

~ 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.

Honesty

Seems like something's missing these days and I think I've figured out what it is. I think it's *truth*. Not talking about "my truth" or "your truth." I'm talking about *the* truth. Seems like forever since you could turn on the evening news and know you're not getting snowed.

Today's agenda-driven reporting should come with a disclaimer: "Facts have been changed to protect the guilty." Remember Walter Cronkite? He closed every newscast with "And that's the way it is." We never really felt the need to question him. If Walter said it, you could count on it being the truth. Just the facts. No commentary necessary. Today you have to do a 30-minute research to try and confirm one statement. Boy, do I miss Walter.

I feel for the younger generation. Their world of AI, Photoshop and Virtual Reality has to make deciphering the truth difficult...and exhausting. Meanwhile, they're being bombarded with ridiculous notions like...biology means nothing, boys can be girls and girls can be boys...because pretending something makes it real. And people who don't pretend with you are just being mean. I believe it was Hitler's chief propaganda guy who said, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." He had a point. Woke Folks have become masters at that technique.

One of the big lies today is that the truth doesn't really matter. I recently heard a young person say, "Just don't do it, and say you did." Broke my heart. To them, lying was an acceptable option, and not even a difficult one to choose. I think we're missing something in the education and direction of kids today. "Follow your heart. My truth, your truth." Parents need to drive home the fact that if you lie, you're a liar. And remind them who the father of lies is.

I think honesty is probably the most important character trait. Without it, you've got all the integrity of a cheap, wet paper towel. When can you trust a liar? That's simple...never. I've heard people say, "Oh I wouldn't lie about that." Really? Then could you please publish a list of all the circumstances in which you would *not* lie, just so those around you don't have to guess? Catch someone in a lie, and it takes away every ounce of integrity so that you question anything they've ever said or done or will do in the future. And being lied to isn't a great feeling. Does God forgive liars? Yep... but they need to ask.

Sometimes truth isn't easy to say or hear. Lying may seem like a simple fix, but nothing is worth your integrity. And wouldn't it be nice to trust people again? So speak the truth. Maybe if we say it big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.

"Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool" (Proverbs 19:1).
Susie Crosby
Prineville, OR

Vote yes to support our children

I am writing to endorse bond measure 25-104 for our school districts.

We have been a part of this community for over 50 years; both my wife and I graduated from Riverside High School. Our business, Rock Enterprises, has contributed to the region for 47 years. I want to ensure that the decades ahead of us are the best they can be. One of the best predictors of our county's future is the kind of education we provide, which will shape our workforce, leaders and citizens of tomorrow.

We have been a preferred contractor for Morrow County Schools for several years. We have worked at our schools from Heppner to Irrigon. We know the conditions of the schools. After extensive work over several months at the Irrigon High School, we know the condition of the building. We support a new high school.

We have done substantial work at Heppner High School. The building is dated and needs a major remodel.

Riverside High School needs love. When we attended, it was one of the nicest high schools in Eastern Oregon. Now it has holes in the walls. The influx into our elementary schools has been drastic. We need to follow this growth to keep our elementary schools efficient and capable of handling the students presented to them.

The infrastructure we use today throughout the county and the schools we have exist because our elders planned ahead for us to have what we need to thrive. Our county is thriving. We need to recognize that and not take second seat to adjacent counties. We need to plan for this growth as our parents and grandparents did. Voting for this bond is about making sure that our schools are ready to help our children and our children's children develop and maintain those skills needed for Morrow County.

In many ways, the failure of previous bonds has been a blessing. It has allowed us to refine the needs of our school district and discover major issues we didn't know existed. Please vote yes for Morrow County Schools. We need to support our children because, in the end, they will support us.

Thank you,
Cecil O. Rock
President
Rock Enterprises Inc.

Vote yes for school bond

To the voters in the Morrow County School District and other concerned citizens:

RE: Upcoming school bond.

This is a quick letter in support of the upcoming school bond. I am an 18-year (retired) employee (music teacher) of Morrow

County School District. Any of us that live in an apartment or a house, regardless if we own or rent, realize that buildings and infrastructure to support those buildings are "biodegradable" products, meaning that without intentional and specific maintenance and upgrades, their usability goes downhill, some things quickly, others over a longer period of time. Our school buildings need help.

Measure 25-104 addresses the needs of our aging school buildings. \$204.4 million is a tremendous amount of money. Estimated nearly \$3 per \$1000 is a lot of money for an individual taxpayer (me).

I hope all of you had the opportunity to read and digest the letter to the editor: (*Heppner Gazette-Times*, Wed., May 7, 2025) "School bond: money left on the table?" John Murray, very succinctly, laid out the advantage of passing this bond, rather than voting no.

My take: We have the chance to drastically improve the physical safety and condition of our schools.

Through certain negotiated contracts within our tax district with businesses and industry, we have the possibility of reducing the length of payment on this bond. No, it will not mean a reduction of the monthly (or yearly) payment of the obligation *however*, it will reduce the *duration* of payments. I see that similar to the 30-year mortgage on my house being paid off in potentially 15 years because someone else picked up part of the tab....

Please vote *yes* for measure 25-104.

Richard Drake
Retired music teacher,
RHS and Heppner schools
Heppner, OR

Health District CEO search

-Continued from PAGE ONE

Godsend for all you serve in our county and all the other counties," she said. "I'm so thankful for it."

The board also approved Jamie Houck, registered nurse and inpatient services director, as acting administrator and director of professional services for MCHD home health if Spencer is absent or incapacitated.

Another hot topic at the health district involves the recent resignation of former CEO Emily Roberts, who took over the position in June of 2021. According to the separation agreement between Roberts and the health district, her resignation was voluntary and not requested by the health district board.

As part of the separation agreement, Roberts will receive her current salary, including scheduled increases, for 12 months, paid bi-weekly starting from the last day of employment. She may opt for a lump-sum payout of the remaining amount any time, payable within 10 business days.

She will also receive benefits for the 12-month period, excluding vacation/sick leave accrual. That includes five percent contribution to her 401a retirement plan, Tri-County Ambulance Association and LifeFlight memberships, death and disability insurance, and medical, dental and vision insurance at no cost to her.

In return, the agreement protects both parties from future legal disputes, as both Roberts and the health district agree not to file claims, lawsuits or administrative actions related to Roberts's employment.

The agreement included a list of health district contributions Roberts is credited with, including opening a mobile rural health clinic extension, improving clinic productivity while reducing costs, implementing primary care behavioral health, and enhancing employee engagement and patient satisfaction.

The agreement also states that no future MCHD board or employee can change the agreement's payments without mutual consent from both parties.

In other business, Burke gave his first report as CEO, though he said he might discontinue the verbal report and only address the CEO Dashboard and EMS stats if the board has questions. He also suggested the board consider a "true consent agenda" for several sections of the agenda.

The CEO Dashboard for April shows 53 days cash on hand, 98 days AR on Cerner and 127 days in AR for all records systems. The health district has changed electronic record systems several times in the last couple of years.

The Dashboard also shows a 9.4 percent turnover rate, 13.1 percent vacancy rate and 14 open positions.

"Some of these numbers are very, very good numbers," Burke told the board.

Pioneer Memorial Clinic reported 166 visits, Ione Community Clinic 207 visits, Irrigon Medical Clinic 251 visits and Boardman Immediate Care 128 visits. Pioneer Memorial Hospital had 287 hospital admit days, 91 emergency

department visits and 254 hospital outpatient visits. Home health and hospice had 237 hospice days and 76 home health visits.

Health district Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer Nicole Mahoney reported \$9,964,456 gross patient revenue year-to-date, less \$99,226 contractual adjustments and provision for bad debts, for total net patient revenue of \$10,063,682 YTD. She also reported tax and other operating revenue of \$3,406,021 for total operating revenue of \$13,469,703 YTD compared to a budget of \$16,074,471 YTD.

Mahoney also reported operating expenses of \$15,786,695 for a net loss of \$934,744 YTD.

In other business, the board authorized check signers Diane Kilkenny, Board Chair; Scott Ezell, Board Vice Chair; Dennis Burke, Interim Chief Executive Officer; Nicole Mahoney, Chief Operating Officer; Staci Hedman, Revenue Cycle Director; Sheryl Angell, Director of Nursing Services.

The board also ratified physician agreements with Daniel Lancefield, MD, and Stuart Clive, MD.

The next regular meeting of the MCHD Board of Directors is scheduled for May 19 at 6:30 p.m.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SEND US PHOTOS
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The Gazette Puzzle Pop

Sharpen your mind with our Gazette Puzzle Pop! Weekly math, word, and local trivia from our five towns—no internet or phones allowed. Answers in next week's edition—grab a pencil and show off!

Math Quizz

Level - Easy
Q: A snail climbs 5 meters up a wall each day but slips back 3 meters at night. How many days to reach 10 meters, and why's it so determined?

Jokes

Level - Easy
Q: Why don't raindrops ever lie?

Morrow County Trivia Challenge

Level - Moderate
Q: In which Morrow County town was the Star Theatre opened on February 5, 1919 and destroyed by a fire in 1962?

Answers from May 7th edition

Puzzle: Speedy Delivery
Q: A delivery truck travels 60 miles to a warehouse at an average speed of 40 mph. On the return trip, the driver takes a faster route, increasing the average speed to 60 mph. What is the total time for the round trip?
A: Solution: The round trip takes 2.5 hours.
Joke
Q: Why did the tomato turn red at the vegetable quiz show?
A: Because it saw the salad dressing!
Morrow County Trivia: What yellow wildflower, common in Morrow County's sagebrush flats, is one of the first to bloom in early spring?
Answer: Sagebrush Buttercup.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

Seniors Matter May Menu

May 6 - Baked Pasta, Garden salad, Garlic bread and dessert 

May 13 - Hot Turkey Sandwich, Mashed potatoes, Pea salad, Dessert

May 20 - Taco Bravo Bar, Spanish Rice and Dessert

May 27 - BBQ Beef Sandwich, Jojo potatoes, Coleslaw and Dessert

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Discover a timeless treasure with this beautifully preserved Craftsman-style home, featuring 1,174 sq ft on the main level and an additional 1,008 sq ft in basement, perfect for storage or extra space to customize. This 2-bedroom, 1-bath gem combines classic charm with modern comforts, including a newer furnace, forced air heat, and a freshly painted exterior. Located in a prime spot near the school and within walking distance to downtown Heppner, this home provides both convenience and a sense of community. Experience small-town living with easy access to downtown. Don't miss the chance to make this spacious, character-filled home your own!
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Upcoming Events

Youth Night May 15th - 6:00 pm - Open to all youth, gun raffle, general raffle, Spaghetti dinner

Lodge Hours:
Wed 4pm to close with dinner at 6pm
Thurs 4pm to close (Lodge at 8pm)
Fri & Sat 4pm to close with dinner from 5pm to 8pm off the menu

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676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main
Members and their Guests

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.