



## Mail votes all counted, Sykes & Wenholz win county commissioner positions

The mail-in ballots have all been counted and Jeff Wenholz and David Sykes are the winners of the two open Morrow County Commissioner's positions.

There was a delay in the county clerk announcing the vote totals. The election was held May 17, however because of new Oregon law, any ballots postmarked on election day but not received by the clerk, must still be counted. To accommodate this new law, the clerk waited one week until May 25 before counting and releasing a total vote count, including all mail-in ballots. The voting was close enough any late ballots still in the mail system could have changed outcomes announced on election night, however it turned out they did not.

Wenholz won three of



Jeff Wenholz



David Sykes

the five county precincts to beat Melissa Lindsay 1,312 to 1,285, and Sykes won four precincts to come out on top with 1,284 to Gus Peterson's 479 and Mike McNamee's 788 votes. Since it was a three-way race Sykes needed 50 percent plus one vote to win outright in this primary election and avoid a runoff

in the fall general election. He did this by receiving 50.24 percent of the total votes.

Lindsay is currently holding commission position three but decided near the filing deadline she would instead switch and file for position two. She has been on the commission for one term. The two new

commissioners will both be sworn in and take office next January.

Other local elections held were Michael Gorman re-elected county assessor and Justin Nelson re-elected district attorney. Both were running unopposed. The Morrow County School District also forwarded a \$138 million bond issue to voters for approval. The money would have been used for new construction at schools around the district, however, it failed in every district by a total of 1,478 no to 883 yes. Ione precinct did not vote because it has its own school district.

The clerk stipulated that this vote count is still not considered final until it is certified on June 13, however no changes are anticipated.

The chart below is a breakdown of county voting by precinct.

County wide vote count by precinct								
	Boardman	Irrigon	Lexington	Ione	Heppner	Total	Percent	
<b>Position 2</b>								
Lindsay	245	264	177	119	480	1285	49.37%	
<b>Wenholz</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>1312</b>	<b>50.40%</b>	<b>Won</b>
<b>Position 3</b>								
<b>Sykes</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>50.25%</b>	<b>Won</b>
Peterson	91	77	70	97	144	479	18.75%	
McNamee	212	398	53	45	80	788	30.84%	
<b>School Bond</b>								
Yes	213	211	103		356	883	37.40%	
<b>No</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>153</b>		<b>402</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>62.60%</b>	<b>Failed</b>

## County names tax break negotiating team for new solar project

Will locate on 10,900 acres 15 miles northeast of Lexington

By David Sykes

Local government is gearing up for a big new solar electrical generating project proposed for Morrow County. In preparation at its May 25 meeting Morrow County Commissioners picked a negotiating team to work on property tax abatement deals with the new business. The project is currently in the permitting phase but, if approved, would locate on 10,900 acres on mostly dryland wheat ground 15 miles northeast of Lexington.

Called Echo Solar Project, the facility will be owned by Pine Gate Renewables out of Asheville, NC. The project is currently under review by the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council with an intent for

the company to apply for a site certificate in early 2023. Construction is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2024 and be completed by the end of 2026. The company estimates there

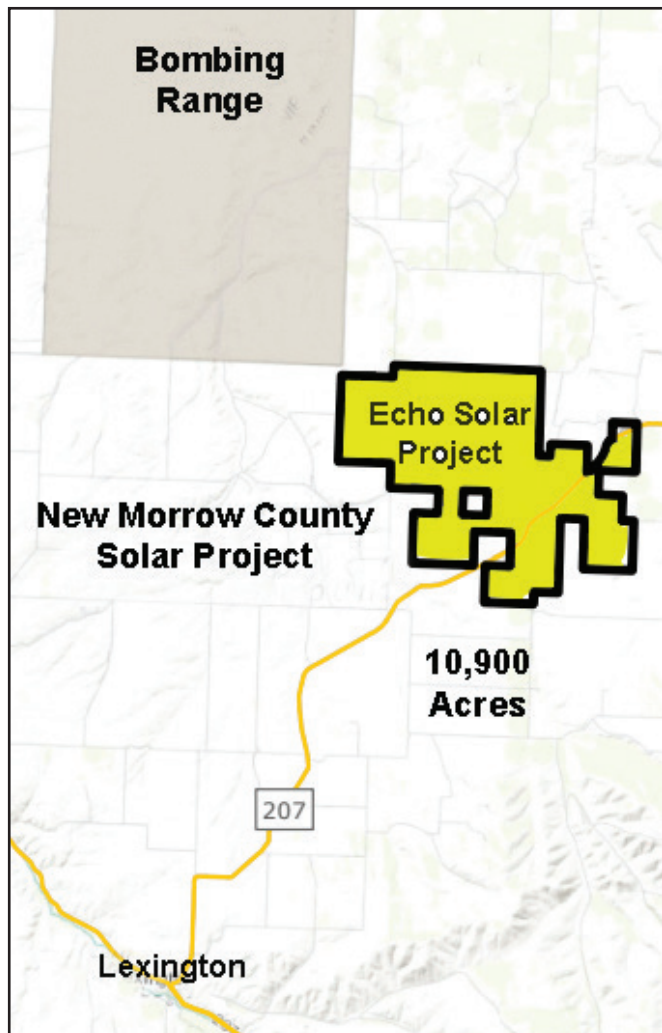
will be an average of approximately 400 employees on-site during construction, with an anticipated peak of up to 1,200 at one time.

The facility will include arrays of solar panels,

battery storage, substations and operations and maintenance facilities, as well as roads and fencing around the project, and, when operational, will produce 1,250 megawatts of power, control systems, meters and other equipment. The battery storage containers, to be dispersed throughout the solar arrays, will be containers up to 9 feet wide, 53 feet long, and 8.5 feet tall.

The new facility would send its power out of the area through a new substation on five acres at the

-See SOLAR PROJECT/  
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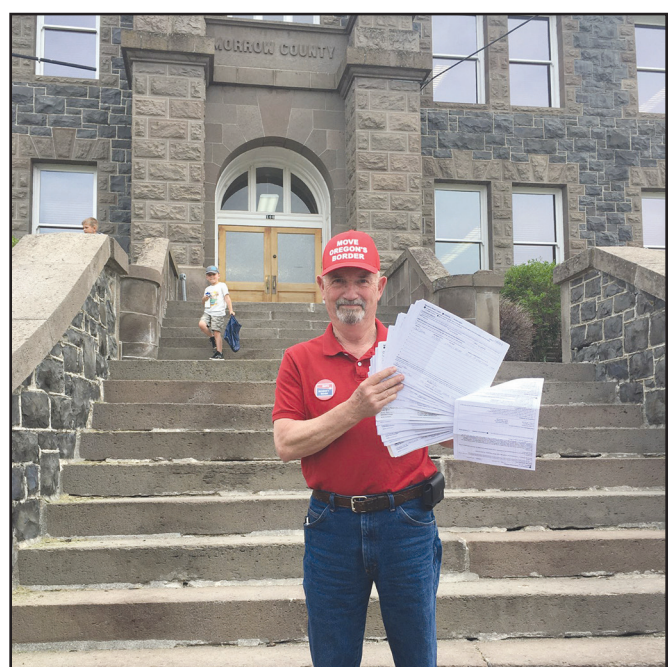
The proposed Echo Solar project will include generating panels and battery storage.

## Sheryll Bates named Woman of the Year



Sheryll Bates was named as Woman of the Year at the annual Town and Country event held May 19. "She is an asset for the community and is always willing to help out," the speaker at the event told the audience. "If it wasn't for Sheryll, we would not have all of the events in town that bring us together," Alicia Doherty continued. Pictured (L-R): Sheryll Bates, Alvin Liu and Alicia Doherty. -Photo by Tylynn Cimmiyottie.

## Morrow County receives signatures to put Greater Idaho on the ballot



The Greater Idaho Movement delivered 287 signatures to the Morrow County court house last week.

The Greater Idaho movement submitted a petition to force a ballot initiative onto the November 2022 Morrow County ballot yesterday at the Morrow County Courthouse. 287 signatures were submitted although only 226 valid signatures are required.

So far, nine eastern Oregon counties have voted for the movement's ballot measures: two in November 2020, five in May 2021, one in a special election in November, and Klamath County last week.

The purpose of the ballot initiative is to show state legislators that voters want them to begin talks with Idaho to move the border. The movement is asking Oregon state legislators for hearings and for cosponsors for a resolution that would invite Idaho to begin talks with Oregon on moving the

border.

When asked why the Oregon legislature would be motivated to give up a part of the state, Mike McCarter, the leader of the movement, pointed to a January SurveyUSA poll that shows support for the move from voters of northwestern Oregon.

The area of eastern Oregon proposed to join Idaho voted 70 percent Republican in the 2020 presidential election, while Idaho voted 64 percent Republican and Oregon 40 percent, according to the movement's website greateridaho.org.

McCarter said "Our representatives would be heard in the Idaho Legislature because they would be a part of the majority party there. Idaho respects rural values and rural industries. Idaho has a lower cost of living and lower taxes."

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