

# Morrow County supports Umatilla County in appeal

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Kearns. "This is wind turbines, but EFSC sites solar projects and other sorts of projects."

"You've seen in the past when the legislature wants to super-site something," he added. "This has kind of been interpreted to be a super-siting statute even though that's not how it's worded."

Kearns said the statute appeared to be worded to accommodate local land-use requirements but that it would "totally cut local governments out of the process" if the EFSC ruling on the Umatilla County code stands.

Umatilla County intends to file its appeal on Oct. 24. Umatilla County's brief would be due Nov. 7. Morrow County's motion to intervene would be due soon after Umatilla County's filing, with the same Nov. 7 deadline for any supporting brief from Morrow County.

"Nov. 7, it's kind of all over," said Kearns.

As far as the cost to the county, Kearns said it was difficult to estimate the cost at this point, but that it would be a pretty narrow brief. He estimated the cost would be much less than \$10,000.

"There's no oral argument in this. It's just drafting the brief," he said.

The board of commissioners voted unanimously to direct Kearns to write the amicus brief and to budget up to \$10,000 for the cost.

## Other Business

Morrow County Public Health Director Robin Canaday reported that the county health department continues to work with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Dept. of Human Services (DHS), Umatilla County and Morrow County Planning Dept. on getting Morrow County domestic wells in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) tested for nitrates.

The agencies continue to provide clean drinking water via deliveries or treatment systems, depending on the nitrate level. Morrow County also participated in two community forums in August, Canaday said, with "really good turnout."

Canaday said the governor's office sent out teams to help canvass neighborhoods in the LUBGWMA with the goal being to reach all well owners and offer testing by Sept. 30. She said they are finished and now compiling all of the data.

Citizens are still able to get their wells tested by appointment. They can either call 211 or go to testmywell.oregon.gov.

According to OHA, 499 well-testing vouchers have been given in Morrow County, with 360 tests completed, 247 residents receiving water deliveries, and 28 water treatment systems installed.

The board of commis-

sioners also approved an amendment to the county's Paid Leave Oregon (PLO) policy. The board had approved the policy for the state-run program at its Aug. 16 meeting with an effective date of Sept. 3. Morrow County Human Resources Director Lindsay Grogan told the commissioners that the state statute had been revised since then, so the county's policy was updated to reflect those changes.

Specifically, employees who wish to supplement their PLO benefits with other available paid leave are no longer capped at 100 percent of their gross wage.

Grogan also said that the county had about six employees take advantage of the program so far, even though it had only been in effect for a short time.

"It's a very popular program," she said.

In her quarterly report, Grogan reported that the county has 12 active positions open but had 15 new hires for the quarter. There were also six transfers or promotions, one retirement, and 13 resignations or terminations. She said the county's employment numbers are holding pretty steady.

"It seems like we hire someone, and somebody resigns," she said. "I don't know if that's the new normal or not, but it seems like it's been pretty consistent over the last year or two."

The county currently has around 150 employees. Canaday said public health has been providing school-based public health services one day a week in Ione, and she said they have been attending various community events and offering flu vaccines. She said they had ordered the Covid-19 vaccine but had not yet received it.

"We're kind of down the priority list to get it, I guess, out here to us," she said, adding that it has been backordered. People wanting the vaccine have been put on a waiting list.

Morrow County Undersheriff Brian Snyder reported that the sheriff's office would be working with Consumer Drug Takeback Solutions to conduct a drug takeback day on Oct. 21 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the North Morrow Transfer Station. Consumer Drug Takeback Solutions is a state program and will fully fund the event.

"No questions asked. You don't even have to get out of your car," said Snyder. "It's targeted for prescription drugs, but they'll take any drug. You turn it in and you drive away."

He said the organization had been conducting drug takebacks around the state but it was the first time for Morrow County.

"We'll see what kind of response we get," he added.

Sykes asked about the drug situation in the county and if Morrow County Sheriff's Office had seen

any new drugs coming in that were alarming to law enforcement. Snyder responded that fentanyl is still a problem.

"It's not a new drug, but it's on the rise," he said, adding that a couple of recent drug overdoses had been tied back to fentanyl. He said many overdoses are from drug users not realizing the drug they're using is laced with fentanyl.

"You've got your fentanyl users, they know how strong it is and they've got it down to, for lack of a better word, a science. They know what they can take and still survive," said Snyder. "The ones that are doing the other kinds of illegal drugs like cocaine or methamphetamine, they're taking their normal hit... but now there's fentanyl laced in it, and they don't know it."

Snyder said fentanyl is extremely scary because it doesn't take much at all for a person to overdose on it.

Morrow County Road Manager Mike Haugen reported that, with the recent rains, every grader available has been out and running to get roads bladed.

The county received its new paint truck in September. Since then, Haugen said, they have been busy painting any roads that need it.

"It's pretty high-tech. It's pretty cool," he said.

Haugen also reported that Social Ridge Road was scheduled for repaving this year, and the county road crew spent two weeks paving it from Clark's Canyon to Rhea Creek. He said the intersections at either end were not yet paved due to rebuilding needed on both of them.

Morrow County took three crew members to a skills demo in Roseburg, OR. Adam Richmond took third in the backhoe, and Justin Hoeft took fourth overall in the top gun. Haugen said there were between 90 and 120 participants from around the state.

The road department also responded to an oil slick caused by 15 two-gallon jugs of oil spilled at Olson and Wilson in Boardman.

The next regular meeting of the Morrow County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Oct. 18 at 9 a.m. in Irrigon.

# Taxing districts get \$2 million

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Taxing District	Equal Dist.	Pro Rata	Total
Umatilla Radio & Data District	\$125,000	\$58,036.32	\$183,036.32
Morrow County Health District	\$125,000	\$206,541.04	\$331,541.04
Boardman Fire & Rescue	\$125,000	\$254,813.60	\$379,813.60
Irrigon Cemetery	\$125,000	\$34,890.07	\$159,890.07
Irrigon Park	\$125,000	\$138,638.54	\$263,638.54
Morrow County Unified Rec	\$125,000	\$155,673.90	\$280,673.90
North Morrow Vector Control	\$125,000	\$64,829.99	\$189,829.99
Oregon Trail Library	\$125,000	\$86,576.54	\$211,576.54

row County's alternate on the CREZ III board. "Just so there's no confusion and no discrepancy into the future."

Gorman also said there seemed to be some discrepancies in thought as to whether the money goes directly to the school district or whether it goes to the state and gets disbursed from there.

"I don't know that it really matters how the money gets disbursed back to the schools," he added. "It's just the process of getting that calculation done and making sure that it does happen."

Stokoe suggested that, with the legislation in its infancy, the CREZ board might want to seek legal counsel so it knows what its obligations are.

Sweek replied that, in his opinion, the burden is on the school.

"But we do have out there, potentially, a company that may be coming to us wanting to negotiate an agreement," added Sweek. "That company is going to want to know what that cost is going to be to them."

Morrow County Commission Chair David Sykes asked if the school's decision would have any effect on the CREZ's negotiations with a company, and Sweek

replied that he thought it would.

"The business is going to look at the whole package of what they're going to have to pay," Sweek said. "How it gets disbursed, I think they're less concerned about. But now there is this mandatory fee that they have to pay."

Sykes responded that it would then make sense for the enterprise zone to talk to the school district about the best percentage, since having a new company in the county would benefit all the districts in the long run.

"We're in a better negotiating position with a lower percentage," Sykes said.

The school support fee is only for years four and five in a standard enterprise zone agreement, and years seven to 15 in a long-term rural agreement.

The CREZ III board voted unanimously to authorize additional funds for the CREZ attorney to review the legislation before moving forward.

Also at the meeting, the City of Boardman requested bringing additional property into the enterprise zone for hotel and motel sites within the city. Sweek said

there are approximately 1,800 more acres that could be pulled into the enterprise zone. He estimated that the city was asking for about 60 acres to be added.

Hotels are the only commercial property allowed in an enterprise zone, and Gorman said he believed they were limited to a three-year abatement. While the CREZ allows for hotel development, city zoning would determine whether a hotel is actually allowed in a certain area.

Sweek said the process, which includes public hearings, would take a minimum of 45 days.

Lisa Mittelsdorf suggested that, if CREZ III decides to go through the process, they should consider whether there were other places they might want to expand.

"If we're going through the process," she said, "we want to make sure that if there's another piece somewhere that we want in, that we get it at the same time."

Sykes also questioned whether more might want to be added to benefit Boardman's new Urban Renewal Area. No decision was made at the meeting.

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