

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

## Inspiring change in MCHD

To the editor;  
I am writing this in the hopes that it may inspire change in the organization known as Morrow County Health District, or at least facilitate some introspection.

My tenure at MCHD has not been an incredibly long one, but it has provided me a very clear picture of many different things. I have made wonderful new friends; I have gotten to witness the family atmosphere amongst employees, and I have had the privilege of getting to reconnect with small town life. I have worked with several employees who truly care about you as a person, not just as an employee and/or coworker. And I have learned much about the inner workings of what it takes to keep a small hospital that covers a large area running.

That said, there are also many things that I have witnessed that, to me, are unacceptable. Gross mistreatment of employees, lack of regard towards burnout, constant over burdening of already stretched thin resources, and a general disconnect between Admin and employees. Not to mention a lack of understanding as to what the public really wants from their entity.

Employees leave, or step down from their position, and their responsibilities are put upon another employee that already has their hands full from their current position. This creates liabilities for not only shortcomings, but it provides too much room for error that could ultimately cost the district significant resources if the district were to be sued, or worse, a loss of life occur.

The EMS program is running on life support. With a very capable paramedic feeling ostracized for wanting to do things as procedure states they should be, and a paramedic that often times forgets to do things with patients that should have been done upon initial contact with the patient. When I have brought these things to the attention of the EMS director (who is also the lab director) they have gone largely unheard, and no changes were made.

I have witnessed the degradation of the former CNO to the point where she felt the only choice she had was to resign from her position. Admin consistently disregarded her opinion, left her out of important conversations and meetings, and generally ostracized her. Upon her resignation, her job was awarded to the IT manager (also the former CNO) who does not even live in the state, let alone the county.

The former COO, while highly qualified, did not reside in the state, and only visited the hospital once a week. And when he would visit, it was like pulling teeth for him to get up to date on what was going on at the district, let alone get up to speed on current projects. I cannot help but to think that this played a major part in his resignation, and not just the travel itself.

Employees put on administrative leave for six weeks and counting, without being told what they have been placed on leave for, and to only be given 24 hours to respond to Ad-

min's investigation. This is not only a gross oversight of due process, but it also places undue stress upon the staff members. From the employees expected to pick up the slack, despite being short two other staff members, to the general stress and lack of appreciation placed upon the employees that have been put on administrative leave. The employees in question, in my experience, have been nothing short of wonderful and caring employees, that treated everyone they met as family. To witness the gross misconduct of the Admin team in the handling of their "investigation" has been nothing short of disheartening. With members of HR even going so far as to yell at them during meetings.

I understand that the district needs to make money. And I do not claim to come even close to knowing what it takes to balance the budget in such a large district that has so many moving parts. I am aware that any business is in the business of making money. But, from my perspective, there are many ways that money is squandered, misappropriated, or generally disregarded. From wasteful spending on new office furniture (despite having perfectly good and functional furniture already in storage) to purchasing buildings and other real estate, simply for them to sit unused. The church across the street was bought with the promise that Admin and HR would be moving into it, but it is currently used as a storage unit. The house that was purchased along with the church requires such extensive repairs that it has been stated that the district will be doing nothing with it. I do not claim to know the reasoning behind these things, but I cannot help but to feel that purchasing these things, and not using them as promised, is a misappropriation of public funding.

We are constantly reminded that our image with the public has been tarnished, and that we need to individually do what we can to improve that image, yet even our own employees cannot get into the doctor to be seen when sick. How are we to convince the public that we are the premier medical provider if we cannot even be seen ourselves. There is a constant lack of providers, and it is not due to us being so rural, despite what we are told. Many providers, upon exit, have expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Admin team, and that they are happy to be going somewhere they will feel appreciated.

All of the above have led to me to vacate my current position within the district. I have loved my job and felt that I did it well. But the volatility of the Administrative team led me to not feel secure in my job, no matter how well I may perform it. And that is not a good feeling. We are constantly criticized, micromanaged and talked down to. This led to an environment that I could not look forward to coming to every day, despite coming to love many of the people that I worked with. I have watched morale within the district sink to (in my opinion) an all-time low, and I see no signs of it improving in the near future. In just the

last two months, nearly 10 employees have left. I cannot look at that and think it just a coincidence.

I truly hope that change comes soon. That HR and the Administrative team are able to reconnect with the cogs that make their wheels turn. That employees will again feel valued, and not insignificant. That much more thought will be placed in decisions that concern use of the public's budget, and the overall welfare and mental health of employees at MCHD. I am saddened to know that I will not be around to witness such change, should it come, but I must think about my security and future for my family. I have enjoyed my time at MCHD for the most part, especially the people that I have met. I thank the district for the opportunity to serve the community of Heppner and Morrow County, but I must move on in my own best interests.

Please do not disregard this letter. I do not write it with malice or to cause harm. I write it to hopefully, as I said at the beginning, inspire change, or at the least, introspection.

Jason Atchley  
Hermiston

## Resuming our advocacy to save BMCC

To the editor;  
Today the faculty association is resuming its campaign of public advocacy after the failure of our efforts to reach an agreement with the college.

We met repeatedly with the college administration and made a proposal that would have preserved the college's educational offerings while providing significant savings to the budget. Our proposal included:

-A faculty salary freeze for the coming year, despite inflation running over 8 percent.

-Giving up paid faculty professional development, a savings of about \$250,000.

-Reducing faculty overload pay by \$100,000 - \$200,000.

-The early retirement of four full-time faculty members, plus the internal transfer of a fifth full-time faculty member, for a total of \$450,000 in savings.

In return for these concessions, we asked one

thing and one thing only: for the college to retract its plan to layoff faculty.

We came very close to reaching an agreement, but the college was unwilling to budge on a minimum of two layoffs. When we asked the college to consider giving up some of its budget increases to preserve educational offerings, they refused to consider or discuss the matter. These budget increases include:

-A \$100,000 increase in travel spending,

-A \$165,000 increase in the supply budget,

-A \$258,000 increase in the repair and maintenance budget,

-A \$116,000 increase in the budget for equipment and furniture,

-A \$100,000 increase in professional services, and

-\$265,000 to hire two new administrators.

Unfortunately, the college was unwilling to even discuss these unnecessary increases to the budget,

nor could they explain why faculty must be laid off to make way for increased travel expenditures, consultants and administrators. We could not accept arbitrary layoffs because we know BMCC's mission is to educate its students. We know that students, parents, alumni, taxpayers and community members rely on BMCC to provide an education that we can all be proud of.

We believe that we have made every possible effort to reach an agreement with the college administration, and we have no choice but to resume our campaign of public advocacy. Thank you for your support.

Please join us at the June 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting. We will be gathering at the BMCC Pendleton campus at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Pete Hernberg  
Blue Mountain Faculty Association  
SaveBMCC.com

## Morrow County 4-H shooters make it to state

By Grace Ogden, OSU Extension student intern

The 2022 State 4-H Shooting Sports Contest will be held in Albany from June 20-22. The state contest consists of four divisions: archery, firearms, hunting skills and Western Heritage Project. Youth 4-H members ages 9-19 years old qualify through the mail-in tournament, members shoot and are scored on the county ranges by trained volunteers. The county shooting sports

program runs from January through March each year.

From Morrow County there are qualifiers in archery, rifle, shotgun and pistol.

2022 4-H State Archery Qualifiers: Novalee Campbell, Brayden McNeil, and Keltie Rietmann; 2022 4-H State Pistol Qualifiers: Joseph Albitre, Jonathon Ashbeck, Mary Ashbeck, Ketch Fennern, Axton Hendricks, and Aden Lathrop; 2022 4-H State Shotgun Qualifiers: Preslie Bowles, Carter Eynetich, Radley Griggs, Chase Lantis, and Kalvin Rietmann.

Ketch Fennern, and Averee Lathrop; 2022 4-H State Rifle Qualifiers: Joseph Albitre, Carmine Albitre, Jonathon Ashbeck, Mary Ashbeck, Callahan Baker, Ketch Fennern, Axton Hendricks, and Aden Lathrop; 2022 4-H State Shotgun Qualifiers: Preslie Bowles, Carter Eynetich, Radley Griggs, Chase Lantis, and Kalvin Rietmann.

### Print & Mailing Services

- \* Design
- \* Print
- \* Mail

Sykes Publishing  
541-676-9228

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:  
**MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**

## Going Out of Business Sale!

Final Days! Thru Saturday Only

Save!- Save!- Save! Everything MUST Go!

75% OFF All Remaining Inventory

Wednesday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

We are closing our doors for good

All Merchandise  
Must Be Sold!

All Sales Final!

Cash & Local Checks Only



Jewelry - China - Gifts  
Collectables



Last chance to pick up personal merchandise that has been left for repair.

If you have any questions, please contact Sheryll at 503-970-7226



177 N Main Street, Heppner