

# Funding Ione wastewater system

-Continued from PAGE ONE

Skow also recognized Ione Volunteer Planner Jerry Rietmann for his role in the project.

“Jerry is the driving force behind the city’s success in achieving this goal. He has given so much of his time over the last several years by meeting with elected officials and the DEQ, learning and ensuring the policies and regulations regarding the wastewater system were precisely followed, helping secure funding, and so much more,” Skow said. “Without his driving force, this project would not have been achieved”

“I want to thank Morrow County and Solutions Oregon for helping in building a dialogue with Oregon DEQ and for DEQ’s willingness to find a reasonable solution for the city,” said Rietmann. “The new wastewater system will ensure that Ione’s home values will not be affected by failed septic systems and folks will be able to invest with confidence in Ione’s housing market.”

# Dinner and Bingo Sunday in Lexington

The Holly Rebekah Lodge in Lexington will again be hosting dinner and bingo this Sunday, April 30.

The dinner of baked spaghetti will begin at 3 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person.

Bingo play will begin at 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 for 10 bingo cards or 50 cents per card.

The ladies of Holly Rebekah host dinner and bingo the last Sunday of each month. The lodge is located at 135 W. Main St. in Lexington.

## ~ Letters to the Editor ~

### Vote for change, not business as usual

My name is John Murray. I have been serving you as Port commissioner for the last 3½ years and am asking for your support and vote now. I am a pharmacist and owner of Murray Drugs in Heppner, Boardman and Condon, serving the Morrow County communities of Irrigon, Boardman, Heppner, Ione and Lexington.

You will likely find that I am passionate about the Port and outspoken when I believe there are issues you, the public, should know about. We are a fully public port, not marginally or reluctantly, we are fully a public port that must conform to all the laws and ethics of the State of Oregon. I’m proud that at the Boardman candidate’s forum for position #4 on April 17, I was called out as being the only one to dissent from previously unanimous board decisions. If you want “business as usual” then I may not be your candidate.

I believe you as the public have the right and should expect to see in your public servants the qualities of transparency, accountability, responsible economic growth, equity in representation, ethics and integrity. These are not lofty goals we hope to attain in a year or two, they are the minimum requirements to run a multi-billion-dollar port.

For the 38 years I have been married to Ann, I have listened to and admired her father Larry Lindsay’s 52 years of service to the Port. It is time we get back to the values the Port was founded on and remember the county-wide focus and tax relief for its citizens that inspired its founding. I feel I am the best candidate to bring county-wide unity for each community to understand the needs of others and then work together in collaboration, not competition.

I care about the Port of Morrow, the people in Morrow County it serves and the employees who work here. I am also proud of the Port for the good it has brought to us; all our communities have benefitted from its economic prosperity. But as we know, the Port has had its challenges, too.

In my opinion, in the last 10 years, the port grew at a pace it could not sustain. One has only to look at wastewater recycling and disposal to see the most serious issue facing the port, and us as people who live here. Currently the DEQ has fined the port \$3.1 million and halted adding any additional wastewater to the Port’s disposal system until a secondary water treatment system is operational. This project is top priority and set for completion, God willing, in 2025.

A second issue I believe is important are the significant conflicts of interest with two of the port commissioners serving currently, one of which is up for reelection now. Having owners on the Port commission of a fiber-optic company that serves, makes money from, and decides on the datacenters located at the Port calls into question its integrity and professionalism. In small counties I suppose leaders can and do serve on multiple boards, which can at times conflict, but not 60 percent of the time as has been the case these last five months. One percent of the time, OK,

declare it, step aside of the issue at hand and then rejoin the meeting when that item of business is done. How does a governing body function with 60 percent rate of declared conflict of interest from 40 percent of its board? Change is needed.

I am proud of the Port of Morrow and the employees who work here. I am also proud of our business partners and the relationship we have with them. I am pro-business, but it needs to be done responsibly.

- I commit to you:
1. transparency and accountability, for such issues as wastewater management.
  2. Responsible economic growth, to avoid such issues as private property rights disputes and road right of way issues.
  3. County-wide representation, to increase understanding and to build unity and not division.

I like candidate Doherty’s idea of modifying the City-County-Port meetings to be *Cities-County-Port* meetings to include all cities in the county so that the needs of all cities are known for such times as CREZ II and CREZ III funds dispersals.

As I mentioned earlier, I am passionate about the success of the Port of Morrow and outspoken on issues I think are important and that affect the integrity and professionalism of the Port. I ask for your vote and support but, if I am not your preferred candidate, then vote for Wes or Jonathan and vote for Kelly Doherty, who has no conflict of interest. Vote for change and not business as usual.

Sincerely,  
John Murray  
Heppner, OR

### It’s time for independent thinking at the Port

A recurring theme became clear at the recent candidate forums. Marvin Padberg would have you believe that if you don’t vote for him, you must be anti-business and anti-growth. I did not hear any of the other candidates debating against economic development; they just offered it can be achieved in a moral, ethical and more thoughtful manner that benefits Morrow County citizens.

While the Port of Morrow has done a great job of bringing businesses into Boardman, Morrow County is a lot bigger than that. I don’t believe the message that the other four communities have been economically blessed since Marvin first became a commissioner. I would say that some of those communities may have declined, in fact. Drive down main streets and one can see empty buildings and closed restaurants. It doesn’t seem like bragging rights.

The Port now says they are going to fix their part of the nitrate issues, spending in excess of 600 million dollars, and become a good partner, doing what should have all along. I personally don’t trust anybody that has to get caught before they finally plan to do what is right. What would this project have cost 10 or 30 years ago? We will never know but can be guaranteed it would have been a lot less when first acknowledged.

In today’s political climate it is disheartening to see our POM Commissioners using the Biden playbook; blaming the past


county commissioners and using them as punching bags for their own missteps. They weren’t the ones who allowed their staff to continue to pollute our waters, lie about their actions and blame the farmers for their shortcomings. Finger pointing instead of accountability is not leadership.

I am tired of the conflicts of interest investigations, judicial department investigations and conversations surrounding Mr. Padberg and his business partners. How is it that so few businesses other than Amazon have been located into Morrow County of late, benefitting him personally and extensively? How is it beneficial to Morrow County that so many of the votes of this board should have had or have had his declaration of conflict and non-votes, to personal gain? I believe good decisions can be made without so much personal conflict at the table.

Why is the POM Commission being filled with yes men and not independent thinking? I fail to understand why disagreement is being held up as a negative trait in debate, answers with a desperate need to silence independent questioning. I am not impressed by claims of unanimous yes decision making for the past 30 years. Decisions that lost millions on a racetrack in Boardman, lost millions on a mill site in Heppner, millions in the red on a golf course that isn’t part of the mission and millions wasted on fines, with more coming, while not holding anyone accountable, by the current POM Commission. I serve on many boards, and dissenting votes/opinions is how we get to the greater good for more community. Isn’t that why we elect more than one member to these boards, differing perspectives should be welcomed in good governance?

Marv is personally a good guy, but his time has passed. The good ole boy way of doing things doesn’t work anymore. My trust in him standing up for all Morrow County citizens has disappeared and I hope the people of these great communities have finally seen the light. These guys need to go, they have needed to go for some time. It’s time for people to do what is right without being forced to. It’s time for independent thinkers who will bring thoughtful decision making. Please take the time to vote. I will be voting for Kelly.

Todd Lindsay  
Heppner, OR

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MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under “Card of Thanks” at a cost of \$10. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

### In support of John Murray

Dear Editor,  
I am writing this letter in support of John Murray for Port of Morrow Commissioner.

It has been my great privilege to work in many different organizations throughout our county. These experiences have shown me what an asset the Port of Morrow (POM) is to our communities. It is important that the POM commissioners understand the needs of all communities in the county. This is a difficult task as we are all very diverse in our demographics. John Murray is a member of a county-wide board. He has displayed an equal approach to the needs of the citizens that the Morrow County Health District serves.

John Murray is a business owner and has made substantial investments in both the North and the South ends of Morrow County. John understands and supports all of Morrow County.

It is important to the residents that we support an experienced and dedicated community member who will give attention to all our needs. That person is John Murray.

Sincerely,  
Kim Cutsforth  
Heppner, OR

### Mrs. Sundquist

Sometimes my mind does not follow a particular path, which can lead to a variety of random thoughts. This morning, my mind wandered back to fifth grade and a very strict teacher by the name of Mrs. Sundquist.

After a rather joyful fourth-grade experience with a teacher who loved art and music and often let me express my talents in these areas, my transition to fifth grade was a bit of an awakening, and not a pleasant one. Mrs. Sundquist was not nearly as impressed with my artistic expression as my previous teacher. For some reason, she thought history, math and language were more important subjects. She also expected her class to follow certain rules. Her students would either toe the line or face the dreaded bald guy down the hall, aka, The Principal.

It got me thinking. I know a few people who might benefit from a little time with Mrs. Sundquist. My daydream continued...

“Now class, first we will say the Pledge of Allegiance and then we will begin our study of the Constitution of our United States. I want you all to know the importance of the... Joey, quit smelling her hair. As I was saying, the U.S. Constitution is... Hunter, we do not put things in our nose. Nancy, please sit down. And why are you tearing up Donald’s homework? To the principal’s office young lady... Now! Hillary, we’ve talked about this... threatening to kill someone is not acceptable behavior. AOC, Honey, you’re in the wrong class. Kindergarten is down the hall. Now, about the Constitution... Joey! Leave her alone!” It’s a wonderful dream.

In all seriousness, maybe a good requirement for government employment would be proof that you’re smarter than a fifth grader. Candidates would need to maintain passing grades in math, history, geography and science (particularly biology/anatomy). They must be able to recite the class rules (no lying, cheating, stealing or hitting allowed), be proficient in computer use (document security, finding emails and laptops), and know the correct use of pronouns, as well as the definitions of secure and border.

Just imagine the competency of our government. Requirements for our Commander in Chief would need to be a little more strict and include a physical agility test, including the ascension and descension of a flight of stairs. I have a feeling if the White House would employ Mrs. Sundquist for a term or two, our current situation would look a little different...and the principal’s office would be full.

Mrs. Sundquist, wherever you are...we need you.

Susie Crosby  
Heppner, OR

### Boor will look to the future

In my lifetime the Port of Morrow has grown from a small sleepy port to an impressive builder of economic growth in Morrow County. The port currently supports approximately 8,000 full-time jobs. Those jobs have great wages and benefits. The success of the port and the dollars it has put into Morrow County seems to have brought out folks with all sorts of opinions to run for port commission.

If you want, you can choose someone who is anti-growth, someone who has a list of grievances with a desire to extract some sort of retribution, or maybe you prefer someone interested in growing the disputes between different areas of the county. Those folks are all on the ballot.

I suspect most of us aren’t really interested in the troublemaking. Today it’s the data centers but just like the coal fired plant, the data centers will someday be history. We need port commissioners who will look to the future, not stay stuck in the past. We need folks who wish to serve for the sake of service, have an open mind, and appreciate that the port’s current staff are doing a great job.

I will be voting for David Boor for Port Commissioner. David has a long history in Morrow County. He has ties well beyond the Boardman area and is interested in the continued success of the port. He has the leadership skills we want in public service. I believe he will represent all the interests in the county, is interested in all the communities benefitting from the port’s success and, most importantly, he will look to the future.

I hope you will join me in voting for David Boor.

Jerry Rietmann  
Ione, OR

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