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VOL. 141 NO. 46 8 Pages Wednesday, November 16, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## County signs with DEQ Ione site cleanup

By Andrea Di Salvo

Morrow County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay told the board of commissioners at its regular meeting Nov. 9 that progress was being made to get the Department of Environmental Quality involved with the cleanup of the old gas station in Ione.

Lindsay asked that the board sign an access agreement with the DEQ to give the department access to the site at 320 Main Street to move the process forward. The county owns the property through a foreclosure.

She said the DEQ was ready to go in and start work on the site, which would include sampling, monitoring and inspecting air, groundwater and/or soil at the site. They would also decommission the underground storage tanks and remove contaminated soil and groundwater so the site could be cleared to DEQ standards. The department would also restore the site to original condition except for any asphalt that might need to be removed.

“DEQ has already started contracting processes with a company to consult on this project. DEQ will carry this administratively and do all the work,” she said. “The site itself doesn’t have asphalt, but it is on Main Street in Ione.

“If there should be damage to Main Street in Ione, that would be a different conversation,” she added.

Lindsay stressed that the property was a brownfield project and would use brownfield dollars, with the DEQ bearing financial responsibility for the project. A brownfield site is defined as a former industrial or commercial site where future use is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination. The state provides assistance to communities looking to clean up brownfield properties.

“Because the county owns the property, they’re just super excited to jump in and help a government entity get a property like this back into good standing,” she said, adding that she envisioned handing the property over to ICABO for further development. “I’d love us to sign this access agreement, give me authority to walk this a little further down the line,” Lindsay said, “and walk this through to a clean handoff, within 12 months, I’m told.”

Lindsay also reported that the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) committee was undergoing a reset and that she and commissioner Dan Dorran of Umatilla County had

been approached to be on the committee and make recommendations for filling the other seats.

The LUBGWMA is a voluntary committee under the management of the DEQ. It was formed in 1990 but became more active after the county nitrate issues came to the forefront. DEQ’s Randy Jones had been spearheading the effort to create a more actionable committee with a voting membership. Committee members were announced at a recent meeting. Jones retires at the end of the year, and Lindsay and Dorran had drafted a letter asking that he continue with LUBGWMA into 2023 to maintain consistency, especially considering Lindsay would be leaving the committee at the end of her term as commissioner.

County Planner Tamra Mabbott agreed with the step.

“He is a voice of reason. He has an incredible amount of institutional knowledge, particularly about LUBGWMA. To lose Randy would be a really big step back,” she said. “Even though his name is attached to DEQ, he sees the big picture.”

In old business, Lindsay updated the board on an abandoned cistern located on county land but surrounded by property owned by Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group. WCVEDG is currently working to get grants and infrastructure together for housing development on their property.

Lindsay said her research had proven that the county still owns the cistern and has taken no action toward fencing it or removing it, which would be dangerous and detrimental to housing development. Lindsay said she would like to work with public works staff to visit the site and come back with a plan for potential removal and cleanup of the cistern, possibly deeding the property to WCVEDG once it had been taken care of. The piece of land is not large enough to be developed on its own.

Board of Commissioners Chair Jim Doherty encouraged Lindsay to move forward with gathering information. Commissioner Don Russell said if it would be doable to take care of the cistern, he wouldn’t be opposed to donating the property. “It’s for the public good,” he said.

Changes included allowing gift cards to be purchased for a victims witness or similar circumstances and the requirement that Morrow County be reimbursed for any charges made without an accompanying itemized receipt. Authorized credit card users for the county will be required to sign the new policy going forward.

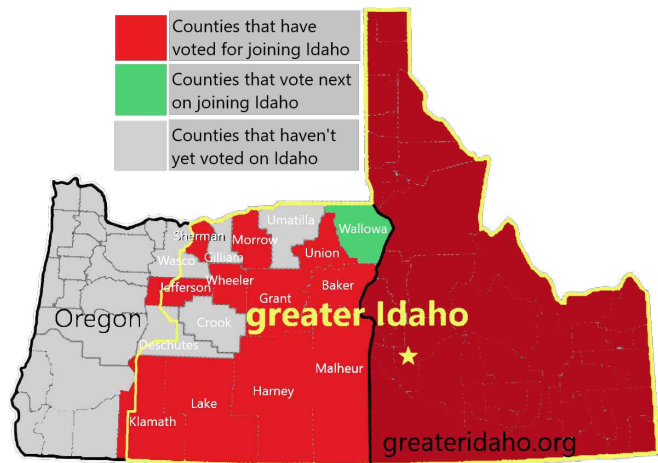
Morrow County Assessor Mike Gorman expressed concern about requiring reimbursement where a detailed receipt was lacking.

“I know there are some cases where you cannot get a detailed receipt,” he said.

-Continued to PAGE FIVE

## Morrow County votes to move forward with Greater Idaho

### County goes red, prohibits psilocybin businesses



Morrow County voted to move forward with the Greater Idaho movement in the Nov. 8 election. The county approved county measure 25-88 with 60 percent of the votes, 2,315 compared to 1,522. The measure passed in every precinct, though the margins were closest in Boardman, Lexington and Ione, with Irrigon and Heppner showing the most support.

The vote makes Morrow County one of 11 Eastern Oregon counties to officially support further discussion on joining Idaho. The measure requires the county commissioners to meet three times yearly to discuss Morrow County’s interests in relocating the state border.

According to a statement from the movement, “County clerks have refused to allow the movement gather signatures in Crook and Gilliam counties, and county commissioners in Crook, Gilliam, and Umatilla counties have not yet agreed to put an advisory question regarding the issue on the ballot.”

The Greater Idaho movement seeks to get a resolution passed in the next sessions of both state legislatures that would invite discussions between state leaders on moving the border.

In other election news, the county went firmly red in federal and state elections. Though losing narrowly in the state-wide election, Republican Christine Drazan swept the county vote in the governor’s race with 2,947 compared to Tina Kotek’s 590 votes and Betsy Johnson’s 382. Incumbent Ron Wyden won the U.S. Senate race by 56 percent at the state level, but Republican Jo Rae Perkins topped him in Morrow County by a margin of 2,720 to 1,134, or 68 percent. Republican Cliff Bentz was a runaway winner in the U.S. House of Representatives District 2 race, including in Morrow County, where he garnered 78 percent of the vote.

All four statewide measures passed at the state level, but Morrow County voted down three of them by wide margins. Only measure 111, which disqualifies legislators with 10 unexcused absences from floor sessions from being

re-elected, passed in the county. Precinct support wasn’t unanimous, however, with both Lexington and Ione voting down the measure.

Voters at the county level and in each individual city voted to prohibit psilocybin-related businesses. Measure 25-91 passed with 65 percent of the vote. Each city passed individual psilocybin-related prohibitions with at least 60 percent of the vote.

Other local election results are:

City of Heppner Mayor—Corey Sweeney; Council Position 4—Dale Bates; Council Position 5—Sharon Inskeep; Council Position 6—Adam Doherty.

City of Ione Mayor—Michael Skow; Council Position 1—Jason Carson; Council Position 2—Beverly Benson; Council Position 4—Brian Spivey. Council Position 5 had no candidate filed.

Town of Lexington Council Position 3—Katie Imes; Council Position 4—Barbara “Bobbi” Gordon.

City of Irrigon Councilor at Large (vote for 3)—Michelle Patton, Heather Bishop and Benjamin Calvert garnered the most votes out of seven candidates.

City of Boardman Councilor at Large (vote for 3)—Roy Drago Jr., Karen Pettigrew and Isaac Williams won the top three spots out of four candidates filed.

Miff Devin and Colin McElligott were elected Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation directors. One SWCD position had no candidate filed.

## Mustangs set sights on Oakland at semifinals

### Heppner takes down Rams in hard-fought victory



Top: #68 Jacob Lentz stuffs Ram player  
Bottom: #24 Caden George stiff-arms Ram defender  
-Phots by Kirsti Cason

The Heppner Mustang football team advanced to the OSAA 2A State Football Championship semi-finals with an 8-6 victory over the Regis Rams. With their quarterfinal win the Mustangs will travel to Hillsboro Stadium to take on the Oakland Oakers this Saturday at 2:15 p.m. The Oakers have a 10-1 record and ended the season as the number-one ranked team in the OSAA State rankings.

In the game with Regis, the Rams got the ball first and drove the ball to midfield, where the Heppner defense toughened up and held them on downs. The Mustangs took over and ran the ball 12 straight times. A pass completion of 12 yards from Caden George to Cameron Proudfoot got ball to the Regis eight-yard line. Two plays later George handed the ball off to Saul Lopez, who scored a touchdown from five yards out to make the score 6-0. George then passed the ball to Proudfoot for the two-point conversion to make the score 8-0 half way through the first quarter.

Both teams relied heavily on their run games to control the clock and the Mustangs went on a 12-play drive in the second quarter that ate up a lot of time. The Mustangs then threw an interception, but Regis could do nothing with it. The Rams threw their own interception when Proudfoot jumped in front of a pass and gave the Mustangs the ball at the Regis 16-yard line. Heppner drove the ball all the way down the field in 12 plays to get to the one-yard line. Heppner couldn’t score as the time in the first half expired with the Mustangs leading 8-0.

Regis scored on their first possession of the second half to make it 8-6. George, Lopez and the interior defensive line for the Mustangs blew up the Regis two-point conversion attempt, so it failed, and the score remained 8-6.

On the ensuing Heppner possession, the Mustangs were stopped and

Jake Lentz punted the ball away. Regis went on a long drive and got the ball to the Mustang five-yard line. Then the Heppner defense stiffened and held the Rams on downs without scoring. The Mustangs got the ball out of trouble and advanced it to near midfield before they were forced to punt again. Regis took control of the ball with 10 minutes left in the game and tried to get something going. The Heppner defense wasn’t about to give up and forced another Regis punt.

The Mustangs got the ball on their own 28-yard line with 8:53 left in the game. They ran the ball well and continued to get much needed first downs as the clock ticked down. The Mustangs dominated the line of scrimmage as they ran 15 plays, travelled 67 yards and ate up the entire time left in the game as they got to the Regis five-yard line. George then took a knee to end the game with another Mustang victory 8-6.

Heppner had a total of 275 yards of offense and Regis finished with 233. The Mustangs ran the ball for 234 yards and Regis 99. Passing yards for Heppner were 41 and for the Rams 134. Heppner dominated the time of possession with 36:12 to Regis with 11:48.

George was 5-7 passing the ball for 41 yards. Proudfoot caught all five of the passes for 41 yards.

Leading the way in rushing was George, who finished with 152 yards on 31 carries. Lopez ran the ball for 50 yards and a touchdown on 10 carries, and Ty Boor had 18 yards. Proudfoot carried the ball for seven yards and Hayden McMahon finished with two.

On the defensive side of the ball, George led the team with nine tackles. Proudfoot and Cade Cunningham each finished with five, and Boor and Landon Mitchell each had four. With three tackles each were Lentz, Lopez, Tucker Ashbeck, David Cribbs and Jaime Cavan.

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