

HCF turns history into housing with Dr. Tibbles home project

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as the medical assistant for Heppner High School's athletic program for 40 years.

Dr. Tibbles' commitment to Heppner extended beyond his professional duties. He was known for his love of fishing, his community spirit, and his deep involvement in civic affairs. In 1975, after 41 years of service, he retired, and the town honored him with a special retirement dinner at the Heppner High School Cafetorium. Over 275 people attended the event to pay tribute to Dr. Tibbles, and he was presented with the keys to a 1975 Bronco, a gift from the community in appreciation for his many years of service. The Bronco, which would become a symbol of his legacy, was later driven by his family in the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Parade during the dedication of his home.

In August 2024, during the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo, the Tibbles family gathered to visit the new renovated home. Dr. Tibbles' grandchildren, Darell Tibbles, Thad Tibbles, Barbra Chabot who had fond memories of spending summers in Heppner—fishing in the creek, running around town, and enjoying the rural charm—attended the event with their spouses. In a touching tribute to their grandfather, they donated his beloved 1975 Bronco to the Morrow County Agricultural Museum. The family proudly drove the Bronco in the parade, bringing the community full circle as they celebrated both the past and the future.

For the Tibbles family, the renovation of the house was particularly meaningful. Lance and Larry, Dr. Tibbles' sons, were close friends with Howard and



Beth Bryant, further weaving the family's history into the fabric of Heppner. Dr. Tibbles had always hoped that his home would one day be used to provide housing for doctors and nurses working in the town, and this project fulfilled that dream.

The Heppner Community Foundation's work doesn't stop with the reno-

vation of the Tibbles house. Over the years, HCF has been dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the greater Heppner area through various initiatives. In addition to renovating and maintaining public spaces like the Tibbles home, HCF also opened a fitness center in 2021 to promote health and wellness, making physical ac-



tivity more accessible to Heppner's rural residents. The foundation continues to support local organizations, providing administrative services that help create stable employment opportunities and address community needs.

By renovating the Tibbles home and converting it into housing for medical professionals, the Heppner

Community Foundation (HCF) has created a practical solution to address the need for temporary housing for doctors and nurses working in the area. This project highlights the importance of maintaining local resources while acknowledging Heppner's history. The decision to preserve the home reflects the community's effort to



retain its historical landmarks, and the availability of housing for healthcare professionals supports the town's ability to attract and accommodate medical staff. The renovation aims to provide a functional space for future healthcare workers, while also maintaining the connection to Dr. Tibbles, a long-standing figure in Heppner's medical and civic life. Dr. Tibbles passed away on January 25th 1986, at the age of 82.

Heppner council invites the MC Board of Commissioners to a public workshop

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tember 4th Board of Commissioners meeting where he highlighted several unresolved issues relating to the current courthouse. He expressed his concerns that moving the satellite courthouse to Boardman would fail to address the significant deficiencies pointed out in Judge Hills' 2023 study. John described some of these critical issues which included "the size, the conflict between justice court and circuit court." John recounted his comments during the BOC meeting about the employment situation: "I checked on the Department of Justice website right after the work session, and there are no jobs open in Morrow County," debunking claims of an inability to fill positions due to their location, according to Doherty. He criticized some of the arguments presented in the session, labeling them as "just hearsay" with "no fact behind some of the items."

Sweeney voiced his doubts regarding the situation and hinted at legal consultation, saying "We don't think it's valid either, and maybe the city attorney can touch on this- but we went avenues just to see how kosher this was because it didn't sit right with us." City Attorney Bill Kuhn revealed that upon being approached by John Doherty for legal research, he learned that a statute specifies the court must reside in Heppner, which neither Judge Hill, the Chief Justice, nor the Supreme Court appeared to have acknowledged,

according to Kuhn. Kuhn has since engaged Attorney Truman Stone from a firm in Eugene to further examine the statute.

Sweeney highlighted that before the recent Board of Commissioners meeting, he had not been aware of the commissioners citing travel as a reason for courthouse to be outside of Heppner. He additionally noted that about 80% of court hearings are now held over Zoom, which further complicates the necessity for physical proximity.

Bates acknowledged Heppner's limitations, such as space for the intended project, but questioned why the commission couldn't allocate additional funds to maintain the building in Heppner. He emphasized the city's commitment by saying, "We were willing to stick our necks out on the line and said we'd spend a million dollars in investment."

Sweeney, however, remained optimistic about the possibility of maintaining the building in Heppner, noting it as the most cost-effective option.

Councilmember Adam Doherty brought attention to a recent Zoom meeting on August 28th, involving County Commissioners and Judge Hill, where confusion was apparent among the attendees. Doherty noted that Commissioner Sykes seemed unaware of discussions regarding the acquisition of new property not currently owned by the county—a point also echoed by DA Justin Nelson's reactions during the meeting, according to Doherty.

To delve deeper into these concerns, the council agreed to hold a public workshop on September 19th, at the Heppner City Hall at 6:30 pm. They aim to invite Morrow County Commissioners, Roy Drago Jr, Jeff Wenzholz, and David Sykes, to further explore and discuss the rationale behind favoring Boardman as the new location for the Circuit Court.

On Monday the 16th an email sent by City Manager John Doherty revealed that only Morrow County Administrator Matt Jensen and Morrow County Commissioner David Sykes will be available to attend.

Moving onto city business updates, the council reviewed updates on the City Park remodel. John Doherty, active in securing grants for the project, shared progress on multiple applications including those to Amazon ChangeX, Good Shepherd, and the upcoming one to Wild Horse Ford Family Foundation. Particularly promising is the Oregon Parks and Rec District's \$100,000 grant which has recommended the project for funding, pending final approval. "We're getting closer," Doherty remarked, signaling a hopeful future for the park's development.

The meeting also touched upon challenges in filling a Public Works position, with John Doherty revealing difficulties in attracting qualified candidates, leading to the withdrawal of advertisements, though the position remains open online.

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