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MORROW EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANTS \$150K TO COUNTY SCHOOLS
District looks to upgrade wireless capacity and introduce more technology to classrooms

IRRIGON – Feb. 10, 2014 – Morrow County School District is receiving \$150,000 from the Morrow Education Foundation as the second of two grant recipients.

The district received the check from Columbia River Enterprise Zone committee chairman, Don Russell, during the Feb. 10 board meeting at Irrigon Elementary School. The first grant recipient was Lone Community School.

The foundation awarded the funds to the county school district from enterprise zone payments stemming from economic development in the Columbia River Enterprise Zone.

Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the funds will be used to upgrade technology, which includes bringing more handheld devices into classrooms.

"The majority of this money will be used for infrastructure improvements to make sure the devices will work when we get them," Dirksen said.

The district's wireless infrastructure is being upgraded and expanded to make sure internet speed will not be a problem. The district will also be moving forward with getting electronic readers for all third through 12th grade students, which would allow nearly every student to have an electronic text book available for use at school and home.

He said a grant program for teachers is being set up for educators to submit applications and explain how handheld devices will be incorporated into their curriculum. The devices will be purchased specifically according to teachers' requests. For example, students could use an iPad in one class and a Kindle in another. It all depends on the teachers' intended use for the devices.

"This is preparation for kids as they go into their future. Technology is here and we are progressing with that," Dirksen said. "We want to educate students on how to use technology and technology helps kids learn the material."

Dirksen said the district is also setting \$10,000 of the \$150,000 aside to fund credit options for the district's students. These options allow students to gain college credits and take classes not offered by the district through programs like Eastern Promise, Extended Options and Greenways Credits.

Another \$15,000 will be granted to the district's three schools with a fourth through sixth grade configuration. Each school will receive \$5,000 for field trips, which are most beneficial to this age group, Dirksen said.

Board chairman Thad Killingbeck said the foundation's contributions are historic for the district and expressed his appreciation for the funds during the board's meeting.

Russell said the funds are part of a payment received through negotiations for tax abatement in the enterprise zone and were designated specifically for education.

About the Morrow Education Foundation: *The Morrow Education Foundation is a non-profit corporation and is independent from the Morrow County School District. The foundation was formed in 2012. The board is made up of nine members from Boardman, Irrigon, Heppner and Lone including the five Port of Morrow commissioners. Morrow Education Foundation's mission is to encourage and enhance academics, technology, arts, athletics, and cultural learning experiences and opportunities for the students of Morrow County through community and corporate support.*

About the Columbia River Enterprise Zone: *The zone is a long-term, rural zone located entirely in Morrow County. The CREZ is one of 51 rural enterprise zones in Oregon. There are 13 urban zones in the state, bringing the total to 64 enterprise zones in Oregon. Enterprise zones provide tax incentives to businesses making new investments in Oregon.*