

POWER LINE

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have wind farms on their land but would lose the economic opportunity if the power lines are built too close. Then the question came up if the high voltage lines can be "tapped" and used to carry renewable energy generated in the county out to the grid. Idaho officials said it could be done but it is very expensive to put in a substation to gather the wind and solar power generated here and upload it to the B2H line.

Some landowners and a county commissioner said adding the capability to tap into the line might then take the line from being a liability to an asset for the land owner and the county. With wind farms and solar facilities having the ability to upload their power directly to a nearby transmission line it would cut transmission costs and make the county more attractive to the wind farms and solar companies who may want to locate here. Estimates to build substations to do the upload are \$20 to \$40 million each, but Idaho Power did not completely rule out the possibility of it happening. One member of the audience suggested Idaho Power make the uploading substations part of the project. "Maybe you could engineer this into the project so that I can see we are going to work together," one landowner said. "We then are going to be partners instead of you just coming through saying you are going to send your solar from Idaho on your line," he said indicating it would give the company more credibility when negotiating with landowners for easements.

County Commission Chairman Jim Doherty said he would be in favor of the commissioners signing on to ask for "taps" into the line. "Not only do the landowners want some just compensation and partnerships, but the county is in

general agreement, and I'm happy to do that for what it is worth," he said.

Commissioner Melissa Lindsay also was in favor of working for taps on the line. "If it (the power line) is coming and you can't stop it, what benefit can you get from it?" she asked. She wanted to know if landowners could "micro site this easement to say, 'I want you off this ridge because it might be a site for a wind project.'" "Can we put something in the easement that says if we get this wind project will you put that 'spigot' that allows us to come on to this line?" She said that would add potential and the power line could then be a positive attractor of a wind farm or solar project because the transmission line would already be there. "Micro siting can be part of an agreement where we work with that landowner," Idaho power said. "A developer would pay for that substation but possibly Idaho power will do some cost share. But I don't think the three of us can commit to that today. But I think that is something we can have in dialog," the company said.

Lindsay also asked if Idaho Power could work with the local Columbia Basin Electric Co-op (CBEC) and bring some benefit to the local economy. "Can we negotiate to bring some power to CBEC and the Willow Creek Valley?" she wanted to know. "Some of our small towns are dying and if we could get some power there, people might all like to see that happen." Idaho Power said they did not think they could do that. "We can work with Columbia Basin Electric (and) maybe have some meetings, but I don't know how that would work," they said. "We can bolster the opportunity to offer economic development, but that would not be with landowners; that would

be an agreement with the county and the local co-op," they added.

Commissioner Doherty also asked if landowners should not be compensated much more for being part of bringing a large amount of power into the Boardman area, mainly for use by industry.

"If this train is coming down the track, we want the least damage or at least get you guys (landowners) compensated to a level," Doherty said. He suggested that maybe the economic development that results from the increased power come back to the landowner instead of just a onetime payment. "Maybe you all have to get together and say, 'We don't want it, but if it's going to come, sit down and get it somewhere else.'" He said the power company will say "We can't pay you \$1 million but we can still bring this through here." "That's a tough nut to crack. That is tough to swallow. We have got to stop advancing stuff in Morrow County on the backs of you folks," Doherty said to the gathered farmers and ranchers. He said there "are hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars coming into and moving around this county" because of the industry being developed here using the electrical grid, and he suggested county landowners should benefit more from it.

County students eligible for AWS scholarships

Amazon Web Services (AWS) recently announced the opening of the 2022 applications for the AWS InCommunities Scholarship Program, which offers grants to high school seniors in designated districts of California, Oregon, Ohio and Virginia who plan to pursue a STEM-related subject at a higher education institution. A total of \$100,000 in scholarships is open to students enrolling in courses such as electrical and electronic engineering, computer science, artificial intelligence, biochemistry, software engineering, physics and much more. Local high school seniors in Umatilla County, Morrow County and Members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation ("CTUIR")/Nixyaawii School qualify and are being encouraged to apply for the available scholarships through the deadline of March 29, 2022. The AWS InCommunities Program exists to make a positive impact through community-based programs, specifically in the regions where AWS builds and operates its global infrastructure. Information on applying for the scholarships can be found at <https://learnmore.scholarsapply.org/awsincommunities/>.

In 2021 a Morrow County student, America Pacheco, Boardman, was selected as a recipient of one of the AWS scholarships. America is currently studying computer science at Oregon State University. Her course of study has a particular emphasis on cybersecurity, a topic Pacheco only discovered her passion for recently.

"Growing up, I didn't see many women in tech careers," she said. "I never thought of myself doing anything STEM-related until I got to high school."

Everything changed when Pacheco attended a series of introductory computer science classes, which captured her imagination. "I was so intrigued. Each week was a different project. It challenged me, but it also gave me opportunities to be creative, which I really enjoyed."

While the classes sparked Pacheco's interest in cybersecurity, she developed a passion for it during the pandemic.

"I was at home constantly, and I was bored," she said. "During that time, I decided to take a couple of free online computer science courses offered by Amazon. At first, it was for a bit of fun, but I got to a

point where I discovered I really liked it and wanted to continue growing these skills."

As she began to plan for university, Pacheco reviewed her finances and realized she would probably need to work part time to finance her degree. "I thought college was doable if I worked part time and during summer breaks, but this isn't ideal when you want to focus on your studies. When I received my Amazon scholarship, I was so excited. It's helped me so much. I can worry a little less about finances and concentrate more on my studies and enjoying my college experience."

Although she has moved across state for college, Pacheco remains focused on her local community. "The population of Boardman is about 5,000," she said. "Amazon and AWS have played a big part in its growth since building a data center here, in addition to many other data centers across Oregon. That growth is something I always wanted to be part of. Although I'm in a completely different part of Oregon right now, I want to return home and give back to my town in some way in the future."

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340 E HILL ST Heppner

\$150,000



NEW LISTING!

SALE PENDING

Nice 3 bedroom 1 bath home in good condition located on quiet street in Heppner. It comes with all the appliances: stove refrigerator, washer and dryer. Fully carpeted basement. Fenced yard for pets or kids. Place for a garden out back. Has a covered patio for barbequing. If you are interested call and set up a showing before it's gone.
385 W UNION ST Heppner

\$300,000



SALE PENDING

A classic beauty in Heppner. From the front sitting room through the woodworked dining room and open kitchen with island, this 4 bedroom 3 bath home is a unique find. The large living room is overlooked by a balcony upstairs where three of the bedrooms are located. Master bedroom is on the main floor with bath and walk-in closet. Skylights give natural light to the interior. Home includes a two car garage and basement for storage along with a big utility room.
Call for an appointment to see this!
195 N GALE ST Heppner

\$235,000



SALE PENDING -bumpable

Large living room, 2 bedrooms and bathroom upstairs, one bedroom and bath downstairs. The workshop has a cold storage room for the hunter and a great workspace. Renters are currently in the process of moving out.
535 ELDER ST Heppner

\$59,000



SALE PENDING

This is a fixer upper in Lexington being sold as is. Call for a tour and see what the condition is. Will be a cash sale with conveyance via Special Warranty Deed.
150 EAST ST Lexington

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SALE PENDING

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