

# Vacant commissioner seat

-Continued from PAGE ONE  
bring it back to the board for approval.

The board also heard from Mabbott regarding a request for amendment on the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) project. The Energy Facility Siting Council had received the request, which would alter the site boundary to accommodate a relocation of the transmission lines on three properties in Morrow County, as well as some refinement to the location of project access roads within Morrow County.

"They have asked the county, as they do any local jurisdiction, for a list of applicable, substantive criteria that would apply to that amendment," explained Mabbott.

She said the nature of the amendments were primarily changing haul routes in a way that should work better for both Idaho Power and the land owner, except for one that actually reroutes the transmission line. Some haul routes are permanent for maintenance, and some will be removed once the work is completed.

The letter came before the board not only because they are the county's governing body, but also because the board serves as a Special Advisory Group for the B2H project.

Mabbott said the planning department has been meeting with Idaho Power regularly through the process, and about 70 different properties in the county will be affected.

The board of commissioners also received more questions from community-based organization Oregon Rural Action about the water nitrate issue and efforts to provide translation services to Spanish speakers. The meeting last Wednesday began with working out some kinks in the Zoom translation service the county has implemented for its meetings.

Ana Maria Rodriguez, ORA community organizer, addressed the board with questions in Spanish. Kelly Doherty of Boardman then read them over in English.

"Thank you so much for so quickly setting up the caption translation last week of the commissioners' meeting. What are the next steps for being able to hear as well as read the translation? Will you provide translated agendas and information packets ahead of time? This would help Spanish speakers decide to come to the meetings based on the agenda topics," read Doherty. "Does the county plan to post meeting Zoom recordings in the future? That would help both Spanish and English speak-

ers participate in county meetings. Wednesdays at 9 a.m., most folks are at work. Also wondering if the closed caption box can be enlarged. It's very hard to read, especially on a small phone or device."

Nelson, who was working to implement the Zoom translation system, admitted the program wasn't perfect but said he wanted to reach a solution.

"I'm willing to work with you. If there are any issues after the meeting or later on, if we want to test this out again, we can absolutely do it," said Nelson. "We're going to try to make this work as well as possible. It's getting better but it is new to us, too, so I appreciate that we're testing this out right away."

As for the other questions, such as translated agendas and meeting packets, Sykes said they would have to take it under consideration.

"We're not prepared to tackle that right at this time," he said.

Boardman man Mike Brandt asked whether any contracts had been drawn up or signed with the state to ensure continuous water delivery service. Sykes said that question would need to be referred to Public Health Director Robin Canaday, but said he had met with the governor's representative the day before and received assurances from her.

"We spent a lot of time talking about water, and they're on board," said Sykes. "I told her to make sure that her office stays in contact so we don't get confusion on the handoff to them about the water," Sykes added later in the meeting.

Raymond Akers, also from Boardman, referenced a report by County Clerk Bobbi Childers at a previous meeting and expressed confusion.

"It's not settling right with me, and I just hope for some clarification," said Akers. "Is it an attempt to not provide papers or making them cost so much that nobody in their right mind would ask for them?"

Sykes said he was unclear on what records Akers was asking for. Akers said there was a reference to public records requests in which she either didn't have the records or it would take "too much time for her to put the effort into getting them for the records request," according to Akers.

"By law, election stuff, there's a lot of stuff she should already have," added Akers. "I'm just curious; if she doesn't have it, why, and if that was just a cop-out to try to get it to where people aren't going to ask

for that kind of information."

"There's a procedure for how to provide those documents and how it's done," said Sykes. "We can discuss it with her, but as far as I know, she said she knows the procedure and she's following it."

"There's also a procedure to go through for you, or any citizen," Sykes added, "on what to do if you feel like you're not getting the documents."

"I just figured I'd bring it through you folks first to see if you can get me some clarification what that conversation was all about," replied Akers. "It sounded like a cover-up happening, so I was just hoping to get some clarification, and I guess I haven't."

Akers appeared to be referencing Childers's regular department report at the Jan. 25 meeting, at which Sykes had asked Childers about her fee schedule.

"It's not about whether you're going to do it or not," said Sykes. "It's about how much time does it take, and are those fees part of our fee schedule and available so the public can see that this is what it's going to cost if I make a large request from any department."

Childers had responded that her fee schedule is set by statute but that there was no easy answer to the cost. She referenced a large request she had received.

"They want every image of every ballot. They want all my back side on my machine, how it works, how many times it's been serviced," she said. "Some of this is available easily. Those are reports that come off my system. Do I have heartache about giving those up? I don't."

"As far as staff time, we're already paying our people to work," she said. "I look at it as this; one, it's our job. Two, if it's readily available and we can do it, we just get it together and ship it out. The only time you're going to see me charge staff time is if it's something so large that it's going to take days."

"But when you start getting into these detailed things that they want," Childers continued. "They want my sorter information. I don't have a sorter. Images off of a thumb drive from your machine. They want those. Well, I don't have that piece. That's another \$4,000 a year for maintenance, so I don't buy it. I would have to go over and scan every ballot."

"If they will take a report, that's easy. But when you ask me to scan every ballot that I got, that's another story," she said.

# Heppner FBLA places in top 10



Heppner FBLA students took top spots at the regional leadership conference in La Grande recently. Back L-R: Karver Wilkins, Paul Lindsay, Cameron Proudfoot, Trevor Nichols, Mason Orem, Owen Cunningham, Irelynn Kollman and Morgan Cutsforth. Front L-R: Caleb George and Katie Spivey. Not pictured: Saul Lopez, Caden George, Brooklyn Wilson and Jackson Coiner. -Contributed photo

On Feb. 2, the Heppner FBLA chapter traveled to La Grande to compete in the Blue Mountain Region Leadership Conference hosted by Eastern Oregon University.

Regardless of the 5 a.m. departure time with FBLA Advisor Mrs. Jean Collins, all the Heppner students who attended the

conference excelled in their events, receiving awards of excellence.

Members were given a prompt and then had 20 minutes to brainstorm before giving a presentation.

Owen Cunningham, a freshman, placed 10<sup>th</sup> in Agribusiness.

Paul Lindsay and Brooklyn Wilson placed

first in Entrepreneurship. Karver Wilkins placed third, and Jackson Coiner and Mason Orem placed fifth.

Katie Spivey placed fifth in Introduction to Event Planning.

Morgan Cutsforth and Irelynn Kollman placed fourth in Marketing.

Heppner especially excelled in Sports Management and Entertainment. Cameron Proudfoot, Caden George and Trevor Nichols placed first. Mason Orem, Jackson Coiner and Caleb George placed third, and Saul Lopez placed fourth.

Overall, the students said they had a lot of fun, all while remaining respectful and classy in representing their school. The top 10 places in each event are all qualified to go to the FBLA State Competition April 6-9 at the Doubletree and Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

# Ione FFA successful at district convention



Ione FFA Advisor Erin Heideman with students who attended the district convention at the Workforce Development Center in Boardman with awards and lunch at the Sage Center. Pictured L-R: Kelly Doherty, Advisor Erin Heideman, Delaney Stefani, Gage Heideman, Jolene Serrano, Madison Orem, Lizzy Doherty and Carter Eynetich. Not pictured, Carson Eynetich. -Contributed photo

Members of the Ione FFA Chapter competed at the 2023 District FFA Convention held at the Workforce Development Center in Boardman Thursday, Jan. 26.

Madison Orem earned first place in advanced portfolio. In beginning portfolio, Gage Heideman earned first, Miley Strzelewicz second, Isabelle Ogden fifth, and Isabelle Ogden sixth.

Madison and Gage will compete at the State FFA Convention in March.

In advanced job interview, first place went to Madison Orem and twelfth place to Carson Eynetich.

In beginning job interview, Gage Heideman earned third place and Carter Eynetich earned fifth place.

Madison will represent Ione at the sectional contest

in advanced job interviews on Feb. 15 at Eastern Oregon University. Beginners don't advance.

Ione FFA was chartered in 2015 and is part of the Oregon FFA Association, Blue Mountain District. The district consists of Pilot Rock, Athena-Weston, Milton-Freewater, Hermiston, Pendleton, Irrigon, Heppner, Boardman, Stanfield, Echo and Ione.

# Man arrested for trespass at Heppner High Monday

A man is in custody after a concerning incident at Heppner High School on Monday.

Witnesses reported that the high school was secured and students confined to classrooms shortly after school began Monday. Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report of a white male who was walking around the Ag building and talking to himself.

Morrow County Undersheriff Brian Snyder confirmed that the school was placed in secure status as a safety precaution due to the suspicious behavior of the subject in question. It does not appear that students or staff were ever in any danger.

MCSO responded and arrested Frank Robert Martineau, 34, on three counts of criminal trespass II. Snyder said that, at the time of the arrest, there were no signs of current drug use by Martineau.

Martineau is currently in custody at Umatilla County Jail without bail.

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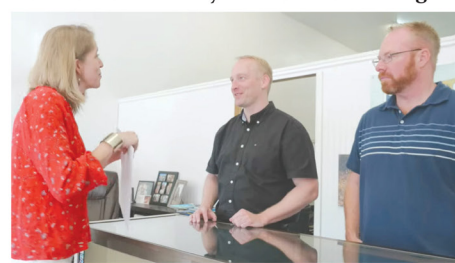
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