

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Hospital Levy to Fund Paint and New Roof

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POMEROY, WA – Commissioners of Garfield County Public Hospital District voted unanimously in support of a resolution last night seeking community support for repairs to the hospital facility. Voters will be asked to consider approving a one year special tax to replace damaged roof and exterior painting of the facility. Appearing on the November ballot, the proposition will seek to raise \$70,000 in 2010 to fund specific projects and, if approved, would cost tax payers an estimated .35 per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation.

Last year voters approved a similar one year tax assessment for \$198,000 that is funding the repair of critical systems in the hospital including the replacement of an emergency generator, telephone system, nurse call system and fire alarm. “All of the projects approved last year are on schedule and on budget” said hospital CEO Andrew Craigie. Most recently the hospital awarded a contract to ITC systems of Clarkston for the replacement of a vintage phone system that services the hospital and the contracting process for the replacement of the emergency generator is underway with the replacement expected to be completed by October. Craigie expects the nurse call system project to take longer due to the approval process required by the State Of Washington and the availability of tax proceeds from the current year assessment.

The public hospital in recent years has operated with funding generated almost entirely through operations. Relying on the community support to help fund capital replacement projects and repairs is necessary says the district because the facility budget has insufficient funding to maintain its infrastructure. “This is a much smaller levy request

than the district has asked for in the past” added the hospital administrator. “The commissioners are very sensitive to the tax burden these requests place on the community, but these projects are really essential to the continued operation of the hospital.” Paint on the exterior of the building is bubbling and peeling exposing the structure and causing weather damage. The building needs to be stripped and painted in order to protect it from further damage. In addition, two sections of roof are also in need of attention; the entire hospital roof is over 35 to 40 years old and needs replacement in addition to a major section of the roof covering the long term care section of the building. The hospital has had numerous leaks resulting in damage to interior walls, ceilings, potentially harming equipment.

With total operating revenues of just over \$6M the hospital generates just enough revenue to meet operating expenses. At the Wednesday night meeting the Finance Committee reported that the District is ahead of budget, year-to-date and believes it will end the year breaking even, as anticipated in the 2009 budget. The administration also offered praise to the staff of the district who they credit with keeping a lid on expenses while still delivering exceptional care to the community.

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