



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Wee Bit O' Ireland returns after two year hiatus - deemed a great success



Above: A large group gathered on the steps of the Methodist Church in Heppner Saturday morning prior to setting off on the Friends Helping Friends 5K Remembrance Walk/Run.

Below: The Spark Cheer Club, who took first place in the Irish theme category, entertained a huge crowd during the Great Green Parade Saturday afternoon.

See page eight of this issue for additional St. Patrick's photos. -Photos by Tyllynn Cimmiyotti.



School board selects three candidates for superintendent position

By April Hilton-Sykes

The Morrow County School Board has selected three finalists for the MCSDD superintendent position to replace current Superintendent Dirk Dirksen who is retiring at the end of the school year. The candidates are Matt Combe, Jose Silva and Chester Bradshaw.

-Matt Combe, Heppner, is the current principal of Heppner Elementary and Heppner Jr./Sr. High School and current director of maintenance and facilities for the school district. Combe has a master's degree from Eastern Oregon University at LaGrande.

-Jose Silva, principal at the Kermit R. Booker Sr. Innovative Elementary School with the Clark County Nevada school district in Las Vegas, has a master's degree in education from Sierra Nevada College and a doctorate in education from Argosy University.

-Chester Bradshaw, superintendent of the Sugar Salem School District in Sugar City, Idaho, has an



Matt Combe
education specialist degree from Idaho State University.

The district held public sessions with the superintendent candidates on Tuesday, March 15, in Heppner and Boardman, and scheduled the last session on Wednesday, March 16, at Irrigon Elementary School.

At the meeting, Dirksen spoke concerning the district's response to the COVID 19 challenge and the projected end of the pandemic. "Helping kids through COVID is a great feeling," he exclaimed, adding that he was "comfortable in moving forward. It's nice to be in this spot." Dirksen said, "Masking is now optional, but 20 percent of parents still want their kids to wear masks."

Dirksen also reported that Morrow County Commissioner Don Russell contacted him concerning monies coming from Amazon. According to Dirksen, Amazon will be donating monies to the school district through Morrow County.



Jose Silva
Dirksen said the monies will go through the Education Foundation and will be put into capital projects. "It was a pretty pleasant call we received," said Dirksen.

At the meeting Dirksen detailed current enrollment figures compared to projected enrollment, which, for the most part, fall slightly short of the projections.

Concerning the upcoming bond issue, Dirksen reiterated that the district is currently operating without bond funds. "The levy went away," he emphasized. However, a district bond issue will go before the voters on May 17. Ballots are scheduled to go out the end of April.

In other business, the board received results of district employee preferences concerning the 2022-23 school year calendar, showing that 70 percent of district employees preferred the pre-Labor Day school start option, compared to 29 percent who preferred the post-Labor Day start option.



Chester Bradshaw
Also at the meeting, the board:

-approved the following licensed employment action for 2022-23 (Heppner listed only): Brook Baker, HES/HJSHS music, Tara Proudfoot, HES fifth grade; Mayme Jill Miller, HJSHS/HES counselor.

-approved the following administrators recommended for extension for 2022-2023: Marie Shimer,

-See SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATES/PAGE SIX

Lindsay files for county commissioner



Melissa Lindsay

Melissa Lindsay, currently Morrow County Commissioner Position 3, filed as a candidate for position 2 on March 8, the final day to file. Lindsay's current term will end January 3, 2023. If elected to position 2, she will take office in January 2023 as well. Lindsay was the third

candidate to file for position 2, although one candidate has now withdrawn.

Melissa Lindsay listed previous governmental experience as Morrow County Judge, county commissioner for six years and chair for two years. She has also been chair of the Morrow County Cultural Coalition, commissioner for the Morrow County Planning Commission, treasurer of the Association of Oregon Counties, member of Local Officials Advisory Committee to LCDCC, Morrow County Local Public Safety Coordination Council, CAPECO board and the Morrow County Broadband Action Team.

The primary election will be held May 17, 2022, and the general election November 8, 2022.

'63 Chevy pickup new again



This 1963 Chevrolet pickup was purchased from Royce Fullerton in 1964 by Frank Osmin and has now been fully restored. Osmin had it repainted its original Glenwood green by Stacey Hunt in Fossil in 2018. The pickup took second place in the Great Green Parade on Saturday in the classic automobile class. Riding with Frank was his daughter, JJ, who had her first ride when she came home from the hospital in the pickup in 1970.

County broadband gets \$150,000 funding COVID dollars to boost rural fast internet

By David Sykes

Federal COVID-19 pandemic relief dollars will be helping expand broadband high speed internet access in rural parts of Morrow County, commissioners affirmed last week.

At their weekly meeting March 9 County Commissioners voted unanimously to allocate \$150,000 to the Morrow County Broadband Action Team's effort to bring higher internet speeds to those parts of the county without it. The money comes from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 when congress passed a \$1.9 trillion package to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of that money came to Oregon which was then funneled down to the county level.

The money will not be used for actual internet infrastructure, but head of the county broadband team Aaron Moss said the money would lay



County broadband leader Aaron Moss

the groundwork to attract more funds for the actual build out. "The biggest one is design," Moss told the commissioners of the areas the money would be spent in. He said that once the county's rural broadband system is designed, he will then be able to use that plan to go out and seek additional funding to build the actual system. There will a large pool of funding available from the \$1 trillion.

-See BROADBAND/PAGE SEVEN

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