

Heppner council considers new security cameras

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 computer scientists. The company is based in California, but Malec said he specializes in government and education spaces in Eastern Oregon.

Malec said that Arlington, which has a population of about 600, has 23 Verkada cameras set up throughout the town. He told the council that traditional cameras have pieces that need to be maintained, such as a network video recorder (NVR) or digital video recorder (DVR), and each camera would require its own NVR/DVR at each location.

Verkada, on the other hand, is hybrid cloud, which means the feed is stored on the camera itself but also able to be accessed and stored on the cloud remotely, so they don't need NVRs. All cameras have a 10-year hardware warranty and automatic firmware and software updates with U.S.-based technical support and unlimited archives.

The cameras also have three different alerts for if the cameras go down, or if someone tries to tamper with a camera or tries to spray over or otherwise block the camera's view.

"The goal there is to make sure that you're never actually missing footage," said Malec.

He also demonstrated how to access the video feeds remotely, showing the council how they could select clips based on time frames or the camera's motion detector, and how to share the footage or archive it for later use.

He also said live feeds from any of the cameras could be embedded in the city's website.

City Manager Kraig Cutsforth told the council he was considered about seven cameras. One would be placed on city hall pointing down Main, one on another building pointing down Main, which would have a feed the public could access, two or three at Heppner City Park, one or two at Hager Park, and one on Thompson Square.

With all of the features included and a 10-year contract period, the cost would come to about \$20,000.

"But that covers everything, and they are nice looking cameras," said Cutsforth. "We have internet at all of those locations except Hager Park, and we could get that easy enough."

He added that the Verkada cameras also have capability for facial recognition and license plate recognition.

Heppner Councilor Dale Bates said he had sat in on some of the meetings and was thoroughly impressed with Verkada.

"I know the pricing seems a little high when you first look at it, but in the long scheme of things, I don't think it's that bad of a deal," said Bates, adding that Verkada cameras would give the city a lot of security and have greater capabilities while using far less bandwidth than the current camera. "I'm excited about this, and I'd like to see this move forward."

"Now is the time to buy these," said Bates. "Now is the time. Five years down the road, I think we're going to be very happy that we did."

The council decided to have Cutsforth move forward with the project and gather more information about the packages Verkada has available.

Street project update
 Based on a recommendation from the Heppner Utilities Commission, the

council voted to close out Premier's contract on the street project. The contract still had about \$20,000 worth of work left, which was for painting crosswalks, stop bars and center striping on the streets. Due to that, the contract had been held open for some time.

The council had earlier decided against center striping but still wanted the crosswalks and stop bars. While the contract with Premier had been for painting, the utilities commission discussed the merits of painting versus torch downs. Torch downs refer to preformed thermoplastic markings that are melted onto the road's surface using a torch. The city workers would be able to apply the torch downs.

Applying torch downs will take a lot of time for city workers, but torch down striping is more durable than paint, and Oregon Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) will cover the cost of materials. The utilities commission had recommended ordering the materials and then closing out the project so the city could get the funding.

Cutsforth said he and Heppner Public Works Director Chad Doherty were ready to order the torch down stop crossings.

"And then our crew, at their leisure, can put those down in the spots they want and not have the lines striped in the middle, and release Premier from their contract," said Cutsforth. "At the last council meeting, that was a little reversed, but I'm coming back with a recommendation from the utilities commission saying they would like to go that way, so I'm here to get clarity."

The council voted unanimously to move forward with torch downs and close out the Premier contract.

Also on the subject of streets, the council approved an intergovernmental agreement with Morrow County to chip seal and/or crack seal city streets including Barratt, Water, Quaid, Elder, some of South Court, Riverside and Bruce Kelly Way.

Chad Doherty told the council that ODOT has a company that's about to come in and tear up all the sidewalk approaches.

"It's gonna be a mess," he said.

He said March 27 was the date he was told that would start. He also said they would be putting in lighted crosswalks across Main at Baltimore and Quaid, along with a redo of the Quaid intersection.

Investments and properties

In other business, the council approved a draft investment policy for the City of Heppner, which guides the city's practices in investing financial assets of general funds. The objectives of the policy are preservation of capital, enough liquidity to meet reasonably anticipated operating requirements, and return on investment, while discouraging active trading and turnover of invest-



Heppner Mayor Corey Sweeney Swearing in John Doherty. -Contributed photos

ments. "This is not required of us, but I think it's best practice," said Cutsforth. "The reason we're doing it is to try to get five percent higher return on some of our quote, 'unused money.'"

He added that the policy makes certain that the city isn't making high-risk investments, and that investments would need to carry Aa or AA ratings.

The policy also states that investment maturity can't exceed five years, with 50 percent required to have maturity in less than 2.5 years and 25 percent of the portfolio to mature in less than 90 days.

"We're not looking at long-term investments. We're not here to keep money invested for the city," said Cutsforth. "We're here to keep it safe and do the best we can in what is a reasonable time frame—because the city doesn't need to retire."

The council also voted to proceed with the purchase of a property on Chase and Center streets and with the cleanup of the property once purchased. The property has a burned-out house that the city would like to see removed. Cutsforth told the council he is in the

process of purchasing the property and that, once the city owns it, it will save a lot of time getting the property cleaned up.

"Otherwise, we'll have to go through a process like we did a few years ago, and we'll end up paying somebody to clear that up," said Cutsforth, referring to a previous property on Linden Way, on which the house had burned and cleanup had been delayed.

Cutsforth also said he had talked with Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group, and they would give up to \$20,000 for the removal of the burned house.

"It will rid us of a nuisance and speed us up tremendously on time," he said. "We'll end up with a plot which, if we want to keep it, we can, if we want to sell it, we can."

Cutsforth did say it was not a very buildable lot, but he estimated the city would only lose two to five thousand dollars if they sold the property, which the city would also lose if they didn't purchase the property.

"This will be a much cleaner thing, and it will be under the control of the council," he added.

Ione business honored at state FFA convention



At the State FFA Convention in Redmond last week, JVB Dairy and John and Janna Vanden Brink were awarded the State FFA Distinguished Service Award. They were nominated for the honor by the Irrigon, Ione, Heppner and Riverside FFA chapters. Pictured are the Vanden Brinks (center) with the four Morrow County FFA chapters and advisors who attended the convention. -Contributed photo

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Funeral Notice

Gayla Jones—A memorial service will be held for Gayla Jones on Saturday, March 25, at 11 a.m. at the Church of Latter-day Saints in Lexington.

Gayla Lee Hodson Kelsey Snell Jones passed away on Jan. 17, 2023, at

Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner at the age of 88. Gayla was born on Oct. 1, 1934, in Greybull, WY, daughter of Willis and Pearl Hodson.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made to the charity of your choice.

Grow 'Em and Show 'Em swine group holds first meeting



By Harper Coiner, Club Reporter

On March 16, the swine 4-H group from Grow 'Em and Show 'Em had its first species meeting. Before the meeting, they took a trip to Neiffer Ranch in Lexington. At the ranch, Jake and Lara Neiffer showed them the compost casa where they breed and raise their pigs. The Neiffers shared a lot of facts about pigs.

After they made the trip, they made their way back to the NRCS office. First, they elected a

vice-president, a president and a news reporter. The president is Natalie Piper, the vice president is Jace Wilson, and the news reporters are Harper Coiner and Keller Sweeney.

Club leaders Kacey Lathrop and Jennifer Wilson also did a presentation on what the pens need to look like, how to know when a pig is sick and what supplies are needed.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 16 at 4 p.m. at the NRCS office.

Country club ladies kick off season April 4

The Willow Creek Country Club ladies board invites all lady golfers to its kickoff breakfast and biannual meeting April 4.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. with breakfast and

meeting at 9 a.m. The ladies will play a scramble immediately following the meeting. Cost of joining ladies Tuesday play for the year is \$30.

Nominations now open for Town and Country Awards



Dale Bates receives the Lifetime Achievement Award at last year's Town and Country event. -File Photo

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for this year's Town & Country Awards.

The chamber will host the Town & Country Awards

banquet on Thursday, May 4, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Gilliam and Bisbee Event Center. This annual event honors citizens that go above and beyond to make Heppner a beautiful, thriving community.

Awards include Students of the Year, Citizen/Educator of the Year, Woman of the Year, Man of the Year, Business of the Year and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Information on how to sponsor this year's event, ticket sales and nomination forms can be found at www.heppnerchamber.com/awards. Copies of nomination forms can also be found at Heppner City Hall and the chamber office.

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