

The Official Newspaper
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner

GAZETTE-TIMES

U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Published weekly by Sykes Publishing and entered as periodical matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1879. Periodical postage paid at Heppner, Oregon. Office at 177 N Main St. Telephone (541) 676-9228. Fax (541) 676-9211. E-mail: editor@rapidsolve.net or sykeschris@hotmail.com Web site: www.heppner.net. Postmaster send address changes to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Oregon 97836. Subscriptions: In Morrow County \$35/year. Outside Morrow County \$40/year. In County Senior Rate (65 years or older) \$30/year. 9 month Student student subscriptions \$35/year.

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Heppner Welcomes New Pastor



SDA Pastor Dr. Dan Solis

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is welcoming a new pastoral couple. Dr. Dan Solis and his wife Cindy are serving the Morrow County Adventist churches in Irrigon and Heppner. Dr. Solis is a graduate of Southern Adventist University, Andrews University, and Reformed Theological Seminary, from which he earned his doctorate. Mrs. Solis is a graduate of Southern Adventist University and Indiana University, where she also taught. She taught in various elementary schools for years and is now a field supervisor for student teachers from Walla Walla University. The Solis's have three adult children living in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, College Place, Washington, and Lodi, California.

Dr. Solis has served the church as a writer, authoring the church's international Bible Study guides in 2014, as well as contributing to multiple sermon collections, devotional books, and church magazines. He authored the book, Discipleship, which was published in both English and Spanish.

He directed the Indiana Community Services Disaster Response Agency for three years before accepting a professorship at Kettering College where he coordinated academic advising, taught history, and religion courses, and sponsored the drama club. Later, after moving to Washington, he directed Walla Walla Valley Camps, coached track for College Place High School and Walla Walla Valley Academy, leading WWVA to four conference/district championships, and coached cross-country for Walla Walla University, leading them to an appearance at the 2019 NAIA national championships.

The Solis family has a wide range of hobbies and interests. Dan, with his experience in cooking for the Navy, enjoys cooking and entertaining. Both Dan and Cindy share a love for gardening and playing table games. Dan also enjoys outdoor activities such as kayaking, canoeing, backpacking, camping, and sledding. On the other hand, Cindy enjoys quilting, canning, and reading.

For those who would like to hear Pastor Solis, the Heppner Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 560 Minor Street, worships at 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays. His sermons are also available on YouTube under the Irrigon SDA Church tab, or The Village Church [College Place] for older sermons.

Gazette gets new sign



Owner Chris Sykes walking out candidly out of the Gazette. -Photo by Cindi Doherty

The Heppner Gazette Times recently added a vibrant touch to Main Street with their eye-catching new sign. Standing tall and proud, this sign is hard to

miss, popping with a playful combination of green and white. The sign was painted by Andrew, Chris's brother.

Solar project

-Continued from PAGE ONE

construction, which doesn't allow enough time to address all possible problems.

At the same time, Sweeney said communication with businesses has gotten better, with energy companies becoming more proactive during initial planning stages.

"The energy companies are being proactive, reaching out to me and more, earlier and earlier, and the county really appreciates that," he said. "I've been able to say to them, 'Look, here's what you're going to run into, what issues you've got to look at,' and we've been working together."

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Chair David Sykes said he saw a two-pronged issue, the need for an agreement and also for compliance and enforcement.

"When the projects come into the county, they negotiate tax breaks," he said.

Sykes gave the example of Wheatridge West's tax abatement being contingent on meeting certain requirements—in that case, the requirements had to do with the warning lights on the turbines. "Is that something that is possible or that you would want in future tax break negotiations?"

He said the Wheatridge case provided precedent, and pointed out that such a contingency would add extra strength to enforcement later.

"I'm not saying they would not take care and do what they say they're going to do," Sykes added. "But as everybody knows, there are probably more solar projects coming, so this might be something that we're going to have to deal with."

"It was one more tool for enforcement," he said.

Mabbott said that it was a good idea to get the language right with the siting council on this project.

"We've learned a lot over the past several years," she said. "I think we're kind of ground central in Morrow County for solar. They bring a lot of revenue, the farmers enjoy it, there's just a few things we need to make sure we get right."

"We're getting smarter. We still want to be very business friendly. We just need to make sure we have the language and the documentation," Mabbott added.

Protecting Farmland

Another sticking point for county planners was the lack of detail in the solar project's Goal 3 mitigation. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 3 refers to the protection of existing farm ground for continued production.

Goal 3 requires counties to identify farmland, designate it as such on the comprehensive plan map and zone it for exclusive farm use (EFU). An EFU zone places restrictions on developments that are unrelated to agriculture in order to minimize uses that conflict with farming.

"What we've asked is that they provide additional information," said Mabbott.

The solar project's application says, essentially, that there will be tax revenue to offset impacts. However, Mabbott said the county needs more information.

"Tax revenue in and of itself does not mitigate the loss of farm ground," she said. "As you know, once a solar facility is built, that land is taken out of farm use, which is why there is an application."

Mabbott stressed that the county needs more details on what NextEra plans, "Rather than say, 'We're going to pay some taxes and the county can do with it what it wants,'" she said.

"I don't know what they'll come back with. Maybe they'll come back with a modified application and EFSC will require it to do some mitigation," Mabbott added, "or maybe we'll just get it as is."

Other Concerns

Other needs addressed in the comment letter included asking for a traffic management plan and road use agreement prior to construction. The letter also asked for more details on dust abatement during construction.

Mabbott said both the City of Boardman and Town of Lexington had expressed concerns on how the project would impact housing. Like many other areas, Morrow County is struggling to keep up with the demand for housing. Mabbott said the county has asked the company to provide additional housing data and meet with the county and cities to address the cumulative housing impact.

She also said the county will have another opportunity to provide formal comment on the project as it moves forward.

"EFSC will take these comments and add that to their staff report and then present that to the siting council, and then the siting council will come up with a preliminary site certificate, and then we get to provide comments on that," she told the commissioners.

Commissioner Jeff Wenzholz recused himself from discussion and voting, and the other commissioners voted 2-0 to approve the comment letter.

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Girls - February 24, 1:00 pm VS Regis at Regis High School



Coach Rob Wilson, Hadlie Nation, Arianna Worden, Healy Hisler, Avery Lathrop, Katie Spivey, Halle Hisler, Ava Gerry, Riley Archer, Kadie Henrichs, Zaleta Masterson Maya Payne, Morgan Cutsforth, Delaney Stefani, Lily Nichols, Coach Russ Nichols

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