

# ASA contracts and county administrator reports

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find out where we're at on that," he said, adding that he hoped to have it by the end of the week.

Jensen also said the title report done by the Port of Morrow was not as "robust" as they had thought, so the county will also be doing a new title report on the specific area they are looking at for the circuit court building.

"Just to be sure we're clear on any easements or anything else that might impact development there," said Jensen.

On a positive note, Jensen said Judicial District 6 Presiding Judge Daniel Hill had reached out to see if the county needed to put additional financial requests in as the new legislative session begins. Hill has put in a request for an additional \$2.5 million to make sure the county is covered in the case of budget overrun on the project.

"We're hoping we don't have to use that, but we've got the request in there as a placeholder," said Jensen.

The \$2.5 million would be a matching grant.

Also in his report, Jensen said he met with several parties regarding the water nitrate issue. He said the county is still awaiting final determination on the grant from Business Oregon.

As the county moves forward, Jensen said, it will be putting out a request for proposals for public outreach. He said there has been delay in public outreach, but he's hoping to get into affected communities this fall and discuss options.

He also reported that the alarm regarding fires in Morrow County has dialed back for the moment and they are now looking at recovery, specifically for those who have grazing lands in affected areas.

"We know that those cattlemen have been impacted by this, and so we are looking to see what we can do to get updates and resources to them," he said.

Jensen also reported that he attended the Let's Build Boardman housing event Aug. 6. He said Boardman is looking for options on how to address middle-income housing.

"More or less, low-in-

come housing gets subsidized. High income housing, they've got the money to do it. It's those people in the middle-average income range who are really impacted by things," he said.

### Other Business

In other business, the BOC unanimously approved an IGA with Oregon Department of Transportation to develop an Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP) for the Tower Road and Interstate 84 intersection area.

Morrow County Principal Planner Daisy Goebel said the county has done IAMPs in the past, but not since 2014. She said it is a "pretty standard agreement," though it does contain a caveat for a technical advisory committee and public advisory committee.

Tower Road is in Boardman, but Goebel said the transportation system falls within the jurisdiction of the county and the state. Jensen said that the city owns adjacent property, but the county owns the road, so Boardman will be a stakeholder in decision making.

In other business, the board of commissioners authorized Jensen to pursue a ChangeX grant of up to \$10,000 for an ABI TR3 "E" arena groomer to take care of both the indoor and outdoor arenas at the fair and rodeo grounds.

The board also approved a lease for a weed department facility on Linden Way in Heppler. The space is a two-bay garage with office space, which will allow the county to store weed equipment in an environmentally controlled area. The lease is \$1500 per month and will require a supplemental budget change. The county will be responsible for mitigation and cleanup of any weed chemicals on the property.

In department reports, Morrow County Public Works Administrative Manager Sandi Pointer reported on the use of Lexington Airport by Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Air National Guard. The groups used the airport July 24 to Aug. 2 for their command center and fuel location when fighting wildfires in the area.

"It was exciting," said Pointer.

The firefighters brought their own fuel tanker, and Pointer and Morrow County Public Works Director Eric Imes agreed that the airport's fuel supply probably wouldn't have supported that much air traffic. In addition to air traffic, there was a command center trailer at the airport.

Pointer said it was good for the county because it brought in a little revenue, as well as more exposure for the airport. She said several state officials commented that, if they had known the Lexington airport was this accessible and easy, they would have used it more often.

Imes said the command teams were great to work with. He said they addressed his concern about the extra noise over the small town and explained the operation thoroughly.

"They took really good care of town," said Imes.

Public works is also in the process of getting bids for new scales at the county's two transfer stations, and Imes is creating a list of road signs that need replaced. If it cannot be completed this year, he said he hopes to have it in next year's budget.

"The road signs around the county are in terrible repair," said Imes, adding that the map of the county was covered with dots where new signs are needed. "It looks like chicken pox."

Morrow County Transit Manager Benjamin Tucker reported that ridership is picking up on The Loop's fixed-route service.

Sykes commented that he didn't think the online schedule was easily readable on a phone and asked if an app could be created for phone users. Tucker said the feedback they received was that people did not want to download another app. He also said the website has an interactive map that shows stops and times. He did agree that the site still needed optimization for phones.

Tucker also said The Loop had worked with Sues Gibbs to create a route with a stop at the fairgrounds during fair week. "We are excited about being able to

offer that," said Tucker.

Morrow County Finance Director Kevin Ince said the finance department is busy with several projects, including closing out the last fiscal year by the end of September.

At the top of the list are four different audits, including finishing the 2023 single audit and the public transit Agreed-Upon Procedures audit while beginning those same audits for 2024.

In Oregon, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) requires audits for entities that receive STIF money. These audits follow Agreed-Upon Procedures established by ODOT.

Meanwhile, Ince said, work continues on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program. Enterprise resource planning is a business management software system that is designed to manage and streamline an organization's functions, processes and workflows with automation and integration.

The department has also finally begun work on the Internet Technology Disaster Recovery Plan, which was pointed out as a weakness in a previous audit.

At the end of the meeting, the board of commissioners went into executive session to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

After executive session, the board voted to engage Bend law firm Bryant, Lovlien & Jarvis, PC as legal counsel for the Columbia Development Authority (CDA) lawsuit.

The move appears to be in response to a lawsuit Umatilla County has filed against the CDA. The lawsuit seeks at least one million dollars for an alleged breach of contract over a March vote that turned over control of the CDAs industrial property to the two ports.

Morrow County, the Port of Morrow and the Port of Umatilla are also named as defendants in the lawsuit.

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**9.09 ACRES**

Secluded mountain property! Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to own your own mountain property. Whether you're looking for a hunting retreat or a permanent residence, this property has it all. With approximately 9.09 acres of land and a private pond you can embrace the beauty of nature and create a life of serenity in the mountains you've always desired. 80844 Black Mountain Ln Heppler MLS#:23510132



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Experience luxury living in this stunning home located in Heppler, Oregon. Built in 2016, this beautiful property boasts luxurious features such as heated bathroom floors, a central vacuum system, a water softener, and central air for ultimate comfort. Enjoy the convenience of being close to the high school, Heppler pool, baseball park, elementary school, fishing spots, and downtown, all within walking distance. With an expansive lot, this is the perfect opportunity to own your dream home in an ideal location. 480 W Morgan St Heppler MLS#: 24057570



**New Listing**  
**\$299,000**

Discover your dream home with this charming, well-cared-for classic traditional house. 4 bedroom 1 bath | 2314 sqft home featuring brand-new carpet with original wood floors beneath and beautiful woodwork throughout, this home blends timeless elegance with modern updates. The remodeled kitchen exudes a cozy, down-home feel, boasting quartz countertops and updated appliances with gas range. Enjoy outdoor living with a BBQ on the back deck or relax on the inviting front porch on a quiet street. The two-car garage doubles as a shop for all your projects, and there is ample garden space. Additional features include RV space forced air heat, central air cooling. Located close to downtown Heppler, this home also offers a remodeled full basement with a living area and a bonus room. MLS#: 24205860  
220 W Center St. Heppler.

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