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Lexington airport work sees setback due to new cultural study requirements

By Andrea Di Salvo

Needed work at Lexington Airport will be delayed a little due to a new requirement by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Morrow County Public Works Administration Manager Sandra Pointer told the board of commissioners of the new requirement at its regular meeting Oct. 16 in Irrigon. Pointer said the requirement came to light when planning much-needed replacement of the airport's Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) lights.

Pointer said the Federal Aviation Admin conducted a PAPI light test at the airport in 2022. They found that the path indicators no longer met clearance requirements. They were also outdated and could not be adjusted to the required angle.

The county plans to replace the PAPI lights through Critical Investment Planning (CIP) funding coming to the county in the 2025-26 fiscal year. The county contracted with Bend firm Centurywest Engineering for the work, at a total project cost of \$50,000.

However, the FAA threw a wrench in the works. Mark Hagedorn of Centurywest told the Morrow County Board of Commissioners that a recent change requires an Oregon State Historic Preservation Office environmental study for any off-pavement work.

"So I've worked with Sandi to quickly get this environmental scope together so we can stay on track with our typical CIP projects at the airport," Hagedorn said.

Pointer said the county had a cultural study done

at the airport 10 years ago, but the FAA requires a new one. Also, the studies are only good for the specific area studied.

Aside from added expense, Pointer said the study will add eight months to a year to the airport's work timeline. That also delays the funding needed for the work.

"The issue with these new environmental scopes that we have to do whenever we're breaking new ground is that has to be done before we can complete our design, and we can't get the grants until we complete our design," Hagedorn told the commissioners.

So, while Hagedorn said the work would be 95 percent reimbursable through the FAA, the county will have to carry the environmental costs for six to nine months until that grant is issued.

Morrow County Finance Director Kevin Ince said he was concerned that there was no room in the airport budget to carry those costs, even with a budget adjustment. Pointer said she hoped to use the remaining funds from a Business Oregon grant.

At the same time, that grant is slated for pouring new pads at the airport—another process that will require a new archaeological study.

However, Hagedorn said Centurywest realized it was a last-minute hiccup and could delay invoicing until January.

The board of commissioners voted unanimously to accept the work from Centurywest in anticipation of the 2025 design grant.

Also at the meeting, the board of commission-

ers moved forward with an intent to award the contract for a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The ERP is intended to make county operations such as budgeting, payroll and human resources more efficient.

The expected cost for implementation and the first year of the contract is \$697,740 to \$801,520, with an estimated \$145,512 in recurring annual costs.

The county intends to contract with Univerus and Euna for the platform and software needed. Contract negotiations will begin after a week unless the intent to award is contested.

The BOC also voted to accept consultant firm BerryDunn's proposal for implementation project management assistance.

Tammie Warren, senior consultant and project manager with BerryDunn, said the project came to light based on existing challenges the county had with outdated software.

"So the approach was to really come in and do a good current state analysis, see where the county was, what existing softwares were being used, what business processes were being impacted, and then what was the path forward through this process," she said.

The project kicked off in January and has been 10 months in the making. Warren said BerryDunn started with assessments and activities to learn more about the county and then reached out to vendors to see what was available.

"Then we sat down with the team and we went through a deep dive into what do those functional

technical requirements look like for a future system, what is needed in a new system?" she said.

Warren said they issued a request for proposals, as well as contacting 50 companies directly. They received eight responses, five for full ERP suites and three for specialized software solutions. They made final evaluations and selections in September.

One of the finalists was Univerus, which proposed three software solutions in its suite. BerryDunn also proffered Euna Solutions as a budget solution to integrate with Univerus.

Depending on contract negotiations and availability, it could be nine to 12 months before the system is operational.

Morrow County BOC Chair David Sykes asked how the new software might apply directly to board of commissioners work such as capital planning. Ince said there wasn't a direct link, but there would certainly be areas in which it would help the BOC function more smoothly.

"There's functionality that currently is just on paper and exists on somebody's desk that's going to be more automated and convert it to a process and a system," said Ince. "There'll certainly be updates and information provided to, not just the board, but all the county employees that it's going to ultimately affect."

Ince also said the timing is good regarding the new risk and procurement manager the county is looking to hire.

"The processes used to execute procurements for

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Ione FFA Chicken Coop Build



The Ione FFA group with their chicken coop. -Photo from Ione FFA Facebook page.

We have officially finished building the chicken coop! Our 16 chickens are now producing eggs for our School Based Enterprise. Soon, we'll have an egg hutch where community members can pick up egg packs on a first-come, first-serve basis, with donations appreciated. The kids are working hard to prepare the coop for winter and for chicks next spring.

If anyone in the community would like to support us with unused chicken

gear or materials, we are currently looking for 3 straw bales, pine shavings, chicken feed bags, empty feed bags (to sew into carrying bags), chicken feeders, chicken waterers, a heat lamp, and old stock tanks for housing chicks.

Please drop off items inside the garden fence, and notify Ms. Castle of your donation along with your address so the Chapter can send you a thank you and a holiday card!

Heppner Booster Club Dinner raises nearly \$50,000 in a night of fun and giving

The annual Heppner Booster Club Dinner and Auction took place on Saturday, October 19th, at the Gilliam Bisbee building in Heppner, Oregon. The atmosphere was lively and filled with laughter, thanks in part to Ken Grieb, who served as both MC and auctioneer, skillfully entertaining the crowd with his jokes and keeping the event running smoothly.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious steak dinner, complete with baked potatoes and salad. The event was a success, with an estimated total of nearly \$50,000 raised for the booster club.

A notable highlight of the evening was when Steve Rhea took the microphone to announce an \$8,000 donation from Mulligans, accumulated over the years from past alumni golf tournaments. The story behind this donation began years ago with \$3,000 that Dave Alstott had saved from

Mulligan donations, kept in his sock drawer. Steve and Dave decided to invest the money in the bank, which eventually grew to \$8,000. Steve humorously remarked that Dave must not have changed his socks often.

The night featured a variety of exciting auction items, including: Blackstone grills, Fishing trips, Cornhole games, Baseball tickets, Oregon Ducks-themed baskets, Blazer tickets, A load of gravel, Gift certificates to Les Schwab

Some of the standout auction sales included:

A handmade purse by Amelia Haguewood, selling for \$4,500

A shrimp boil dinner, donated by Troy & Autumn Morgan, fetching \$3,000

A weekend stay at the Marcus Whitman Hotel, donated by Mark Huddleston of Crown Paper, selling for \$2,050

The 2025 VIP Table, which sold for \$5,500

Heppner council gives update on city park remodel and tiny homes project

By Annalynn Black

During the October 14th Heppner city council meeting, a significant portion of the agenda was dedicated to the discussion of ongoing developmental projects, including enhancements to the local park and an exciting housing initiative involving tiny homes.

The city manager, John Doherty, provided an update on the Heppner city park project, which has been gaining traction thanks to the acquisition of three different grants totaling \$270,000. His goal is to make the city park inclusive for all users, adding ADA accessible structures and additions. Additional funding is still being pursued through pending grant applications. A focal point of the park's development was the potential installation of a shade structure, crucial to making the park more accessible and comfortable during peak sunny hours. Initially, the city considered a large conventional shade structure; however, estimates revealed that such an installation could cost about \$100,000. An alternative, more innovative "sail-type"

structure modeled after sailboat technology is being considered, that will cost around \$50,000, according to John.

Given the high costs, alternative methods of increasing visibility and support for the project were discussed. Ideas included hosting a community event focusing on the park's benefits, collaborating with Sykes Brothers Printing for a promotional vinyl banner, and engaging local elementary school students through informative presentations. The target goal for this project stands at \$500,000 to cover all necessary developments and installations.

An essential component of the park enhancements highlighted during the meeting was the consideration of accessibility. Council member Cody High emphasized the project's inclusive design, ensuring it accommodates individuals with disabilities. Despite the relatively small size of Heppner's community, the council is committed to addressing the needs of every resident, reinforcing the importance of accessible

public spaces. "We have a smaller community and a smaller need but the one individual that meets that need makes it worthwhile," John says.

Furthermore, the council discussed progress on the development of the Chase Street property, which is set to be transformed into a community of tiny homes. Spearheading this project is Kim Cutsforth, who is working with the Willow Creek development group. Preparations are underway for the financial aspects of the property transaction, with groundbreaking anticipated around the beginning of 2025. These homes, projected to be around 1,000 square feet, according to John, aim to provide innovative, compact living solutions and are expected to be under construction by Spring 2025. Cutsforth says these homes will be mainly for the elderly in the community looking to sell/ downsize their current homes. Tiny homes are generally defined as dwellings that are 400 square feet or less in total living area. Despite their small size, these homes are meticu-

lously designed to be both functional and comfortable. Additionally, tiny homes are often more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly compared to traditional housing due to their small footprint and lesser material requirements. The trend of tiny home living also encourages a minimalist lifestyle, promoting the idea of living with less material possessions and greater financial freedom due to reduced housing costs.



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