



District Basketball Tournament —7



North Powder FFA barbecue fundraiser —9



Lefty's Taphouse set to open —8

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LOCAL NEWS: HEADLINE STORIES • LOCAL ARTICLES • OUTDOORS • AGRICULTURE • CLASSIFIEDS

Bark beetles, dead trees, and the politics of forest management



Brian Addison / The Baker County Press

An area on the south side of Dooley Mountain treated by a Forest Service prescribed burn.

By Brian Addison
Brian@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Arvid Andersen drives the Dooley Mountain highway (OR Highway 245) to the Burnt River Valley and views the world around him through the eyes of a professional forestry consultant and experienced timber cruiser.

As he looks out across

the forests of southern Baker County he points out dead and dying pine trees speckling the landscape and he sees bigger problems on the horizon. Large Ponderosa pine trees dead and dying from bark beetle infestation, conifers invaded by Dwarf mistletoe, and the resulting increased potential for catastrophic forest fire run

through Andersen's mind.

The conditions on the forestland on and around Dooley Mountain and the south fork of the Burnt River region are the result of decades of a federal forest management and timber program locked down by regulations, says Andersen and others close to the problems including Baker County Commissioner and

Burnt River region rancher Mark Bennett, and long-time Bridgeport timberland owner Lynn Shumway.

The lack of active forest management and an adequate timber harvest program has set the stage for what Andersen sees as a bark beetle infestation ready to turn epidemic.

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Protesters come out against dispensaries

CITY APPROVES FIRST READING OF BUSINESS LICENSE WORDING SERVING TO BAN DISPENSARIES



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Vicki Freeman (at left) helped organize an anti-pot dispensary protest on Tuesday at City Hall.

By Gina K. Swartz

Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Last week, a group in favor of marijuana dispensaries protested in front of City Hall the day of a special City Council Session to discuss the issue. This Tuesday, another group—those against dispensaries in Baker City—countered with their own peaceful protest during the noon hour on the day of the scheduled City Council meeting on the same subject.

At that City Council meeting, the first reading of a revised business license was approved, which will include new wording saying businesses in Baker City will comply with federal, state and local laws. This wording could have the effect of banning dispensaries since marijuana is a federally controlled substance, even though it will be legal statewide in Oregon July 1, 2015.

Vicki Freeman of Baker City, who led the protest, said she wasn't affiliated with any particular group—she was simply a member of a local church who helped spread the word. She, along with Jessy Raczowski and Matthew Pedersen, solicited protest help from the congregations of several local area churches.

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5J superintendent finalists

CANDIDATES APPEAR AT MEET AND GREET

By Sunny Werner
Sunny@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The library at Baker High was packed as crowds of teachers, School Board members, interested parents, curious community members, school staff and reporters flocked to meet and question the three remaining candidates for the position of Superintendent of Baker District 5J last Friday.

The three contenders are Betty Palmer, currently holding the position of Principal at South Baker Intermediate; Mark Whitley, currently Superintendent of Schools Grant School District #3; and Robert Vian, Superintendent of Schools in Orofino, Idaho.

Ben Merrill, BHS Principal, explained that



Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press

Robert Vian.

Baker High's Culinary Arts Program had prepared and submitted a bid to the School Board for the hors d'oeuvres, which were created and served by the students in the programme.

"This is a great opportunity for them to practice the full catering experience," he explained. "From

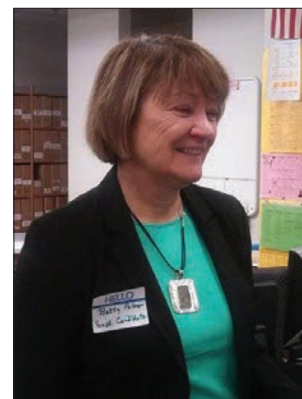


Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press

Mark Whitley.

the pricing of materials and the bidding right through cooking and presentation."

Kevin Cassidy, Vice Chair of School Board, explained some of the issues affecting the understanding of the general public and factors affecting the candidates applying for the post.



Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press

Betty Palmer.

"What many people don't realize," he said, "is that the school district is like a really big corporation. Sometimes people just look at the salary, and they think wow, that's more than anybody else around here is getting!"

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Sheriff resigns

By Kerry McQuisten
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Wednesday morning, Sheriff Mitch Southwick announced his resignation to the Baker County Board of Commissioners during a special work session.

According to those who witnessed at least part of the work session, the resignation came as a surprise when Southwick stood and asked for five minutes of the Commissioners' time.

He then shook each of their hands and gave them his written resignation letter.

Southwick's current term would have ended at the end of 2016.



Submitted Photo.

Mitch Southwick.

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Friday Mixed rain and snow, little to no accumulation expected. Highs in the upper 30s. Chance of precipitation is 70%. Low around 25.

Saturday A slight chance of an early snow shower, otherwise mostly cloudy. Highs around 35. Chance of precipitation is 20%. Lows in upper teens.

Sunday Clear skies with abundant sunshine. Highs in the upper 30s. Lows at night in the lower 20s.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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