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County's market values, tax values see significant increase

By Andrea Di Salvo

At its Dec. 7 meeting in Heppner, the Morrow County Board of Commissioners heard the assessment and tax quarterly report from Morrow County Assessor Mike Gorman.

Gorman reported that the county's total taxable value was \$3,759,690,030, with a market value of \$9,228,177,745. Strategic investment Program (SIP) exemptions totaled \$1,269,106,755, while enterprise zone exemptions were \$4,033,767,140.

Gorman said the coun-

only has one year left on its exemption.

Echo Winds is shared with Umatilla County, with each county allocated 50 percent. Gorman said Echo Winds actually paid more this year than they would have if they had paid taxes, but in previous years it had been the other way around. The agreement included an \$80,000 per year local improvement payment to schools for the first five years. It also has one year left in its exemption.

The Shepard Flats project paid an additional

for the solar portion that came online this year, plus a \$335,000.00 CSF. The county does not share in the CSF.

In total, SIP payments were \$4,739,657.66 for the year, with \$1,726,593.00 in CSFs. Total SIP exempt taxes were \$16,700,937.00 and the total exempt value was \$1,269,106,755.

On the enterprise zone portion of the payments, payments to the CREZ (Columbia River Enterprise Zone) II board totaled \$13,729,646.92 while enterprise zone bond payments

Threemile Project has a standard five-year exemption for a methane digester and pumping facility to PGE's Carty co-gen plant. The total investment was about \$37 million, and Gorman said Resilient IG purchased a portion from Threemile in 2020. This is their third year claiming the exemption. A payment of \$61,684.70 is made to CREZ II each year, with Threemile having the option to utilize 50 percent of that amount as a "buy back" option. Gorman said Threemile usually takes advantage of the option to give the money to programs of its choice.

"They're really big into the 4-H and FFA programs," he said.

Threemile also was billed \$3,596.40 for the Boardman Fire bond.

The largest taxpayer in the county, Amazon, currently has five separate locations. The first two, which Gorman referred to as Lewis & Clark I and Rippee Rd., both have multiple standard enterprise zone exemptions. These exemptions are from agreements made in 2013, 2014 and 2016. The 2013 and 2014 exemptions have expired, but the 2016 agreements still have a substantial amount of exemption and will expire in 2023. Amazon requested a graduated payment schedule with the payments to CREZ II to increase during the exemption. In addition to the enterprise zone payments, the two sites paid bond amounts of \$29,986.48 and \$16,874.80, respectively. Those two sites will be on the tax rolls after next year.

The remaining three Amazon sites, Lewis & Clark II, Olson Rd. and Gar Swanson Rd., all have

SIP Property	2022 Payment to Morrow County	Exempt Tax Amount	Exempt Value
Willow Creek Energy	\$21,145.74	\$320,081.85	\$19,931,990
Echo Winds	\$60,043.48	\$77,974.77	\$6,331,845
Shepard Flats	\$1,504,466.56	\$3,844,611.44	\$239,409,880
PGE Carty Co-Gen Plant	\$2,170,073.00	\$5,106,584.80	\$409,283,140
Wheatridge Wind PGE Portion	\$694,728.25	\$1,744,213.79	\$140,795,250
Wheatridge Wind NextEra Portion	\$1,805,496.37	\$4,445,941.24	\$413,867,520
Orchard Wind Project	\$129,887.48	\$487,873.37	\$39,487,130

ty is in good shape so far, having collected about 95 percent of the current year's taxes, with only \$2.9 million left to collect as of Nov. 30. The week of November 14-18 alone, he said, the county collected more than \$33 million in property taxes, with an additional \$10 million in SIP and enterprise zone payments.

The \$3.7 billion in taxable value is an increase of \$823,696,830 over last year and is mostly due to expiring exemptions, Gorman said, most notably Amazon. Residential, commercial and industrial new construction contributed, he added, along with the statutory three percent increase in assessed value, just not to the level of Amazon's expired enterprise zone exemptions.

The county's total market value of \$9.2 billion is an increase of \$1,099,435,000. That brings the certified property tax amounts to \$54,070,119.75, an increase of \$10.63 million. Of that, Morrow County's portion is \$15,363,749.17.

Gorman broke down for the board the amount of SIP and enterprise zone payments by property. Two SIP properties, Willow Creek Energy and Echo Winds, are shared with neighboring counties.

The Willow Creek Energy payment is shared with Gilliam County, with 62.5 percent allocated to Morrow County. It includes a \$40,000 per year school grant payment for the first five years; the property

amount of \$1,004,466.56 and a Community Service Fee (CSF) of \$500,000 in addition to its SIP payment. The project has four years remaining in its exemption.

Gorman added that the original project owner, Caithness, sold it in 2020 to Brookfield Renewables, a Canadian company. Brookfield Renewables have invested "a significant amount of money," he said, in a "repower" of new blades and gearboxes to get more efficiency out of the project.

"Caithness was a great partner in this project for 10 years, and so far Brookfield has been a great partner as well," Gorman added.

The Portland General Electric (PGE) Carty co-gen plant also paid a CSF of

were \$279,111.31. Total enterprise zone exempt tax amount was \$57,169,499.88 with an exempt value of \$4,033,767,140.

Columbia River Technologies (CRT) paid \$875,000 to CREZ II, with \$47,128.50 of that payment going toward the Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Boardman Park and new Boardman Fire & Rescue District bonds. CRT has a 10-year exemption with one year remaining.

Lamb Weston paid \$1,130,857.99, with \$180,857.99 of that payment for the BMCC, Boardman Park, Boardman Fire and City of Boardman bonds and \$950,000 to CREZ II. Lamb Weston's 15-year exemption has six

Enterprise Zone Property	2022 Payment EZ Payment
Columbia River Technologies	\$875,000
Lamb Weston	\$1,130,857.99
MCGG	
Threemile Project	
Amazon L&C I	\$804,807.03
Amazon Rippee Rd.	\$791,873.99
Amazon L&C II	\$5,060,000
Amazon Olson Rd.	\$2,000,000
Amazon Gar Swanson Rd.	\$2,000,000

\$500,000 and an additional amount of \$1,670,073, but the county does not share in CSF.

The Wheatridge Wind Project is divided into two portions, with PGE paying one third of the SIP fee and NextEra paying the other two thirds plus additional payments for a solar project. PGE paid a CSF of \$165,000.00 and an additional amount of \$529,728.25, while NextEra paid \$1,037,996.37 for the wind portion of its project and \$432,500.00

years remaining.

Morrow County Grain Growers (MCGG) has a standard five-year exemption for MCGG's rail grain car unloading facility at the Port of Morrow. The total investment was about \$7 million. This is their third year claiming the exemption. MCGG was billed \$1,051.89 for the Boardman Fire Bond and, per the CREZ agreement, a payment of \$30,000 is to be made to CREZ II in years four and five.

The WOF PNW

G-T closed Dec. 26

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed Monday, Dec. 26, for the Christmas holiday. The deadline for all news and ads for the Dec. 28 edition is Friday, Dec. 23, by 5 p.m.

We wish all of our readers a very merry and safe Christmas.

G-T to publish holiday photos



Residents are asked to submit photos of their homes that are lit up and decorated for the holidays. Please include the city where the home is located, and the street it is on if you choose. The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish the photos in the Dec. 21 issue.

Photos may be emailed to editor@rapidsolve.net, uploaded to Heppner.net or texted to 757-285-5792. Photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 19, to be included. For additional information, contact the Heppner G-T at 541-676-9228.

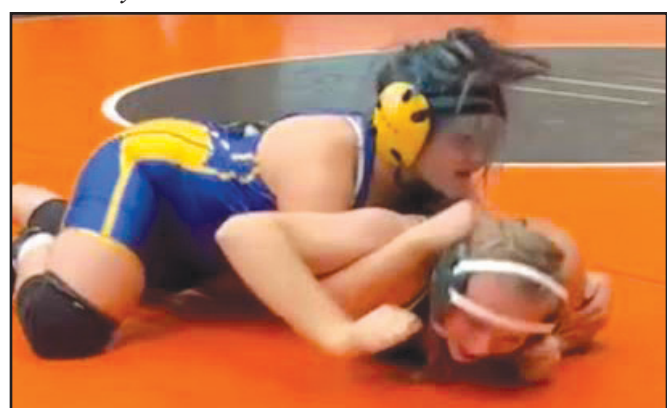
Heppner wrestlers place at Culver



Zac Brown placed fifth at 145 pounds. -Photos by Kirsti Cason



Cade Cunningham placed fourth at 220 pounds. -Photos by Kirsti Cason



Kylie Holden placed second at 155 pounds. -Photos by Kirsti Cason

Heppner wrestlers braved more bad weather and icy roads on the drive to the Culver Invitational Friday and Saturday, where three Heppner wrestlers found spots on the podium. Placing for the Mustangs were Cade Cunningham, fourth at 220 pounds; Zac Brown, fifth at 145; and Kylie Holden, second at 155 pounds.

The tournament included 25 teams from all over the state of Oregon—from Adrian to Ranier and from Joseph to Klamath Falls, just to name a few.

Heppner had 12 wrestlers participating: Owen Guerra, Landon McMahon, Tyeler Moore, Jaime Cavan-Harris, Haydn McMahon, Zac Brown, Chace Jones, Saul Lopez, Cade Cunningham, Loren Trujillo, Journey Cavan-Harris and Kylie Holden.

In the Culver Girls Invitational on Saturday, Loren Trujillo placed eighth in the 103-pound class, losing the seventh-place match by fall to Miriam Noy of Culver. Journey Cavan-Harris was beat out of fifth when she lost by fall to Sarah Estes of Mazama to place sixth at 119 pounds. Hold-

en won by fall in her first two matches only to fall to Summer Schellinger of Gilchrist in the first-place match, ultimately ending in the second-place spot.

On the men's side, the 145-pound men's bracket was by far the biggest, with 32 wrestlers. Brown lost his second match to Ryon Martinho of Illinois Valley, which meant a lot of wrestling to get back to placing rounds. He worked his way through the consolation rounds, finally winning the fifth-place match by fall over Everett Lerma of La Pine. He ended up with seven matches during the tournament and a well-deserved spot on the podium.

Cunningham received a bye on his first round and won his second match by technical fall over Bennie Ayala of Irrigon. He then fought his way to the third-place match, placing fourth when Clancy Rutledge of Culver won the match by decision.

The Heppner team will be at the Tri County Tournament in Echo Dec. 14 and will travel to Elgin for the Elgin Memorial Classic this Friday and Saturday.

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