

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MORROW PROBATE DEPARTMENT

NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned individual has been appointed personal representative of the estate of Richard Keith Skoubo, deceased. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the undersigned personal representative in care of the law office of Bendixsen Law, P.C., attorneys for the personal representative at 245 E. Main St. Suite E, Hermiston, OR 97838, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the record of the court, the personal representative, or the attorneys for the personal representative.

Dates and first published on November 30, 2022.

(s) Ella Skoubo Personal Representative c/o Cameron Bendixsen, Attorney for Personal Representative Bendixsen Law, P.C. 245 E. Main St. Suite E Hermiston, OR 97838 Tele: 541-567-5564 Published: November 30, December 7, 14, 2022

SWCD Annual Meeting

The Morrow SWCD will hold the annual meeting for fiscal year 2021-2022 on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 beginning at 6:30 PM at the Ag Service Center in Heppner to report activities and give a financial review for the year. To join via Zoom or conference call, please contact the SWCD beforehand at 541-676-5452. Meetings of the Morrow SWCD are open to the public. published: December 14, 21, 218, 2022

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Kay's Essay:



"Years ago, my young son, Roy Proctor, won a t-shirt at the Hermiston, OR Safeway for placing in the Oreo stacking contest. Such fun! Shortly after, he was diagnosed with a devastating blood disease and now at age 34 is 3,000 miles away from Oregon being treated for leukemia. Roy was blessed over the years with such kind care from medical support staff. I wish that 110 huge gift baskets of Oreos and other special treats could be delivered to medical support staff at the University of Pennsylvania Hematology Cancer Clinic where he is receiving his care to say thank you for what you do."

Tax values see increase

-Continued from PAGE ONE Olson Rd. agreement was finalized in 2018 and began its exemption in 2020. The Gar Swanson Rd agreement was finalized in 2020, and this is the first year of its exemption.

Gorman said all three of these agreements have a payment schedule of \$1 million per building or data center located at that site, with a minimum payment of \$2 million per year. There is also an additional payment calculation of \$25 million times the property tax rate for that area in that year. The \$25 million is indexed 3 percent per year, similar to the Community Service Fee related to the SIP Program.

Morrow County Commissioner Don Russell asked for clarification on whether there are additional payments for smaller buildings at the site. Gorman said there are, and added that, at the Lewis and Clark II site, there is a smaller building pays \$60,000 per Amazon's agreement.

"They're miniscule in size to their normal buildings, physically," he said. "As far as what's inside, I don't know."

Gorman also said that standard enterprise zone exemptions of three to five years tend to have a larger exemption percentage than long term rural enterprise zone exemptions and that analyzing a particular company's percent of exemption on a given year can be misleading due to each individual payment structure. The percent of exemption will change from year to year, he said, and a full analysis should be performed at the end of the exemption period to get the best picture of the total exemptions.

"Not all the information is apples to apples," he added.

In general property taxes, Gorman said the combined total tax rate for properties inside the Boardman city limits is lower this year because the city levied a much lower bond amount, while the outer Boardman and Irrigon areas are a few cents lower than last year.

Within the Heppner city limits, the tax rate decreased a little, he said, but market values increased a whopping 30 percent, resulting in many properties having compression reduced due to the City of Heppner's high tax rate.

"Sale prices have just been increasing exorbitantly here in the south end of the county, mostly due to there's no inventory, so if a decent house comes up for sale, it's almost a bidding war to get to it," Gorman told the commissioners. "Some properties saw significant tax increases even though nothing had changed on the property."

He said he is not aware of any appeals as yet, but that his office is working with at least one property owner to justify the increase and why the value on his property is what it should be.

Gorman added that he didn't want to pick on the local government, especially the current government, which isn't responsible for it, but Heppner's tax rate is above the Measure 5 limit of \$10 for local government.

Meanwhile, properties within the Ione School District boundary have an increased tax rate of about \$.42 due to an appeal by Pacific Gas Transmission, which is a major contributor of value for the school district. The tax rates for rural South Morrow are a few cents lower than last year.

Gorman ended his presentation by pointing out that the increase in Real Market Value (RMV) is mostly from new industrial and utility value and that the reason the taxable value increase (AV) is not proportional to RMV is because a number of the new industrial and utility properties have received a property tax exemption, either through the Enterprise Zone Program or the Strategic Investment Program.

Several food processing plants, ethanol producing plants and data centers have contributed to the industrial growth, with four major wind production projects and a large scale gas-fired power plant contributing to the utility component of value. Gorman added that there has been substantial residential and commercial value growth throughout the north end of the county, but not to the extent of the industrial and utility value growth.

Gorman said he expects values to continue to increase due to new residential, commercial and industrial development as well as expiring exemptions.

"Even though interest rates have gone up, there are still people who need houses. And they're still building houses and they're still selling houses and people are still buying houses," he said. "There's still a large number of land development going on, with partition plats and subdivision plats—a hundred-lot subdivision in Boardman. A hundred lots. That's huge."

Morrow County Board of Commissioner Chair Jim Doherty addressed rising property values and pointed out that Morrow County was at one time in his tenure both third highest average income in the state and third highest in poverty level.

"You talk about the home values going up, and we have that struggle," he said, adding that the RMV had almost doubled during his time on the commission. "We also lead the state by a factor of 10x in trailer homes."

"So, we still have that gap in the middle, right?" he added. "It's tough to move into that middle housing, and I don't know how we get there, but we gotta make sure, as we celebrate our successes, that everybody comes along."

"Part of the problem in the south end of the county is available inventory, or lack thereof. There isn't any," Gorman replied, pointing out that the lack of housing often means a bidding war when something decent does come on the market. "And I'm not just picking Heppner. Ione and Lexington are facing the same issues, and all three communities are facing wastewater issues. Maybe with some of these enterprise zone monies and SIP monies, we can help that, which would in turn help that middle range of people

to be able to afford to have a home."

Doherty pointed out that there were also "wastewater issues" in north county. Gorman said he had received several phone calls from people around Boardman who had nitrate issues with their water and wanted to know why their property value had gone up. He said that market value is based on sales, and sales have not indicated that they are affected by the nitrate issues.

"If you know something I don't, if you have some information and think it is affecting the market, come talk to me."

In other business, the board appoint Morrow County Planner Tamra Mabbott as an alternate to the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) committee. Morrow County Commission Vice Chair Melissa Lindsay recapped the history of the voting body for the LUBGWMA and said she brought it up because there potentially was a meeting scheduled before swear-in of the commissioners elect, "It being a little unknown what the governance will look like," she added.

She said she was fine with appointing a temporary alternate and allowing the new commission to give a permanent assignment, but she thought it was important to "at least get it in place should there be a meeting." She recommended Mabbott because she was already heavily involved in LUBGWMA and had been attending meetings and assisting Morrow and Umatilla county commissioners.

"I'm happy to serve in an interim capacity, just to keep a Morrow County seat at the table, and further, if that's what the new board chooses. If not, that's okay



Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director-Contributed Photo

as well," Mabbott said, adding that she does regularly attend and has been in and out of those meetings for a number of years.

"I don't want to step on any toes, it's just the importance of these votes," said Lindsay. "I didn't want to miss out on anything as a county."

The board voted unanimously to appoint Mabbott as an alternate with an expiration of Jan. 15 to allow the new board to consider how they wanted to fill that seat.

In other business, the commissioners voted 2-1 to approve the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) Solar Agreement with Tower Solar, LLC. Lindsay voted against the approval, saying she had made her comments during a previous meeting. The 15-year PILOT program allows Tower Solar to make a yearly payment in lieu of taxes of \$6,250 per MWac (megawatt alternating current) without energy storage or \$7,000 per MWac with energy storage.

Ione FFA continues Christmas tree, wreath sales



Pictured L-R are Ione FFA members working on building wreaths in the school shop: Mika Limberg, Madison Orem, Liam Heideman, Carter Eynetich, Kelly Doherty and Lizzie Doherty. -Photo by Erin Heideman

The Ione FFA chapter will continue selling Christmas trees and wreaths from Ione Community School through Thursday, Dec. 16.

Trees will cost \$55-\$65 and range in size from five to 7.5 feet. Wreaths

will be \$30 and are being handmade by high school ag students.

Some delivery in town is available. Contact advisor, Erin Heideman,

at erin.heideman@ionesd.org or call 541-422-7542 for more information.

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