

Business & Ag

Ace Hardware to move

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Inside the building they have been painting, installing new heating and cooling vents, new LED lighting and cleaning fixtures.

No new employees are expected to be hired as the store changes locations.

"I think this store will be a little easier to run just because it is so wide open. The store now (at 3rd and Court Street)—I've done about three additions over there and so we have a cubby hole back here and a cubby hole over there. It's kind of hard for the employees to walk through; they have to walk a half a mile just to see if anybody is in the store," Thatcher explained.

Thatcher says he will be able to expand all of their departments a little bit and spread merchandise out so it is more visible.

The new space is about

4,000 square feet bigger on the inside, for a total in the neighborhood of about 16,000 square feet.

"Then we have the yard outside where we will have our lawn and garden center. We already have a greenhouse so we will move that over and then we are going to get into a lot more fountains, statuary and lawn furniture," he said.

Thatcher believes that the new location on Resort Street will also give them better exposure.

He said of the current location, "You've got to know where we're at. We don't get the driving-through-town people, and since Resort Street has been redone, I mean I looked at this location even before Del's moved in here and it just didn't seem feasible at the time, but now that the street is done, I mean I sat out here one day and just watched the traffic go by and it's amazing the

difference.

"Hopefully we will be more in the public eye and people will be driving by us more. I'm happy with this location."

Thatcher also noted the abundance of parking the new location offers.

He said, "I never thought I'd have people complaining about not being able to find a place to park at our current location but it happened. There are about 20 spots there at the old location and here at the new one, I quit counting around 150. Is goes around the side of the building and over towards the Dollar Tree. There is a lot of space."

Thatcher owns the current location building and says he has already had some inquiries into uses for the space. He is hopeful he will be able to sell or lease the property.

Ace Hardware is a co-op, and each store is privately owned. Each owner

has stock in the company.

In 2010 Scott and Diana Thatcher opened a second store in La Grande. "So between the two stores we employ about 50 people. Each store has a manager, assistant manager and sporting goods manager. We have really good employees," he said.

Thatcher is utilizing local contractors for the remodel job. "We are so glad to be able to provide some jobs during a time of year when it may be a little slow. Most all of them shop with us on almost a daily basis so it's my turn to return the favor," he said.

A grand reopening is expected once they have moved and settled in.

For anyone who may be curious, Duce the cat will be moving to the new location as well.

"He is very excited," Thatcher said with a grin.

Powder Basin Watershed Council: membership meeting

By Todd Arriola

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The Powder Basin Watershed Council (PBWC) held its Annual Membership Meeting, the first for the Council, on Wednesday at the Baker City District 5J Office

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m., and the first item of business was the recognition of guests, and introductions. From the Board of Directors were Nancy Rorick, Chair; Jim Young, Vice Chair; and Karen Spencer, Treasurer. Present Council Members included Johanna Sedell, Executive Director; Suzanne Fouty, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) Hydrologist; Timothy Bliss, Baker City resident; Marion Crows, Halfway City Council Member; Meghan Rorick, Outreach Coordinator; Doni Bruland, Executive Assistant; Denise Schmitz, Vale District Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Shannon Archuleta, WWNF Biologist; and Andrew Umpleby, Powder Valley Water Control District.

Guests included Mike Kee, Baker City Manager, Bill Harvey, Baker County Commission Chair, Wes Morgan, Burnt River Irrigation District Manager, and Curt and Cheryl Martin of North Powder.

Rorick welcomed the group, thanked the staff and Board for their efforts, and then presented the 2014 Annual Report. She pointed out that \$292,232 was secured last year in grants for restoration, monitoring and outreach, and the approximate value of the total for volunteer hours (calculated at the rate of \$21.35 per hour) was \$42,507. Matching funds received was \$625,003 from partner contributions, including the BLM, WWNF, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Baker County, Baker County Soil and Water Districts

(BCSWD), Bureau of Reclamation, Baker School District 5J, AmazonSmile, Idaho Power Company, Patagonia, Jubitz Family Foundation, Leo Adler Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

She discussed the Water Quality Monitoring Program, stating that there are 78 monitoring sites across the Powder Basin, and partners include WWNF, BLM, Pine Eagle High School, Baker High School, and Burnt River High School. Rorick said there are 18 citizens who also volunteer to collect water quality samples.

Rorick said conservation projects for 2014 included work along Pine Creek at McMullen Slough. Major construction was completed in August, and riparian fencing was installed in December. The purpose of the project was to address concerns about erosion, using large wooden structures and transplanted clumps of willow to slow the force of Pine Creek, tap sediments, and allow riparian colonization. OWEB, NFWF, USFWS and Patagonia funded the project, along with support from the Baker County Road Department and WWNF. River Design Group provided engineering services, Steve Lindley Contracting, Inc. constructed it, and the landowner installed the riparian fencing.

Habitat conditions along 25 miles of stream were also surveyed last year.

PBWC held a field day at the Hughes Lane Park in Baker City, which included 130 5th and 6th graders from Haines and South Baker schools, where they could have hands-on experience with exploring watershed science.

PBWC also involved community members in six public watershed learning events, and two river cleanup events, including removing trash from along the Powder River in downtown Baker City.

Sedell thanked the group for attending, and explained that Wolf Creek had been chosen to be monitored for the last two

years, with the intention of monitoring for one more (three-year rotation), and if anyone had any suggestions about another stream to monitor in the future, to let her know.

Meghan Rorick said there will be another field day event held in May, again with South Baker 5th and 6th grade students. She'll be designing the hands-on learning stations, five in total, and volunteers will be needed for each one, she said.

Spencer gave a Treasurer's Report, stating that the budget review through June 2014 looked great, noting there was not much of a change from the year before, and no issues were observed. The current financial statement was given, and she noted that she had copies of the reports for those present.

Fouty discussed with the attendees the purpose for the social hour held immediately after the meeting, which was a brainstorming session, in order to provide suggestions and ideas, like locations for river cleanups, areas that need improvements, etc.

Before a slideshow was presented, showcasing projects from last year, Fouty said Steve Hawkins, WWNF Fuels Program Manager, will be the guest speaker at the next meeting. She said he'll speak about fire ecology, history, and past and current fuels treatment.

Comments collected from attendees includes the following: 1. Cut willows and plant them. 2. Look for

opportunities for aquifer storage. 3. Maximize limited resources and look at fuels and restoration projects on and off private lands. 4. Keep data that is collected through monitoring on a basin-wide basis, rather than DEQ-specific sites. 5. Show kids electroshocking fish. 6. Look for beaver dams, and map them and how much water is being held in them. 7. Snorkel camp-canoeing, look at bugs and fish. 8. Nature walks. 9. Beavers and development of ways to decrease conflicts. 9. Moving rocks that block fish out of streams. 10. Fish screens. 11. Baker City would like support of fuel reduction in the Baker City Watershed.

The 2015-2017 PBWC Biennial Work Plan includes Smith Ditch partnering and funding; expanding youth programs; expanding presence at community events; conducting volunteer activities and recognizing volunteerism; macro invertebrate monitoring; flow monitoring; new rotating panel (Wolf Creek, etc.); Clear Creek riparian restoration and stream bank project; fish passage barrier culvert replacement; development, funding, and implementation of the Powder Basin Streamside Stewardship Program; replacement of two fish screens on USFS managed land; prioritization of interest concerning off-stream livestock watering facilities with partners; and Council development and management goals.

BEEF MONTH DRAWING!

We're busy celebrating Beef Month here at *The Baker County Press*. Did you know that between our editorial board, sales staff and reporters, we have three generations of cattle ranchers involved in putting out this paper every week? If you renewed or took out a new subscription this month, you've already been entered into a drawing for a free package of our own tender, juicy, home-grown-in-Baker-County steak! Subscribe between now and the end of the month to be entered!



— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, February 6, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity and demand continue to be slow. The good weather in several areas of Oregon has slowed down demand, as the pasture grasses are already starting to grow and end users are being able to turn animals out on pasture rather than purchase and feed additional hay. Fewer containers available at the shipping ports has slowed down the ability to export hay overseas. Several producers have told all that they plan to sell for this season.

Eastern Oregon sales reported:

| Tons | Price Range | Wtd Avg |
|--|------------------|---------|
| Alfalfa - Large Square / Premium | 99 225.00-225.00 | 225.00 |
| Alfalfa/Ochard Mix - Small Square / Good | 25 180.00-180.00 | 180.00 |

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 557

Steer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk 325.00 - 366.00 | Top 368.00 |
| 400-500# | Bulk 262.00 - 309.00 | Top 318.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 248.00 - 289.00 | Top 293.00 |

Heifer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk 268.00 - 286.00 | Top 291.00 |
| 400-500# | Bulk 218.00 - 254.00 | Top 260.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 211.00 - 228.00 | Top 230.00 |

Yearling Steers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 198.00 - 223.00 | Top 231.00 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 186.00 - 200.00 | Top 204.50 |
| 800-900# | Bulk 174.00 - 182.00 | Top 186.00 |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk 167.00 - 178.00 | Top 180.00 |

Yearling Heifers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 196.00 - 214.00 | Top 215.00 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 179.00 - 193.00 | Top 203.50 |
| 800-900# | Bulk 173.00 - 177.00 | Top 179.00 |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |

Thin Shelly Cows 85.00 - 95.00

Butcher Cows 95.00 - 104.00

Butcher Bulls 98.00 - 117.00

Stock Cows 1375.00 - 1800.00

ProducersLivestock.com

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Delivered to Elgin

Doug Fir / Larch 6"+ \$370/m

White Fir/Sp 6"+ \$380/m

LPP 6"+ \$350/m

Delivered to La Grande

P. Pine 6-11" \$290/m

12-17" \$340/m

18-23" \$390/m

24'+ \$420/m

Delivered to Pilot Rock

12-17" \$390/m

18-23" \$440/m

24'+ \$480/m

Delivered pulp

\$28/ton to Elgin

\$28/ton to La Grande

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,

Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,236.80

Silver: \$17.00

Platinum: \$1,208.38

Palladium: \$769.00

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$386.50/bu/USD

Wheat: \$521.53/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$973.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$272.50/bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$10.22/cwt/USD

Canola: \$459.80 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$153.20/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$202.60/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$66.13/lb./USD

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