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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner**  
**GAZETTE-TIMES**  
U.S.P.S. 240-420

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For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be requested at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).

For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.

For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. 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.

## Town of Lexington December report

One significant accomplishment during the maintenance report involved the successful relocation of rocks surrounding May Day Park. The objective of this was to facilitate easier access for fire trucks to enter the adjacent firehouse. The removal of these obstructions has now ensured a more efficient response time during emergencies, ultimately enhancing the safety of the community.

Moreover, a commendable initiative was undertaken to beautify the picnic tables in May Day Park. The aim of this project was to enhance the overall ambiance and attractiveness of the park, providing residents with a more pleasant environment for gatherings and relaxation. The refurbished picnic tables now offer a visually pleasing space for visitors to enjoy.

Moving on to the fire department report, it was noted that several members of the fire department have been unavailable due to medical issues within their families. Josie Miles, who is currently 7 1/2 months pregnant, has been on bench duty since she was 5 months pregnant. This unfortunate situation has resulted in a shortage of available personnel for fire meetings and

operations. On December 5, 2023, Veronica Ferguson held a meeting with Josie where she submitted the annual summary of calls responded to by the fire department. This was done to conduct checks for the fire department members. Additionally, Josie handed in a check amounting to \$1,100.00 from the 9/11 fundraiser. The funds from this check are to be deposited into the fire fund, significantly contributing to its financial resources.

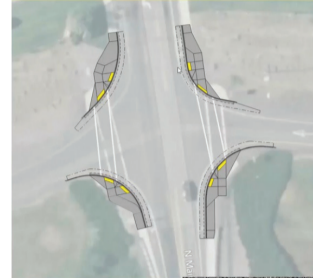
In terms of infrastructure, Larry Hess has been actively engaged in obtaining estimates from contractors for the installation of a new garage door at the front of the fire hall. However, as of now, no proposals have been received. It has come to our attention that this project may require more work than initially anticipated, which may potentially affect the timeline and budget.

Overall, the Town of Lexington has made noteworthy efforts in improving the community's safety and recreational spaces. However, the fire department is currently facing challenges due to a personnel shortage, which needs to be addressed promptly.

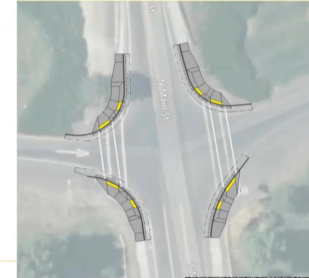
## Outdated ADA ramps in Boardman lead to crosswalk safety conversation

### Improvements

• North Intersection



• South Intersection



Blaise Exon from Jacobs Engineering giving his presentation to Boardman City Council via zoom. - Contributed photo



A google map view of the intersection S Main st and Front St. - Contributed Photo

The Boardman City Council meeting in December involved a lengthy discussion with Blaise Exon from Jacob Engineering, who is working with the ODOT project manager, Erin Winterton, regarding ramp improvements in Boardman. The schedule for these improvements is in its final design stage, and construction is set to be carried out next year.

The current ramps along I84 do not meet the standards outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Blaise Exon mentioned that the impact on traffic will be minimal, and pedestrians will be directed around the construction sites. The plan involves replacing nonstandard ramps and constructing new ones where necessary. It was emphasized that every intersection should provide an opportunity to cross the street, unless there is a legally documented closure of a crossing.

During the debate, there was discussion about whether adding crosswalks along the bridge would make crossing more dangerous. The city council questioned the need for east-west stripes on the bridge and mentioned that the crossing was discontinued due to safety concerns. There was a suggestion that Jacobs Engineering should not mark the crossing from east to west if the city of Boardman does not want it. Blaise Exon confirmed that they will not mark the crossing.

It was brought to attention that children frequently cross the intersection on the north end at 3 o'clock. A councilmember stated that people can legally cross the street anywhere, and it is the responsibility of drivers to be vigilant.

In terms of action items, Brandon Hammon was nominated as the replacement for Karen Pettigrew on the voting board of the North East Area Com-

mission of Transportation (NEACT). NEACT consists of 20 voting members and serves as a platform for local government agencies and the private sector to discuss and coordinate long-range transportation issues in the northeast Oregon region. The commission also makes recommendations to ODOT regarding special funding opportunities and programs.

It was noted that Boardman does not have a state highway.

The report provided by Chief of Police Rick Stokoe highlighted a significant increase in DUI cases in Boardman, which has resulted in the need for overtime to address this issue effectively. During a previous discussion on crosswalks, it was brought up that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is currently replacing them and constructing ramps. This action is being taken because of an ADA compliance lawsuit against the state. When questioned about the compliance of other sidewalks in Boardman, the council admitted that they are not currently ADA compliant. However, they assured attendees that these sidewalks would be addressed and made compliant during the ongoing sidewalk improvements.

A separate topic of discussion arose regarding the placement of mailboxes and who is responsible for setting the rules associated with them. It was noted that some mailboxes in the community are not even being used. Currently, the only rule in place is that mailboxes cannot be in the right of way. A community member suggested the implementation of a defined set of guidelines for mailbox placement to avoid confusion. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the postmaster holds the responsibility of determining the location of post office boxes.

## Spiritually Speaking

Father Thankachan Joseph  
St. Mary's Catholic Church Wasco



## EPIPHANY REMINDS US OFFER OURSELVES TO GOD

On the second Sunday after Christmas, the Catholic Church usually celebrates the Epiphany. Every culture, tradition, region has its own understanding of the Epiphany. The feast of Epiphany is also called "The Adoration of the Magi" or "The Manifestation of God." Epiphany celebrates Jesus's first appearance to the Gentiles, as represented by the Magi - Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. The First reading from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, 60:1-6, is chosen partly because it mentions non-Jews bringing gifts in reverence to the God of Israel. Isaiah, consoling the people in exile, speaks of the restoration of New Jerusalem from which the glory of Yahweh becomes visible even to the pagan nations. Thus, the prophet in this passage celebrates the Divine Light emanating from Jerusalem and foresees all the nations acknowledging and enjoying that Light and walking by it. As a sign of gratitude for the priceless lessons of faith offered by Jerusalem, the nations will bring wealth by land and sea, especially gold for the Temple and frankincense for the sacrifice. Similarly, the responsorial Psalm (Ps. 72), declares that all the kings of the earth will pay homage to and serve the God of Israel and their Messiah. The Gospel of Matthew (2:1-12) teaches us how Christ enhances those who carry Him in their hearts. Since the Magi came with joy in their hearts to visit the Baby Jesus, God allowed them to see wondrous things. At the same time, today's Gospel hints at different reactions to the news of Jesus's birth, foreshadowing His passion and death, as well as the risen Jesus's mandate to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). The Gospel also tells us the story of the encounter of the Magi with the evil King Herod. This encounter demonstrates three reactions to Jesus's birth: hatred, indifference, and adoration: a) Hatred: A group of people headed by Herod planned to destroy Jesus. b) Indifference: Another group, composed of priests and scribes, ignored Jesus. c) Adoration: The members of a third group -- shepherds and the magi -- adored Jesus and offered themselves to Him. The destructive group: King Herod considered Jesus a potential threat to his kingship. Herod was a cruel and selfish king who murdered his mother-in-law, wife, two brothers-in-law and three children on suspicion that they had plotted against him. In today's Gospel, Herod asks the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah is to be born. The group that ignored Christ: The scribes, the Pharisees, and the Jewish priests knew that there were nearly 500 prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the promised Messiah. Unfortunately, they were more interested in their own selfish gains than in discovering the truth. Hence, they refused to go and see the child Jesus -- even though Bethlehem was quite close to Jerusalem. The group that adored Jesus and offered Him gifts: The shepherds offered the only gifts they had: love, tears of joy, and probably woolen clothes and milk from their sheep. The Magi, probably Persian astrologers, were following the star that Balaam had predicted would rise along with the ruler's staff over the house of Jacob (Numbers 24:17). The Magi offered gold, in recognition of Jesus as the King of the Jews; frankincense, in acknowledgment that He was God, and myrrh as a symbol of His human nature. On the feast of Epiphany, let us pledge and offer our gifts, our whole selves, like the Magi, to the newborn Baby Jesus. (a) The first gift might be friendship with God. After all, the whole point of Christmas is that God's Son became one of us to redeem us and call us friends. God wants our friendship in the form of wholehearted love and devotion. (b) The second gift might be the gift of reconciliation. This gift repairs damaged relationships. It requires honesty, humility, understanding, forgiveness, and patience. (c) The third gift is the gift of peace: seeking God's peace in our own lives through prayer, the Sacramental life, and daily meditation on the Word of God. It is out of humble gratitude that we give Him from the heart our gifts of worship, prayer, singing, possessions, and time. As we give our insignificant little gifts, the good news is that God accepts them! Like the Magi offering their gifts, we offer what we have, from the heart, in response to what that Child has given us - Himself.

## Town & Country Awards Banquet

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce is currently accepting nominations for the upcoming Town and Country Awards Banquet. This annual event celebrates outstanding individuals and businesses within our community. The categories for nomination include Man, Woman, Educator, Student, and Business, with an additional recognition for Lifetime Achievement. The deadline for nominations is January 12th. To submit a nomination, please visit the official website of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce at <https://heppnerchamber.com/.../town-country-awards-banquet/> and access the nomination forms. Fill out the required information and provide details about the nominee's accomplishments and contributions. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge those who positively impact our community. The awards banquet will take place at the Gilliam & Bisbee event center, located at 106 E Main St. Heppner. The dinner will feature a Tri Tip Dinner prepared

by Alvin Liu. If you wish to attend the banquet and indulge in this delicious meal, dinner tickets can be purchased for \$28. You can secure your tickets from the Chamber Office, City Hall, or Murrays Drug. Alongside nominations and attending the event, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce is also seeking sponsorships for the Town and Country Awards Banquet. There are various sponsorship levels available. Gold Sponsorship, priced at \$1,000, includes 8 event tickets. Silver Sponsorship, priced at \$750, includes 6 event tickets, and the Bronze Sponsorship, valued at \$500, includes 4 event tickets. In addition to these sponsorship options, there is an opportunity to contribute a gift basket for the silent auction, with a minimum value of \$200. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Heppner Chamber of Commerce at 541-676-5536 or send an email to [heppnerchamber@gmail.com](mailto:heppnerchamber@gmail.com).

## Bowles announces candidacy for sheriff



Sheriff John Bowles

Sheriff John Bowles is announcing his candidacy for Morrow County Sheriff in the 2024 election. John and his wife live in

Heppner and have raised three children who have graduated from Morrow County School District. John, in the past, has served as a Reserve Deputy, 911 Dispatcher, Marine Deputy, Patrol Deputy, Search and rescue Coordinator, Probation Deputy, Emergency Manager, Undersheriff and Sheriff. He was the undersheriff to Matlack for 6 years and the Morrow County Sheriff since November 2022. He also held an executive level position with Morrow County Sheriff's office since 2016.

## Corrections

The Heppner Gazette would like to apologize, the new Deputies for Morrow County were switched on

last weeks paper. Nick Berg was on the right and Ryan Freeland was on the left.

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