



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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DEQ grants Port of Morrow modified permit

Port to invest up to \$200 million in improvements



The Port of Morrow industrial complex in Boardman. -Contributed photo

Boardman, OR—The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has granted the Port of Morrow a modified permit for industrial wastewater treatment and land application. To comply with permit requirements, the Port will invest up to \$200 million in improvements, including wastewater treatment facilities.

DEQ's permit modifies an existing Water Pollution Control Facilities permit issued Dec. 21, 2017, which allows for land application of industrial wastewater from food processors, energy generators, data centers and job-intensive industries at the Port. Without reuse, the wastewater would be just that—waste. The major change in the modified permit is effectively disallowing land applica-

tion of wastewater in the non-growing season from November through February.

The Port proposed to construct additional wastewater storage lagoons with a 1.5-billion-gallon capacity by Nov. 1, 2026. The added capacity will hold large amounts of wastewater during winter months and allow the Port to meet restrictions on winter wastewater application.

The Port also proposed constructing three anaerobic digesters to treat high-nutrient wastewater. The first unit is nearly complete. All three will be on-line by November 2023.

Oxidation ditches will be added by July 2025 to provide secondary treatment for water from the anaerobic digesters. These deadlines may change



The modified DEQ permit does not allow land application of Port wastewater November through February. -Contributed photo

based on supply chain issues, which would cause a need for a modification.

The Port committed to a substantial expansion of farmland acreage used for land application of wastewater stored over winter months. In addition to providing a reliable source of water for irrigation without drawing down groundwater, the wastewater contains nitrogen that substitutes for commercial fertilizers produced with fossil fuels.

Port Commissioners declined to appeal the modified permit despite expressing concerns to DEQ over aggressive deadlines and the agency's calculations of nitrogen levels in land-applied discharges. Meeting the deadlines will require swift start-up and completion of wastewater infrastructure upgrades.

Commissioners instructed Port staff to pursue funding sources for the \$150-\$200 million investment to comply with modified permit provisions, including applying for State of Oregon funds and federal funds from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Even though the Port is responsible for approximately 3.5 percent of the nitrates found in the Lower Umatilla Ground Water Management Basin, our responsibility as environmental stewards is to do everything possible to ensure industrial wastewater remains a community asset" stated Lisa Mittelsdorf, Executive Director.

Amazon once again top taxpayer in county at \$20.69 million

Data centers pay more than next 19 businesses, combined

MORROW COUNTY 2022-23 Top Tax Payors

NAME	TAX AMOUNT	RMV*	AV
AMAZON DATA SERVICES, INC	\$20,691,726.33	\$4,021,943,860	\$1,561,640,110
AVISTA CORPORATION	\$3,343,707.42	\$207,160,000	\$207,160,000
THREEMILE CANYON FARMS, LLC	\$3,140,766.73	\$292,521,899	\$246,859,935
LAMB WESTON, INC	\$2,545,166.24	\$3,361,544,150	\$157,528,390
PORTLAND GENERAL ELECTRIC CO	\$2,149,638.54	\$684,611,000	\$139,896,860
GAS TRANSMISSION NORTHWEST CORP	\$1,210,341.60	\$81,353,112	\$81,353,112
COLUMBIA RIVER PROCESSING, INC	\$746,573.28	\$56,560,870	\$56,518,670
PORT OF MORROW	\$515,423.04	\$41,905,245	\$36,298,039
PORT VIEW APARTMENTS, LLC	\$433,010.87	\$28,410,010	\$23,942,920
FARMLAND RESERVE, INC	\$388,722.99	\$50,732,338	\$29,503,233
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CO	\$378,472.86	\$128,676,273	\$29,355,290
RDO/CALBEE FOODS LLC	\$343,977.29	\$26,147,630	\$26,147,630
OREGON POTATO COMPANY	\$292,854.56	\$18,471,139	\$18,092,471
ALTO COLUMBIA, LLC	\$285,092.53	\$21,671,470	\$21,671,470
WILLOW CREEK ENERGY LLC	\$276,017.09	\$37,120,000	\$17,188,010
ORCHARD WIND PROJECT	\$257,763.49	\$60,350,000	\$20,862,870
PACIFICORP (PP&L)	\$245,434.68	\$18,694,000	\$18,694,000
LUMEN TECHNOLOGIES INC	\$233,898.48	\$15,842,000	\$15,842,000
TIDEWATER BARGE LINES INC	\$217,307.10	\$9,320,000	\$9,320,000
EASTERDAY DAIRY, LLC	\$191,634.06	\$15,513,059	\$15,222,723

*Note: RMV amounts are before any exemptions.

A recently posted list of top taxpayers in the county shows Amazon far and away the highest taxpayer in the county. In the above chart, the tax amount is what will be paid by each business this year, RMV is real market value, and AV is assessed value.

Amazon Web Services (AWS), which operates several data centers around Boardman, is once again the top taxpayer in Morrow County. The company is shelling out more than

\$20.69 million in property taxes this year, which is more than the next 19 highest taxpayers combined.

Amazon's tax bill is up more than \$9 million from the \$11.47 million it paid last year, and it has held the top county taxpaying spot since 2018.

The next highest taxpayer at \$3.3 million is Avista Corporation, operator of a gas-fired generating facility at Boardman. The tax chart posted on the county assessor's web site

also shows Amazon's total investment in Morrow County now at over \$4 billion.

In addition to the \$20.69 million it pays in county taxes (distributed to taxing districts in the county), Amazon will also pay an additional \$11.88 million this year to the Columbia River Enterprise Zone II in lieu of taxes. That money is distributed around the county to schools, various districts, cities and economic development groups.

Heppner Lights at Heritage Park



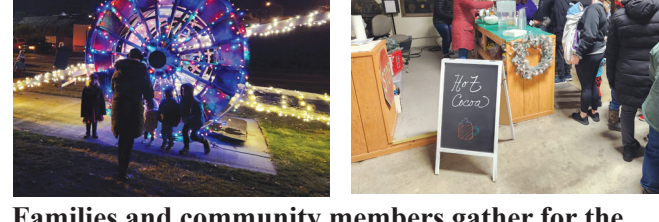
Sage garden preschoolers sing Christmas carols - Contributed Photo



Kids from the Heppner daycare and preschool sing Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. -Contributed Photo



Families and community members gather for the Christmas light show at Heritage Park in Heppner. -Contributed photo



Rebecca Finch catches Santa's ear at the Ag Museum. -Contributed photo

Recall vote appears successful

According to unofficial results released Tuesday by Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers, both Commissioner Jim Doherty and Commissioner Melissa Lindsay seem destined to leave office sooner than they planned. The vote will not be certified until Dec. 20, however, to allow time for the county clerk's office to receive mailed ballots and resolve ballots.

Both recalls won out by fairly small margins. As of Dec. 6, a total of 1,337

residents voted to recall Commissioner Doherty, while 1,173 voted against the recall, a difference of only 164 votes. Commissioner Lindsay's recall had an even narrower margin with a difference of only 20 votes, 1,263 in favor of the recall and 1,243 against.

Results were not unanimous across the county, however; the recall passed by the largest margin in Boardman, while it failed by a large margin in Lexington. Full breakdown by

precinct as is below.

The voter turnout was also low. As of yesterday, the Morrow County Clerk's office had only received 36.17 percent of the ballots sent out.

According to records, not only has a county commissioner never been recalled in the 137-year-old history of Morrow County, but a recall effort has also not even been successfully initiated against a commissioner. Morrow County was created in 1885.

Recall Election Results by Precinct as of 11/29

	Heppner		Lexington		Ione		Boardman		Irrigon	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Doherty Recall	308	438	88	147	131	109	433	213	359	262
Lindsay Recall	257	488	79	157	108	129	441	205	363	258

November cooler, wetter than normal

According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged much cooler than normal during the month of November.

The average temperature was 34.2 degrees, which was -7.4 degrees cooler than the normal average temperature for this

month. High temperatures averaged 42.6 degrees, with the high of 60 degrees being recorded on Nov. 5. Low temperatures averaged 25.8 degrees, with the low of 14 degrees being recorded on Nov. 19.

There were 26 days when the low temperature was below 32 degrees, and six days when the high temperature was less than

32 degrees.

Precipitation was much above normal during November, totaling 1.67 inches, which was 0.30 inches above normal. Precipitation of at least .01 inch was reported on five days. The heaviest amount of precipitation was 0.63 inches, which was reported on Nov. 2.

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