\$0	\$4,475,000	\$4,620,000	\$2,360,000	\$875,000	\$950,000	\$30,000	\$13,310,000
2025	\$0	\$0	\$4,485,000	\$4,630,000	\$4,380,000	\$1,000,000	\$950,000	\$7,500	\$15,452,500
2026	\$0	\$0	\$4,500,000	\$4,645,000	\$4,395,000	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$14,490,000
2027	\$0	\$0	\$4,510,000	\$4,655,000	\$4,405,000	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$14,520,000
2028	\$0	\$0	\$4,520,000	\$4,670,000	\$4,420,000	\$0	\$950,000	\$0	\$14,560,000
2029	\$0	\$0	\$4,530,000	\$4,680,000	\$4,435,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,645,000
2030	\$0	\$0	\$4,550,000	\$4,695,000	\$4,445,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,690,000
2031	\$0	\$0	\$4,560,000	\$4,705,000	\$4,546,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,811,000
2032	\$0	\$0	\$4,575,000	\$4,720,000	\$4,570,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,865,000
2033	\$0	\$0	\$4,590,000	\$4,730,000	\$4,585,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,905,000
2034	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,750,000	\$4,590,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,340,000
2035	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,600,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,600,000
2036	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,610,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,610,000
2037	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,620,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,620,000
									\$190,999,230

Above is a table recently released by County Assessor Mike Gorman showing where the \$191 million comes from until 2037 when the tax deals expire.

By David Sykes

Although no longer making new business tax deals, the Columbia River Enterprise Zone II (CREZ II) will still be disbursing a large amount of money across Morrow County over the coming years. According to recent estimates from the county assessor, over the next 16 years CREZ will distribute almost \$191 million across Morrow County. All the money will come from tax abatement deals already in place with businesses located in the enterprise zone, with the major tax payer being the Amazon data centers at Boardman and the Port of Morrow in north county.

Although the CREZ's state charter has expired there will still be people in place until 2037 making decisions on how the millions arriving each year will be spent. Allocating these funds will be representatives appointed annually to the CREZ II board from the Port of Morrow, Morrow County and the City of Boardman. These representatives can be a mixture of



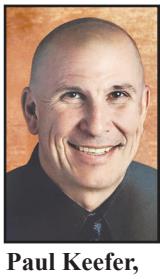
**Jim Doherty,**  
County  
Commissioner



**Don Russell,**  
County  
Commissioner  
and CREZII  
Chairman



**Karen Pettigrew,**  
Boardman  
City Manager



**Paul Keefer,**  
Boardman  
Mayor



**Ryan Neal,**  
Executive  
Director, Port  
of Morrow



**Rick Stokoe,**  
Port of  
Morrow  
Commissioner

elected representative and paid staff.

*Pictured above are the government officials, elected and staff, who will make the decisions this year on how to disburse the CREZ money. Although they will change over the next 16 years there will always be two representatives each from Morrow County, the City of Boardman and the Port of Morrow deciding how to spend the millions in CREZ money.*

The CREZ II was established 10 years ago, and since then has made tax abatement agreements with businesses locating or ex-

pand in the Enterprise Zone (EZ). These agreements allow the businesses to pay reduced property taxes instead of the full appraised amount, under the theory they will provide good paying jobs in Morrow County. There are currently 74 enterprise zones authorized by the State of Oregon, so officials from Morrow County's main economic development engine, the Port of Morrow, say they would be at a severe disadvantage without having the EZ in its business recruitment "toolbox."

The CREZ does not operate under regular taxing district rules, however. Under CREZ procedures

the money collected from EZ businesses "in lieu" of property taxes goes directly into the CREZ bank account. The money can be spent with very few outside guidelines. On the other hand, "normal" property taxes collected annually from all other property owners goes through county government for disbursement to the various 44 taxing districts scattered throughout in the county. For example, these districts can be fire districts, cemetery districts, schools, cities and even county government itself. Under state taxing and budgeting laws each of these districts are required to publish and

hold public hearings on their annual budgets. This is not a requirement of any enterprise zone in the state, including the CREZ II.

However, the local CREZ does have internal policies, established by its original members on how it wants to spend its money around the county. These guidelines, which have been for the most part adhered to, include funding of the four broad categories of education, public safety, housing and community enhancement. The board recently added infrastructure to that group of funding. The CREZ also has used the three county economic development groups to funnel much of the funds for disbursement to the local communities.

But at its December meeting, when deliberations began on dividing this year's funds, the board was greeted with nine separate groups asking for special funding. The main decision facing the board appears to be should it continue with past funding strategies or

begin taking individual "asks" from groups and organizations around the county. At the December meeting the board deferred any spending decisions until a yet unannounced January meeting date. CREZ II chairman Don Russell indicated at that time he would like to continue with the past funding methods, however there were no decisions made.

Also recently released by the county assessor was an accounting history of the approximately \$26.5 million in lieu of taxes collected and spent by the CREZ since 2012. From this total amount it has spent \$12.4 million on housing and community development, \$3.3 million on education, \$3.4 million on public safety, \$800,000 divided equally amongst the four communities of Heppner, Lexington, Ione and Irrigon for infrastructure, and \$5.5 million divided equally among the three CREZ member entities the Port of Morrow, City of Boardman and Morrow County.

## Good News Only

By Doris Brosnan

If two neighborhood cats could, they would surely thank Sam Van Laer for her kindness, especially now, in the freezing, snowy weather. The two belong to no one, actually, but both have been neutered, and both have been fed in a particular back yard for a few years. Van Laers moved into that home recently, and Sam took over the feeding of the two vagabonds but has taken the operation to a new level that includes bedding enclosed in a large shielded warmed with heat lamps. Lucky cats.

Whew. What a storm. Tiny silver lining - time to finish a book while staying warm under the covers with a flashlight, waiting for the seven-hour outage to pass.

To the young, robust Columbia Basin heroes and their neighboring fellow linemen, a big thank you for your imperative, greatly-challenged efforts early-morning Monday.

Doing double duty as work and play, the shoveling of snow from the sidewalks of Main and some side streets offers easier walking for pedestrians and some snow fun for the

operators of the ATV-snowplows. Thanks go out to the thoughtful men who make such a difference.

Other people, too, have been caught performing "Neighborhood Acts of Kindness" reported to the Good News column: When Bob Hager shovels snow from his sidewalks, he continues down Cyde Estes's sidewalk. (And while he's at it, Bob is apt to also get her garbage can out for pickup.) Another gentleman who doesn't stop at the end of his walks, Clyde Perkins jogs across the street to shovel snow from JoAnne Burleson's and Adam Doherty's sidewalks. (Until the snow, JoAnne toted Chad's garbage can to the curb when she did the same with hers.)

The road conditions threw some travel plans awry last week, but for Alyse Wentz, that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. While also attending Linn Benton College, Alyse works at a Safeway in Corvallis and had to work until December 23, when she came to Heppner to visit her family and friends, expecting to return to Corvallis on Monday because she was scheduled to work on Tuesday. Plans changed when road conditions meant chains required in the gorge, so Alyse reported to her supervisor the need for a delay, and she ended up enjoying her

visit for two days more than planned. She then headed out with some new tire chains, detailed instructions on how to put them on, and her boyfriend, Carson Brosnan, riding shotgun.

David and April Sykes of Heppner had visitors over Christmas weekend. Son Christopher and wife Rachel, son Waylon and daughter Sophie came from Pendleton. Also, there was son, Andrew from Pendleton and daughter Camille, with Eddie Gonzales and their son Oscar, from Milwaukie. The families opened presents together on Christmas morning and later enjoyed a lamb Christmas dinner prepared by April. Camille and Eddie stayed at the Gilliam Bisbee Airbnb one night and at Farra's Guesthouse the second night and had good reports on both of them.

Such good news Kay Proctor shares this week, "Mike and I got to spend five days in Philadelphia with our son, Roy, to celebrate Christmas and Roy's, 34<sup>th</sup> birthday (December 25th). We visited St Peter and St Paul's Basilica on Christmas Day, stayed in a hotel near Rittenhouse Square, three blocks from the historic 1901 City Hall and near JFK Boulevard and Benjamin Franklin Way; visited Independence Hall and the statue of Rocky Balboa by the Museum of

Art. One day was spent driving to the south Jersey shore. We also toured the Ivy League campus of the University of Pennsylvania, established in 1740. Roy moved to Philadelphia in August to begin his master's degree in Hospital Psychology at the University of the Sciences, established in 1822, for which he has received a scholarship, and plans to return soon to a professor's-assistant job he worked at earlier there. Roy attended school at Heppner from kindergarten to graduation in 2006. Our flights to Philly via Pasco and Denver were interesting, with a mechanical delay, almost missing a connection, a cancellation, crowded terminals and long lines, rebooking, a long layover, a gate change, misplaced luggage and an aborted landing during a snowstorm, but it was all just part of the adventure."

Only after the fact did Tony Lankford and Emma Osmin announce on Facebook that they had eloped on November 21, to Stony Ridge in the mountains. A cousin, Jeremy Worden, performed the ceremony that the Lankfords later announced to his dad, Steve Lankford, mother, Susan Clemens, and her parents, Jess Osmin and Amy McIntosh. The newlyweds plan to eventually move into a home near Tony's grandparents, Mike and Marlene

Gray. On Wednesday, December 29, family and friends gathered at the home of daughter and son-in-law Kristi and Mark Smalley in Hermiston to celebrate John and Pat Edmundson's 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Despite adverse weather, nearly thirty people gathered for food, drinks and toasts. A great time was enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to contributors to this week's column. Feels good to smile. And continued encouragement to everyone who has a positive tidbit to share with our readers. Contributions can come this way before Monday afternoon by writing to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or calling 541-676-5382 or 541-223-1490.

Here's hoping that some good news comes to everyone reading this.

**ALL NEWS AND  
ADVERTISEMENT  
DEADLINE:**

**MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the merchants and Individuals that donated to and assisted with the Celebrate Heppner Community Christmas Event.

- Wheatland Insurance
- Russell Ellsworth
- Allstott Construction
- TREO Ranches
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- Les Schwab
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- East Oregonian
- Alive & Well
- Prodigal Son Brewery
- Blue Mountain Community College
- Amazon AWS and the "Amazon Elves"
- Kim Cutsforth
- Walmart Distribution Center
- Sage Clothing Company
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- Flood Town Books
- Mayor Jim Kindle
- Sarita and Mrs Clause
- The Heppner Elementary Parent-Teacher Club
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- And Sheryll Bates