

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under “Card of Thanks” at a cost of \$16 Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

Just Tariffs

First of all, I’m not a financial wizard. If I were, I’d have lots more fabric and probably quite a few more chickens. But I’m getting a little tired of all the tariff talk and people doing the, “We’re all gonna die!” thing. So, let me put it simply. We’ve been getting punched in the nose by other countries for quite a while. They’ve been charging us some pretty steep tariffs and we’ve just let it happen. Maybe it’s time we punched back, even if we end up with a few bloody knuckles. No pain, no gain.

Now that Trump has decided to put an end to it by charging reciprocal tariffs, he’s accused of being unfair. My question is...unfair to whom? Keep in mind that the meaning of “reciprocal” is to “give in return.” So, if someone gives you a 20 percent discount on their product, you give them a 20 percent discount on yours. And if someone charges you a 20 percent fee to sell your product in their country (let’s not call it a tariff just to keep the stress level down), you charge them a 20 percent fee to sell their product in your country. An eye for an eye, or punch for punch...that’s reciprocal.

So, if a country charges you a 50 percent fee, and you charge them a 10 percent fee...now *that’s* unfair. It’s kind of like a biological male being allowed to beat the tar out of a woman. That would be ridiculous, right? And you have to wonder, if tariffs are so horrible, why have they worked so well for other countries?

Maybe we need to listen to President Trump and give him a little time before we get out the tar and feathers. He said this would be rough at first, but worth it in the end. He sees tariffs as a great bargaining chip. Will it work in our favor? We shall see. It looks like we’ve already had some good responses. Netanyahu said he would cut tariffs altogether. Good job, Israel. Sounds like Vietnam and India are ready to make nice too. And here’s an idea. How about we stop being so dependent on other countries and actually make and buy our own stuff? Depending on China for our meds makes me kinda nervous.

As we’re all focused on tariffs and the stock market, let’s not forget all the insane spending our government has been doing the last four years. Kudos to Musk for shining a light on the waste and doing his best to take out the trash.

And are we concerned about a National Debt that we can virtually never pay back? Biden’s idea of printing more money isn’t exactly a cure. A government that has had too much freedom to spend and very little accountability needs to change, even if that change means some people need to find new jobs.

So, let’s do the hard stuff and not get sucked in to the distraction of the Tesla-trashing crazies. We have a lot to be thankful for. A secure border, a safer country and tax dollars not going to stupid places, for starters. And if you have food on the table and a roof over your head, you are blessed. If you have that and a dozen eggs in the fridge, you are rich.

“When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous

but terror to evildoers” (Proverbs 21:15).

*Susie Crosby
Prineville, OR*

Stepping aside to step up: My support for Molly Rhea

I have been honored to serve on the board of Morrow County Health District for the last four years. To stop confusion of my intentions, I want to announce I will be fully supporting a new candidate stepping forward to serve on the board, allowing me to focus on serving out the last months of my term.

Molly Rhea has been intertwined with the health district for the last 40 years, working with all the CEOs and physicians during those years. She started her nursing career out on the nursing floor and rose to the responsibilities of chief nursing officer. She has worked with every department in the hospital, including the ER, and retired as director of home health and hospice.

Molly established the Medicare certified hospice program in 2003 with many awards. She has attended countless board meetings; with her experience as the CNO, she has knowledge of how the budget works and participated in recruitment and retention. She understands the present needs of our district and the responsibilities and hurdles of building the future of our rural healthcare. She has provided care to every corner of our county and worked with many community partners.

Molly’s integrity, honesty, compassion, community involvement and leadership will serve the best interests of the Morrow County Health district and all county residents. Molly has been my colleague, peer and dear friend.

Please join me in supporting Molly’s candidacy and voting for her. Thank you, Molly, for stepping forward.

*Diane Kilkenny,
Board Chair,
Morrow County Health District*

Your Taxes Should Work for You

It was my privilege to help folks file their taxes this season at the AARP site in Lexington. In addition to helping others, it reminded me that the state and federal governments do nothing to earn money; their funding comes only from each one of us, taken from our wages, investments and business income.

It is thus deeply disturbing to see this administration’s slashing of programs that help struggling Americans: cuts have been made in the last month to the Veterans Administration, health care and research, food banks, senior services and libraries, to name a few. At the same time, the Pentagon recently estimated that \$40 million had been spent in one month to house 400 migrants at Guantanamo Bay, and the 2025 budget for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is \$9.7 billion.

I’m all for cutting out waste and fraud in the government, but ending Meals

on Wheels and cancer research isn’t to the point. I for one would much rather see my tax dollars support veterans, the poor, the sick, the elderly, schools and libraries than in demonizing immigrants, detaining them at outrageous expense in immoral conditions, and deporting them without due process. If you feel the same way, let our representatives in Congress know.

*Sincerely,
The Reverend Lea Mathieu
Ione, OR*

Time for Change in the Health District

As a candidate for a position on the Morrow County Health District, I am writing this in response to the current board’s comments at the recent meeting in Lexington and in last week’s Gazette.

First, I agree that whoever put the photos of Emily on the power poles around town is pathetic and a coward.

Secondly, I take offense to the statement that we who are candidates for board positions are running out of “spite.” Speaking for myself, I am running for a position on the health district board out of necessity. There have been so many questions by the public and no answers. Remember, we (the taxpayers) deserve to know how our taxes are being spent.

Third, it’s time for change. We have lost way too many doctors, nurses and other staff with no explanation of why. There is a Promise of Excellence statement on agendas and minutes of the board that they view through rose-colored glasses.

With board members who care about the employees and the district, we will make these statements come true.

*Janet Greenup
Heppner, OR*

Rhea has passion for MCHD to succeed

I am writing this letter to encourage everyone to consider Molly Rhea for the position on the Morrow County Health District Board of Directors.

Molly has worked for the health district for years in various positions. She knows the needs and workings of our district. Molly is very knowledgeable and has the desire to have a good, functioning health district.

We need someone who has passion and desire for our hospital and health district to succeed. Molly Rhea is that person.

*Myrna Sieler
Lexington, OR*

Cast Your Vote for Molly Rhea

I’m pleased to recommend Molly Rhea as a board member for the Morrow County Health District and encourage you to give her your vote. I first met Molly 12 years ago when I was hired as the CEO of the Morrow County Health District, and she was my Chief Nursing Officer. She quickly earned my respect and trust.

During these past 12 years I have worked as CEO with three different boards: Morrow County Health District, Harney County Health District and now Wallowa County Health District. I have worked with some amazing board members and have seen firsthand how a good board member can make a difference.

The primary role of a health district board member is to hire and work closely with the CEO. Board members have ultimate accountability for the strategic direction, quality of care and the long-term viability of the organization. The best board members don’t try to micromanage, but they take the time to really listen, understand and ask good questions. They exercise good judgement when selecting a new CEO and they trust and support who they hire or inherit.

Serving for many years as a Morrow County Health District executive has given Molly the skills and insights that will make her a successful board member. She regularly contributed to annual strategic plans, ensured a skilled and competent nursing staff, and participated in budgeting and financial stewardship. She worked closely with a number of CEOs and will know how to properly select and support them. She regularly attended board meetings and has observed highly skilled board members in action. But perhaps Molly’s biggest asset is that she is Morrow County through and through. She loves the people there and has given her life to serving them.

I am confident that Molly will be an exceptional board member for the Morrow County Health District and that you will be pleased with what she brings to the role. I invite you to cast your vote for Molly.

*Daniel Grigg
Former MCHD CEO*

Committee Vote Opens New Direction for Wildfire Program

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ate and House Republicans stated in a release. “Senate Bill 83 puts power back in the hands of the people, not government bureaucrats. The wildfire hazard map caused fear and uncertainty, burdening families with costly and unfair one-size-fits-all mandates. This bill repeals that mess, empowers people to protect their homes without the threat of government interference, and focuses on practical solutions for wildfire prevention. With this step forward, we’re delivering the change that rural Oregon has long deserved.”

SB 83 empowers local communities to make decisions tailored to their unique needs, enabling them to take effective steps to protect their homes. It also ensures taxpayer dollars are spent where they have the most impact—supporting local efforts like defensible space, forest thinning, and wildfire readiness programs.

Senate Bill 83 now moves to the Senate floor for a vote by the whole chamber.

CDA uncertainty

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the property is in dispute. Instead, he suggested a resolution to sell the property once Umatilla County and the Port of Umatilla had reached an agreement.

The board voted 4-1 to approve moving forward with a land sale once the litigation had been settled. Tovey, the lone dissenter, said he wasn’t comfortable with “that sort of horse trading.”

“What happens next year?” asked Tovey. “Are you going to give another 100 acres back to us?”

Smith responded that he thought the CDA’s purpose was to work itself out of business.

“The purpose of the CDA was to benefit the redevelopment of the property,” Mittelsdorf added. “For us to give up a hundred acres is not just to say, ‘Here, CDA, here’s a boatload of money to operate.’ It’s so there’s a development, and that development will pay taxes, that development will create jobs, just like any other economic development project.”

“It’s not for the CDA to generate a bunch of income for the future of ... what?” she added.

Tovey said he agreed but said that the tribes had taken on an expense with their share of the property, designated as a wildlife refuge. Tovey said, with property transferred to the two ports, the counties would receive tax revenue and the ports would receive funds from land sales and transfers, but CTUIR would end up with a bill for natural resource management.

“We’re going to have to pay through the nose for that,” he said. “There’s an equity thing here that I’m concerned about.”

“Take a thousand acres away and give us a hundred and we’re supposed to be grateful for it,” said Tovey. “I’m not grateful for a hundred acres. I want the thousand acres back.”

Meanwhile, the contentious issue of the transfer of CDA property to the ports of Morrow and Umatilla also raised the question of whether the CDA would receive the funds or whether they would go to the POM.

According to Port staff, the transfer agreement included the ability to withdraw 100 acres that the CDA could sell and use the funding from.

“The spirit of this would be that the Port of Morrow leans into helping us get this done so we have a way of paying our bills,” added Puzey. “We have a resource that you have granted to help us with

Pastors invited to submit Easter messages

Area pastors are invited to submit Easter messages to the *Heppner Gazette-Times* for publication in the April 16 edition. The deadline for submission is 5 p.m. Monday, April 14.

Messages may be emailed to editor@rapid-

serve.net, mailed to Gazette-Times at P.O. Box 337, Heppner, OR 97836, uploaded to the website Heppner.net or brought into the Gazette-Times office, 177 N. Main in Heppner.

At the same time, under the 2022 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) agreement the CDA has with the federal government, nearly all income within a seven-year timeframe must be reinvested in the property.

CDA Director Greg Smith told the board that accepted uses included infrastructure like roads, sanitation and utilities, as well as police and fire facilities, building rehabilitation, landscaping and marketing, among others.

There was some disagreement on the board as to whether administration and legal could be included in that list.

Smith told the board that the sale of land to cover the budget shortfall left by the loss of the grant was in line with the OLDCC’s original intent.

Finally, a Port of Morrow request that all five CDA members equally share costs also met with a chilly reception. POM Chief Financial Officer Eileen Hendricks told the CDA board that the Port would be able to request grant reimbursement for July 1, 2024, through Feb. 21, 2025. The total grant-related expenses for that time were \$583,786, she said, and they would request \$402,203 from the OLDCC after deducting costs like disputed payroll and grant matches.

“Regardless, we have put out \$583,000 since July 1 that should have been the five parties’ responsibility and have not received reimbursement for any of those dollars—and for some entities, longer than that,” she said.

POM has also paid for expenses such as legal costs, paving and payroll since Feb. 21, with no federal reimbursement expected for those expenditures.

Tovey said he could not bind the CTUIR board to additional funds without express consent from the CTUIR board of trustees.

Schafer, meanwhile, said the current language in the CDA’s intergovernmental agreement was to protect the CDA members from personal liability, and he felt the idea of equal sharing of costs required a unanimous amendment to the IGA.

The topic was set aside, but not before Shafer told Puzey that the request “flies 100 percent in the face” of a possible agreement regarding the lawsuit.

“And I hope you vote no on this,” he said, “Because this would completely blow all of the work that we’ve done out of the water.”



**BUCKNUM'S
TAVERN**
146 N Main Street
Heppner
541-676-5274

Lunch & Dinner Menu

4/10 - 4/16

Thursday - Monte Cristo with hashbrown patties
Friday - 2pc of cod with clam chowder
Saturday - pepperoni quesadilla with chicken tortilla soup
Sunday - closed
Monday - General Tso chicken, fried rice, egg roll
Tuesday - Italian Sub sandwich with jojos
Tuesday Night - 6-9pm \$2 hard shell tacos
Wednesday - grill chicken Philly with deep fried chips