

Local

Huntington hosts meeting of Baker County mayors

By Eileen Driver
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The City of Huntington was privileged to host this quarter's Mayor's Council Meeting and Luncheon on January 15 at the VFW Hall & Community Center, from noon to 2 p.m.

The Mayor's Council is a group of community leaders who come together to help their communities, by discussing issues important to their particular town or to the region as a whole. In this way they can bring together perspectives from all different sides of an issue in order to solve problems or make better, more informed decisions for their communities.

Also shared are success stories from projects completed and encouragement for other projects underway.

The Mayor's Council Meeting was chaired by Mayor Travis Young of Huntington and the attendees dined on a luncheon of grilled garlic and herb chicken breasts on a bed of Alfredo noodles, green salad, garlic toast and strawberry white chocolate ganache cake provided by the Huntington Parks & Recreation Committee, before beginning the discussions.

Mayor Young opened the meeting by stating, "We would like to welcome you all to Huntington and hope you will enjoy the luncheon and will find the information provided by everyone here to be

helpful and encouraging."

The meeting agenda included City updates by mayor Travis Young of Huntington, mayor Jim Brown of Haines, vice mayor Mike Downing of Baker City and mayor Melissa Findley of Sumpter, and a governor's report by Scott Farley of Regional Solutions of Eastern Oregon that included a reminder for all to contact their legislators with questions and comments about any legislation that affects us.

Timothy Bishop of Baker County Tourism brought a county-wide marketing and advertising report and Mike Ybarguen of Idaho Power Community Relations in Payette/Nampa/Ontario/Hells Canyon area, gave an update on the Boardman to Hemingway Project and the Windmill Projects coming online in the area soon.

An Economic Development update was provided by Julee Hicks of the Baker County Economic Development Department, who invited everyone present to attend the 2015 Eastern Oregon Mining & Aggregate Development Summit being held on January 27th at the Baker County Conference and Events Center at the fairgrounds. She emphasized the need to help and encourage new entrepreneurs in the area.

A County update was given by newly elected Baker County Commission



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Mayor Jim Brown of Haines with Huntington City Engineer, Andy Gehrke.

Chair Bill Harvey who resides in Haines.

Other topics of discussion included the Main Street Revitalization Act proposed by the Coalition to Revitalize Main Street and Restore Oregon, jobs and economic development, the Huntington sewer project, \$3 million grant and the stricter regulation expected to be set by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency in the future, the updating of Sumpter's employee handbook and the reasons for others to do so to comply with new legislation, the local impact of ever increasing mining restrictions and regulations in the region and the need to work closely with small Eastern Oregon communities and Commissions in order to benefit all of us as a whole.

Others present were Lieutenant Travis Ash of the Baker County Sheriff's Department, Isaac Dalke

of Regional Solution of Eastern Oregon, Tawny Bean who is the Regional Coordinator for Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA), Julie McKinney the Sumpter City Recorder, Randy Jones of Regional Solution / DEQ, Tracy Mclean Huntington City Recorder, Chad Carter and Andy Gehrke of Holladay Engineering, Huntington's Engineer of Record, and Annie Oakley, Toni Thompson, LeAnne Woolf and Bob Armbrusta of the Sumpter City Council, Eileen Driver, President of the Huntington City Council & Chairman of the Huntington Parks and Rec Committee and Allan Driver Vice-Chairman of the Huntington Parks and Recreation Committee and President of the Huntington Neighborhood Watch Association.

The next Mayor's Council Meeting and Luncheon will be held March 19 in Baker City.

Lookout-Glasgow fire protection launches

The first annual organizational meeting of the Lookout-Glasgow RPA will be held January 26, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the Keating Fire Hall.

This district encompasses the area from the Oregon Trail Interpretative Center to Richland, Oregon, all land not part of another fire district that drains to the Powder River. All land owners and lease owners within this area are invited to attend the meeting.

The meeting will review the assessments proposed by the board and the bylaws, as well as plans for the coming fire season, including potential for pre fire preparation and creation of fuel breaks.

This association is a group of people who have informally fought range fires in this area to reduce fire damage to the rangelands owned by themselves and their friends and neighbors. It is always better to fight and stop a fire on your neighbors property than wait until it gets to your property. This group has always communicated primarily by smoke signals. When a column of smoke is seen, it is time to load up the cat and whatever other equipment is available and head for the fire.

The association, which was approved by the Oregon Board of Forestry in July of 2014, and has already assisted in putting out several fires before they got large. The association has acquired two off-road trucks with 1,000-gallon tanks and a D-7 cat, that have been declared surplus by other agencies. Additional equipment has been applied for. Radios and basic firefighting equipment are also in the works.

The goal is to have the people who already live and work in this area better trained and better equipped so fires can be stopped quickly before they get large and expensive.

Lions Club recognizes Justin Kirkland



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Allan Driver presents Justin Kirkland with an award.

By Eileen Driver
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The Huntington Lion's Club recognizes the initiative of young, eight-year-old Justin Kirkland, a student at Huntington Elementary School, in gathering pull can tabs for their recycling drive for Ronald McDonald House. Justin heard about the Lions Club's effort to gather can tabs and took it upon himself to help out by finding as many as he could.

He presented three large plastic baggies full of tabs to an appreciative Lions Club who in return presented him with a certificate of recognition for his efforts. Lions Club secretary Bill Burley commented, "We definitely want to acknowledge and encourage this young man's desire to help his community." The award was presented to Justin by local Lions Club President Allan Driver, who shook his hand and congratulated him on his accomplishment at the club meeting on January 13th.

Lions Clubs everywhere collect aluminum can tabs which are turned into Lions International, where they are sent to a recycling center and turned into cash which is donated to the Ronald McDonald House Organization which provides a home-away-from-home to families who have children with serious illnesses and must stay in the hospital for treatment. The money goes to offset the cost of running these houses and takes the burden of paying for the majority of the housing cost off of the families. Lions Clubs have so far collected over 400 million can tabs for the benefit of these families. If you would like to contribute to this effort you can contact any local Lions Club with a donation.

CORRECTION!

Last week we ran a story on Sumpter City Council with two incorrect names. Cary Clarke was misspelled, and Mona Clarke was in fact, Myrna Clarke. We apologize for the errors.

THE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH, BROWNFIELDS AND FULL-DAY K

School board has full agenda

By Brian Addison
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The superintendent search has been narrowed to three by the Baker 5J School District Board of Directors.

Still vying for the District's top spot are current South Baker Intermediate School Principal Betty Palmer, Grant County School District Superintendent Mark Witty, and Joint School District Superintendent from Orofino, Idaho, Robert Vian.

School board members plan to interview the three superintendent candidates on February 20. A public open house with the candidates has been scheduled for later that day beginning at 4 p.m. at the Baker High School Commons.

The school board, due to the timing of the superintendent interviews, has rescheduled their February meeting moving the date from February 17 to Thursday, February 26.

Full-day Kindergarten discussed.

Discussions of expanding to a full-day Kindergarten schedule continued during the January 20 board meeting. Some of the staffing requirements and equipment needs were part of the discussion.

With the anticipated move to full day Kindergarten the district expects to add one, possibly half-time, administrator, three certified staff teachers, and two or three para-professionals.

Additionally, 5J fina

cial director Doug Dalton explained the need for the purchase and placement of a fourth modular building to be placed on the grounds of Brooklyn Primary School.

Dalton said the Governor's and Oregon legislative co-chair's schools budget should cover all costs associated with personnel needs and that the purchase of the modular has been included in the 5J budget under Capital Projects Fund and not from General Fund dollars.

The school district expects to receive \$7,000 per Kindergarten student with an anticipated enrollment of 70. The district may offer the option of full day or half day enrollment.

"If students attend half day Kindergarten then the district would receive half the funding," said Dalton.

During the discussion on the need for another modular building to accommodate expansion to full day Kindergarten, the need for another modular at Haines Elementary was mentioned.

Board members plan to gain more funding information and the plan for full day Kindergarten during Oregon's legislative talks before the Feb. 27 school board meeting.

EPA Brownfield site used as educational tool.

The US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Program identifies land sites in need of cleanup due to contamination by hazardous materials caused by past usage.

In the 1920s, Paul Oswald built and operated a small machine shop on approximately 0.2 acres in Baker City. The machine shop remained in the family and continued operation until the year 2000.

After the machine shop ceased operation, the Oswald family donated the property to the school district to be sold and the proceeds used for the district's scholarship program.

During the real estate evaluation it was determined that the site was contaminated with hazardous material and required cleanup before being listed for sale. Cost of cleanup is not expected to exceed \$110,000 according to school district documents.

The district was able to secure grant dollars through the EPA of about \$200,000 to fund the cleanup process and to provide an educational element to the project.

Baker High School science teacher Megan Alameda has led several Environmental Hazards students through the process of federally mandated hazardous site cleanup.

The project has entered its second year with the next step including the posting of a Request for Qualifications to determine the hiring of a firm to provide cleanup of hazardous materials.

During the project, students have learned about the process of environmental assessment, have been involved in an endangered species survey, and are



Submitted Photo.

Student of the month, Bailey Hill.

now writing and posting the Request for Qualifications.

During a project presentation to the school board, Alameda mentioned that Baker County contains 80 EPA Brownfield sites, the most of any county in Oregon.

Baker High School Student of the Month.

Associated Student Body President Bailey Hill received recognition as BHS Student of the Month. The honor was presented by high school principal Ben Merrill.

Merrill commended Hill for his mental and moral strength and for his role as a leader in the school and in the Future Business Leaders Association.

During the BHS update, Hill reminded anyone interested in keeping up-to-date on scheduled events at BHS to visit the Baker High School Facebook page.