



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢



VOL. 144 NO. 19 10 Pages Wednesday, May 15, 2024 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

CREZ II stumbles over 2023 fund disbursements

By Andrea Di Salvo

Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) III agreed to pursue an extension in the Lexington area, while CREZ II reached a stalemate regarding fund distribution at a joint meeting April 30th in Boardman.

CREZ III chair and Morrow County Commissioner David Sykes brought forward the idea of extending the CREZ III boundary into the Lexington area. The property in Lexington is a small parcel of privately-owned property on the edge of town, zoned rural industrial.

While no applications have been made to use the land, Sykes pointed out that expanding the CREZ III boundary to include that land could encourage growth in the Lexington area. The enterprise zone has made boundary extensions before without active business applications on the table, and Port of Morrow Executive Director Lisa Mittelsdorf said she would recommend the expansion.

Rural industrial zoning would receive an automatic three-year tax abatement for any business wishing to develop on that property, though a term of up to five years could be negotiated.

Sykes said he was bringing up the issue because the CREZ is already putting an application in with Business Oregon for an extension in the Boardman area, so it would be easy to add the Lexington parcel to the existing application.

The CREZ III board unanimously approved adding the Lexington property to the current application. The property is not within the town limits but is within Lexington's area of influence, so Sykes said he would bring it before the Lexington Town Council at the town's next meeting on May 14th.

Decision making didn't go so smoothly when it came to directing the remaining 2023 funds from CREZ II. The CREZ II board is made up of two members each from three sponsoring entities—the Port of Morrow, City of Boardman and Morrow County. At least one board member from each sponsor must vote yes for a motion to pass.

The remaining \$900,000 to be disbursed from 2023 had been earmarked to fund public safety. When it came to how this particular disbursement

would happen, however, there seemed to be tension between the City of Boardman and the Port of Morrow.

Port of Morrow commissioner John Murray started the discussion by moving that direct disbursement be made to law enforcement and the various fire districts in the county, among others. Disbursement amounts ranged from \$50,000 to \$200,000 per entity.

CREZ II Chair and Boardman Mayor Paul Keefer disagreed, saying he thought it would be simpler if the funds were divided between the city and the county, with those entities determining the final disbursement.

"I don't think it's cleaner. We can take care of business here, today," replied Murray.

Keefer replied that CREZ II was not obligated to disburse funds to anyone other than the three sponsors.

"That's not the way the board has gone," he said, but added that special districts in the south end of the county are taxing districts and would keep receiving tax income from the businesses after the enterprise

zone ends.

"There will be no more money for Boardman. There will be no more money coming to the Port," he added.

"I don't know that we'll be running out of money any time soon," said Murray.

Mike Gorman also pointed out that some CREZ II projects are located at least partly in the City of Boardman.

Despite support from the county and the Port, Murray's motion failed when Boardman board members Keefer and Karen Pettigrew voted against it.

Sykes offered a motion to disburse \$300,000 each to Boardman Fire Rescue District and Boardman Police Department, with the remaining funds to be determined. That vote also failed when Port of Morrow members Murray and Kelly Doherty voted against it.

A third motion by Keefer to disburse \$300,000 each to Boardman Fire, Boardman PD and Morrow County Health District died for lack of a second. With no agreement reached, the disbursement was tabled until the next CREZ II meeting.

Recall signatures submitted for verification

Morrow County - On May 9, Stuart Dick presented over 720 signatures for each recall petition to County Clerk Bobbi Childers. He initially filed three recall petitions on February 15, aiming to unseat county commissioners David Sykes, Jeff Wenzholz, and Roy Drago Jr. Each petition required at least 613 valid signatures within 90 days to prompt a county-wide recall vote. The petitions received 725, 726, and 748 signatures.

Childers has 30 days to verify these signatures, with the process anticipated to conclude by early June, while the primary election is set for May 21. In a sim-

ilar recall effort in 2022, around 60 signatures were invalidated. If any petition falls short of 613 valid signatures, the recall process will halt. Otherwise, the commissioner targeted by a valid petition must either resign within five days or provide a 200-word statement for the ballot, which would lead to a recall vote within 40 days of the signatures being validated.

Drago is also campaigning to retain his seat in the May 21 primary election. If he fails to secure a top-two finish, he could still be subject to recall before his term ends in January 2025. If he wins either the

-Continued to PAGE TWO

Kids enjoy prizes and fun at Elks Youth Night



The kids on stage gathering for a picture to finish of the fun night. - Photo by Janelle Ellis



(L-R) Berkley Hanna and John Doherty posing for a picture after Berkley's name was drawn for the Henry .22 rifle raffle. - Photo by Chris Sykes



Kids and parents waiting to see if their ticket will be drawn for youth night. - Photo by Janelle Ellis

Local kids and relatives gathered at the Heppner Elks Lodge for an exciting evening filled with raffle drawings, a spaghetti dinner, and plenty of fun. Among the many prizes were Nerf guns, toy cars, paint sets, basketballs, sci-

ence kits, Barbies, and coloring books. The highlight of the night was the gun raffle, where Berkley Hanna won a Henry .22 caliber rifle. With plenty of prizes and good food, the kids had a fantastic and memorable time.

Pendleton Center for the Arts features Heppner Teacher



One of Andrea's oil paintings that is on displayed at the Pendleton Center for the Arts, Lorenzen Gallery through May 31.



Andrea Perry-Nelson

Andrea Perry-Nelson plays multiple roles in her Heppner community. She teaches math and science, runs the high school's art program, and is working on opening an art center and ceramics studio. She also paints, with a solo exhibition of her new work on display at Lorenzen Gallery at the Pendleton Center for the Arts through May 31.

Perry-Nelson attributes her development in art to

having access to comprehensive school programs, teachers at Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), and ample creative space. She benefited from opportunities to explore various mediums and develop her artistic skills through private and high school classes, logo contests, and mentorships at BMCC. Although she did not pursue art as a career, she maintained it as a hobby.

After college, Perry-Nelson returned to Eastern Oregon to teach. She currently teaches in the Heppner school district, covering multiple subjects and integrating art into her curriculum. She manages the high school's art program part-time and is working to expand it.

She typically dedicates her Sunday afternoons to

painting, using the best light to create images inspired by her travels in the region. She focuses on using Eastern Oregon as a study and recreating it on canvas. Establishing a specific time and place for her art has allowed her to consistently create.

Her current body of work is in oil paints, although she initially worked with watercolors. Her focus is on landscapes, transitioning from realism to abstraction. She describes her style as "Realistic Impressionism." The inspiration for her work comes from the changing light and scenery of Eastern Oregon, making each piece unique and recognizable.

Perry-Nelson's work will be exhibited at the Lorenzen Gallery at the Pendleton Center for the Arts through May 31,

alongside the Small Works Invitational in the East Oregonian gallery. Admission is free and open to the public. More information is available at PendletonArts.org or by calling 541-278-9201.

START THE YEAR OFF ROAD SALES EVENT

\$2,000 OFF UP TO SELECT POLARIS XPEDITION MODELS

OR

FINANCING AS LOW AS 0.99% APR FOR 36 MOS

POLARIS OFF ROAD

Morrow County Grain Growers Inc.

CALL 541-989-8221 ext 204 for more information

WARNINGS: Polaris' off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and car seats (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2022 Polaris Inc.

POLARIS OFF ROAD