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The Morrow County Fair Starts Today



Ione school hopes to break ground on bond project this fall



Plans for the new athletic complex, which the school district hopes to place along Hwy. 74. Superintendent Tracey Johnson says the plans are a “wish list,” and may change according to funding. Right now they include a football field, track, areas for field events and 150-seat bleachers, among others. -Contributed

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Ione School District hopes to break ground on the long-awaited school bond project this fall. The \$22.5 million project will include expansion and remodel of the Ione school, along with improved parking and new athletic facilities.

Ione voters approved the 30-year, \$18.5 million bond in May of 2021. The school district chose to go for the bond that year because of the possibility of an Oregon School Improvement Match grant (OSIM) for \$4 million, as well as the expectation of an increased tax base due to investments like the TransCanada natural gas pipeline and wind projects located in the district.

The Willow Creek Farms and Shepherds Flat wind projects are under tax abatement programs right now, which will expire in 2024 and 2027, adding an expected \$215 million to the district's tax base.

The school district determined the need for the bond after receiving a grant for professional analysis on the condition of ISD facilities and long-range student needs. The report indicated a need for significant repair, modernization and upgrades in all of the district's facilities. Additional community focus groups and surveys showed priorities of school modernization,

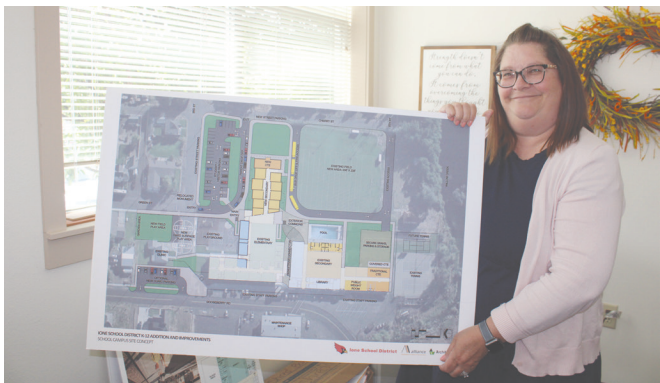
additional educational and athletic space and expanded community services.

To accommodate the additions and upgrades, the school district will need to make some major changes to the school's existing layout. Since the bond passed two years ago, ISD has been busy behind

ing across the current football field toward Cherry St.

Between that addition and 3rd Street will be new student parking and a parent drop-off lane.

Behind the addition will be a new lane for bus drop-off and fire access. Part of the football field will remain as a grassy field



New Ione School District Superintendent Tracey Johnson holds the architectural plans for the school improvements. She stands in her office, which will become the new Life Skills Space. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

the scenes, working with Alliance Management and Construction Solutions and Architects West to design plans that will fit both the district's needs and the budget.

Current plans are for both the elementary and secondary buildings to stay, though with some portions repurposed—especially on the secondary side. For instance, the site of the current school office will become a Life Skills room.

A new addition to house secondary classrooms will be built extending from the existing elementary build-

that can still be used for some practices and outdoor activities.

Johnson says the school will need to rearrange student pick-up and drop-off for the short term, as well, to accommodate the ongoing construction and ensure student safety. She says she plans to be in touch with parents before school begins at the end of the month.

The school district has also been working closely with the City of Ione to get the necessary easements and permits. One big change to the city's layout will come from the city's

vacating the portion of 3rd Street between Spring and Green streets.

With part of the current playground taken up by new construction, not to mention being inaccessible during construction, part of the vacated street will serve as a paved play area. To make up for the loss of the football field as a grassy playground, the area between Ione Community Clinic and Green Street will become a grassy playground with a garden area.

The school's new front entrance will be from the parking lot at Third Street and Green.

The loss of the Cardinal football field is an obvious concern to the community, but the school district has big plans to remedy that.

Those plans include a new athletic complex with football field, track and field facilities, and bleachers. They hope to put it along Hwy. 74 just east of town, with an entrance off H Street.

The Port of Morrow has promised both funding and help with the actual building of the facility. Morrow County Unified Recreation District also donated \$200,000 toward the track and field, along with \$25,000 to the Ione Pool.

The layout of the new athletic complex is exciting, but Johnson clarifies that the plans are more of a wish list, “just to make sure things fit.” While funding is there, the school district has to take into account rising

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Healy resigns from Port of Morrow

Port seeks to fill commission vacancy

Jerry Healy of Heppner has resigned from the Port of Morrow Commission, the Port announced this week. That leaves the Port looking to fill the position until the next district election in May 2025.

According to state law, the remaining commissioners will appoint Healy's replacement. The Port of Morrow Commission encourages all interested and eligible local residents to send a letter of interest and resume to POM Executive Director Lisa Mittelsdorf.

The Port Board of Commissioners sets policy for the Port. Commissioners must attend board of commissioners meetings on a regular basis. Regular meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. Special

meetings are also held occasionally.

Applicants must reside in and be a legally registered voter in Morrow County and meet other legal requirements. Upon receipt of the letter of interest and resume, the Port Commission will review them, proceed with interviews and make a determination by the majority of votes.

The cover letter and resume must be received at the Port Office no later than 5 p.m. on September 11, 2023, at 2 Marine Drive, P.O. Box 200, Boardman, OR 97818.

The person appointed shall serve until the next district election, which is May 2025 with a term effective date beginning July 1, 2025.

Heppner council discusses feral cat problem



Heppner city council discussed the increasing feral cat problem at last meeting - Contributed Photo

By Andrea Di Salvo

Feral cats were the hot topic of conversation at the Heppner City Council Meeting Monday night, as the City of Heppner decided in a split vote not to dedicate city resources to the capture and transport of stray cats. The city is also considering an ordinance against feeding feral cats.

“Heppner has a feral cat problem,” Heppner Interim City Manager Thomas Wolff stated to the council at the Aug. 14 meeting.

He said he had on his

desk two pictures that vividly showed the problem. One of the photos showed a residence at N. Elder St. with a feeding station for feral cats.

“With 32 cats in the picture,” he added.

The second picture showed around 25 cats and kittens around a feeding station in a back yard on Morrow St., Wolff said.

Among the problems produced by the feral cats were the time and cost of

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Emergency coordinator to speak in Ione

Stephanie Pflugrad, Eastern Regional Coordinator with the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, will be the guest speaker at the Conversation and Coffee Hour held at Ione Community Church on Aug. 24. The program will begin at 10

a.m.

Pflugrad works with the Division of Mitigation and Recovery Services and will explain the disaster mitigation process. She will also lead a question-and-answer session regarding the recent flooding in Ione.

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