



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Nitrogen removal plan for the Port of Morrow

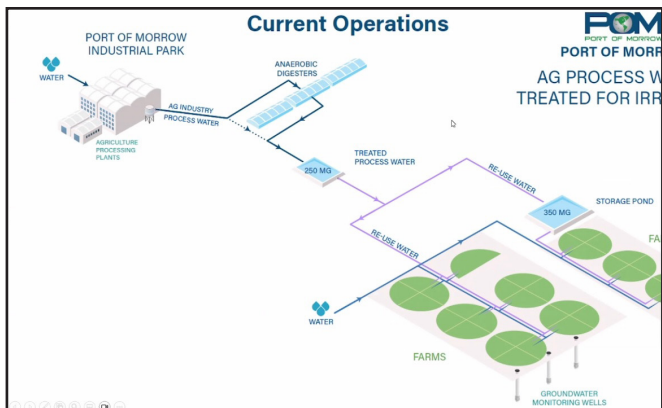
By Chris Sykes

During a Port of Morrow meeting/Information session held on March 13th, Libby Bakke, from CONSOR, presented the plans for a new nitrogen processing plant and how it will be financed. CONSOR specializes in water and transportation infrastructure in North America. Their range of services includes planning, engineering design, structural assessment, and construction services. CONSOR's main focus areas are water infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, traffic engineering, hydraulics, structural assessment, and strategic communications.

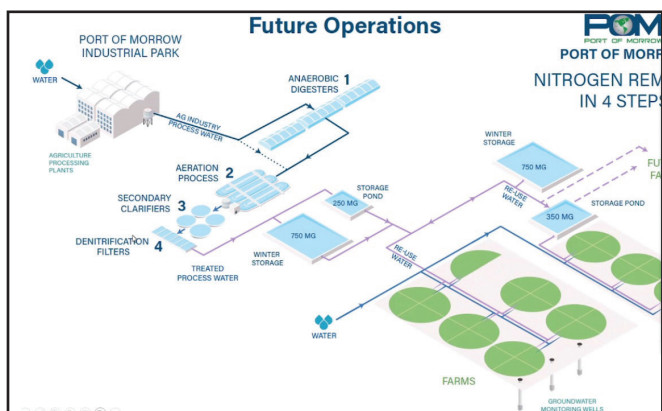
In terms of the project timeline, construction of anaerobic digesters began in 2018 and was completed in 2023. The planning and design phase for secondary treatment has been finalized, with construction scheduled to commence in the summer of 2024. Additionally, the planning and design stage for the creation of new storage capacity of 1.5 billion gallons is currently underway. Expansion, land application, and land purchases are currently in progress.

The plan is to use the newly constructed anaerobic digesters and secondary treatment to remove nitrogen in four steps. The treatment approach involves treating industrial wastewater using biological treatment and filtration. Biological treatment utilizes microorganisms to break down organic material, while filtration involves running the treated effluent through a bed of sand to further clean the water.

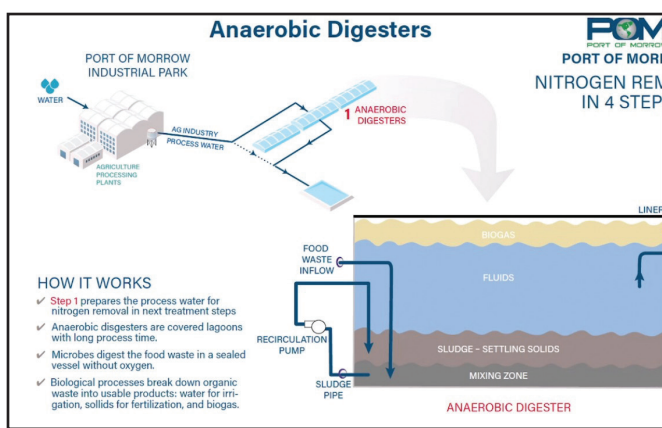
In the first step, the



Current operation at the Port of Morrow



Future addition to the original digester.



Example of Anaerobic digesters.

anaerobic digesters play a vital role. These digesters are 20 feet deep and prepare the process water for nitrogen removal in the next treatment steps. They are covered lagoons with long process times, where microbes digest the food waste in a sealed vessel without oxygen. The biological processes break down the organic waste into usable products such as water for irrigation, solids for fertil-

ization, and bio-gas.

Moving on to the second step, the aeration process is implemented to remove most of the nitrogen from the process water. This is achieved through a biological process that consumes biodegradable organic matter, ammonia, and solids through aeration. The water is recirculated multiple times through anoxic and aeration basins, aiding in the removal of nu-

trients, including nitrogen and phosphorus, from the treated water. The anoxic process is a critical phase in the treatment of water and wastewater, designed to eliminate pollutants, particularly nitrogen compounds such as nitrates (NO3-) and nitrites (NO2-), without the presence of oxygen. In this phase, specific microorganisms act on these compounds in an oxygen-free environment, using nitrate as an alternate electron acceptor. This action is pivotal for the denitrification step, where the conversion of nitrate to nitrogen gas (N2) occurs, allowing it to be released safely into the atmosphere and thus reducing the nitrogen levels in the water.

In the third step, secondary clarifiers come into play. These clarifiers operate downstream from the aeration process and are responsible for separating water from solids. The treated water can be reused or sent to advanced treatment filters. The water moves slowly in the clarifiers, allowing larger particles to settle out before the treated water flows to storage or advanced treatment. Additionally, the solids removed from the clarifiers are returned to the aeration basins to maintain the appropriate bacterial levels.

Finally, in the fourth step, denitrification filters are used to produce high-quality water for industrial reuse when needed. These filters remove the remaining nutrients, namely nitrogen and phosphorus, from the process water. Silica sand and graded gravel are among the filter media utilized in this advanced

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Interim Ambulance service in effect



Photo of a similar ambulance seen around Heppner during the St. Patrick's celebration.

The Interim ambulance service, provided by American Medical Response (AMR), is now operating in Heppner. This past weekend, amidst the St. Patrick's Day celebrations, AMR

paramedics were observed riding around town. While they did not participate in the parade, their presence was visible throughout the community.

Matheny places 3rd at Regional Elks Hoop Shoot Competition



Sonny Matheny, with his 3rd place trophy.

-Photo by Chelsey Matheny

Sonny Matheny, a young talent from Heppner, Oregon, showcased his skills by securing the 3rd place at the regional Elks Hoop Shoot competition. The event witnessed tough competition from participants representing Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. Sonny was in the 8-9 year old division, with the banquet held at the Paso Red Lion and the free-throw shooting contest taking place at Kamiakin High School.

In each division, both boys and girls had the opportunity to compete, with four representatives from each state. The divisions included 8-9, 10-11, and 12-13 age categories. Sonny gave an impressive performance, making 16 out of 25 free-throws, ultimately securing the 3rd place spot. It is worth noting that the winner in his division achieved a score of 19 out of 25, while the runner-up obtained 18 out of 25.

Sonny's mother, Chelsey, said, "He had been practicing a lot and was consistently in the 18-21 range. He was disappointed but the experience was great! We are so proud of

him. Really puts a lot of pressure on these young players. Good preparation for pressure situations in games."

The main rules for contestants:

All contestants should be allowed 10 minutes to warm up under the supervision of contest officials. Each contestant, according to their draw, can have up to five warm-up shots and then shoot 10 shots for score. After completing their warm-up shots and the 10 shots for score, the contestant will report to the end of the line or sit on a chair until the remaining contestants have finished. Once all contestants have completed their shots, the contestant will shoot 15 additional shots to complete their 25 shots for score. The line judge signals made or missed shots to the scorers. Each free throw attempt must be made within 10 seconds from the time the contestant is handed the ball. The Line Judge silently counts to 10 or uses a 10 count out of the contestant's line of vision for each free throw attempt. Contestants must stay behind the foul line until the ball touches the hoop, backboard, or net. Ties will be broken using a number of five-shot sets, previous contest scores (if applicable), or a coin toss.

History of the Elks hoop shoot.

According to The Elks Hoop Shoot web page, the hoop shoot started in Corvallis, Oregon, in 1946, and has grown into a national youth free-throw shooting competition, and its ability to bring communities together and foster sportsmanship among the youth. Initiated by Frank Hise, a past National President of the Elks, the program

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Morrow County Health District press release

Service Excellence Initiative. It has been brought to the MCHD Board attention that there are concerns surrounding community member complaints as well as employee retention of the Health District. The board would like to share with those that have concerns, the direction and vision for handling such complaints.

The board directed the CEO and the Executive Team three years ago to begin the task of implementing a much-needed change within the organization. Changes are not always well received as we all know and can create a lot of fear and uncertainty as progression occurs. The board along with the administration have maintained a high level of transparency with staff regarding the changes that are necessary to achieve a more cohesive culture and accountability among staff districtwide. The board and administration believe that with positive change inside the organization, it will then be passed on through patient care, and thus reach the community. There are staff that are not onboard with the changes, however with that said there are far more staff that are thriving from

the changes that have been implemented and have appreciation for the accountability and culture changes.

What is the MCHD Service Excellence Initiative?

The Service Excellence Initiative is a districtwide effort aimed at improving patient satisfaction and employee engagement. Here are a few improvements made over the last couple of years:

Implementation of the Service Recovery policy, which allows employees to provide a \$10 gift card to patients when our services fell short of their expectations. Adoption of a formal process for responding to patient complaints in compliance with CMS standards.

Patient satisfaction scores are now available, discussed and analyzed by staff on where improvements are needed.

All staff meetings are held monthly.

Monthly provider and executive team meetings were implemented to improve provider engagement.

To improve transparency and communication, the CEO sends a weekly update

to all staff and the Board of Directors, which includes kudos submitted by staff.

The monthly Board Dashboard was created, which gives Board members more transparency into what is happening with the district financially and operationally.

Board agenda, minutes and packets are posted to the MCHD website.

The Service of Excellence Council was created with membership by front-line staff and management. The SEC has oversight of all patient satisfaction and employee engagement initiatives.

This is a short list of all the things that have been created and put into action to grow and change the culture. The Morrow County Health District and Board of Directors welcomes the community and staff to share concerns, complaints, or compliments through the appropriate channels. CEO Emily Roberts has an open-door policy for staff and community members. Complaints can also be received through the District's anonymous hotline (www.lighthouse-services.com/mocohd) or submitted to our Compliance Officer, who is well qualified and

most helpful at investigating, researching, and finding a resolution.

Studies show that a person works 1/3 of their life at work, thus making it even more important to support and encourage an environment and culture that grow positivity and accountability.

MCHD appreciates the support of our community and especially now more than ever.

Sincerely,
Trista Seastone
Morrow County Health District Board Vice Chair



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