



# The Baker County Press

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## Local pilot escapes crash uninjured

• MECHANICAL FAILURE LIKELY CAUSE OF CRASH

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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On the sunny Sunday morning of May 31, seasoned pilot Troy Woydziak of Baker Aircraft was busy hauling his first load of the day up to the Minam River Lodge, not yet knowing he

was in for one intense ride. Woydziak had been hired to carry logs up to the lodge, which is undergoing some improvements.

His helicopter, a UH-1H, had a 150-foot-long line on a load of nine, 24-foot logs weighing 2,000 pounds on the end of the hook.

In moments, Woydziak said, "I felt a loud vibration and heard a howling sound coming from the transmission area of the

helicopter. I immediately dropped the logs into the field from a height of about 15 feet and looked at the master caution light to see if I had any warnings. I did not. I immediately lowered the collective and started a descent into a flat open field with trees."

As fate would have it, a gardener some yards away was watering his newly planted garden.

SEE CRASH PAGE 5



Submitted Photo.

The skids were broken after this helicopter came down hard near the Minam River Lodge.



Brian Addison/The Baker County Press

Valedictorian Zach Tomac addresses the crowd and his fellow classmates under a hot sun.

## Class of 2015 graduates

• 109 GRADUATES AWARDED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

BY BRIAN ADDISON  
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Baker High School awarded high school diplomas to 109 graduates of the Class of 2015 under bright sunny skies and unseasonably warm temperatures Sunday, June 7 within Bulldog Memorial Stadium.

The Class of 2015 held 28 students graduating with academic honors.

Valedictorian Zachary Tomac began his commencement speech by remember fallen classmate Joe Davis who succumbed last year to complications associated with Multiple Sclerosis.

Tomac read a poem written about Joe recognizing him for possessing

the spirit of a lion and the patience of a lamb, a fierce determination, expressive eyes, and referring to him as "our hero."

Tomac spoke of lessons learned including the standard of class set by Baker High School students, for learning to work in groups, and for having the skill of improvisation instilled within him by a dedicated staff of instructors.

He also handed down sage advice to his underclassmates, "Always be nice to the office staff; it will make your life 100 percent easier."

Rebekah Compos was recognized for her academic acumen by being awarded the class Salutatorian honor. Compos referred to her education as a preparatory tutorial for the life ahead. "Rejoice, we have accomplished much in this tutorial," she told her classmates.

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Brian Addison/The Baker County Press

Beloved middle school teacher, Bill Mitchell, now retired, gave the keynote speech to the BHS Class of 2015.

## Walden's local staff changes

• KIRBY GARRETT PROMOTED TO D.C. POSITION, JORDEN NOYES ASSUMES LA GRANDE OFFICE ROLE

BY BRIAN ADDISON  
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Submitted Photo.

Jordan Noyes.

Kirby Garrett, formerly Field Representative for US Representative Greg Walden (R-OR 2nd District) in the La Grande office, has moved on from his local position to join Walden's staff in Washington D.C.

SEE WALDEN STAFF PAGE 5

## Haines celebrates its littlest heroes

BY BRIAN ADDISON  
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Heroes come in all shapes, sizes, ages, and walks of life. Some are trained and paid, some are strictly volunteers, and some still calculate their ages in single digits. Haines Elementary School honored a full spectrum of heroes, from life-savers to those who volunteer time and effort to better their community, during the school year ending assemblé, June 10.

Adam and Ori Kerns are thankful for the calm and immediate response their three oldest children displayed during a life-saving emergency on May 26. The Kerns' youngest child 15-month-old Thomas had fallen in the pond and was found face-down and unresponsive by his three siblings, 5-year-old Kylie, 9-year-old Caleb, and 8-year-old Wesley.

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**Friday** Sunny and mild, with highs near 80. Clear at night with a low around 42.

**Saturday** Sunny and mild, with highs near 80. Clear at night with a low around 42—again!

**Sunday** Sunny and mild, with highs near 80. Clear at night with a low a little warmer at 47.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.

Our forecast made possible by this generous sponsor:



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