

Local

County Commissioners

Continued from Page 1

Arthur Sappington showed the Board a copy of a block diagram he helped create, titled "The Changing Economic Role Of Natural Landscapes," with details about how our different natural resources benefit Baker County, and how legislation often tends to target the wrong priorities.

Ken Anderson said, "In regard to this carbon-reduction thing, one thing people tend to forget is the effect of volcanoes on this carbon activity. Man's effect on this carbon thing is very, very minimal."

Saw Mill.

Haines Mayor Jim Brown was present, and discussed with the Board the possibility of a sawmill in Haines, since he was contacted by Rory Leonard about it.

"I met with him, and he was interested in putting in a little sawmill in the City of Haines. He had a potential contract with the Union Pacific to supply between 5,000 and 15,000 railroad ties a year." (See separate article, page 3.)

Brown said Haines does have some property available to lease for the potential mill, and at least five to six jobs would be created, but a major issue is the availability of timber.

Bennett said, "I have the same problem in Unity. There's a man with a small mill, and he can't afford to bid on big projects with the Forest Service."

Bennett said if the small mills could be somehow funded together with Economic Development assistance, for example, there could be some progress, and possibly a contract negotiated as one group. There is an existing sawmill in Haines, operated by Rory Leonard, but the issue again is the availability of timber for a larger proposed mill, Bennett said.

Harvey said, "It would be a great idea to do that," and told Brown that, as far as promoting the idea, the property the City of Haines could lease for the potential mill operation looks like a positive first step, and he said he would be in contact with the Economic Development department to discuss the matter, along with getting together with other individuals, such as Forest Service representatives, and other Mayors and Commissioners.

Road Department.

Jeff Smith, Baker County Road Master, was present to give the Board a departmental update. "The gas tax, I know, is a heated issue with everybody, but on the federal level, it's been at least 20 years since

the tax has been raised, and on the state level, not that long." He pointed out the issue with the funding formula for Road Departments, citing Multnomah County as a prime example. Smith said that County has 200 miles of roads, and receives \$36 million in funding, and Baker County has 900 miles of roads, and receives \$1.3 million in funding. "There's quite a difference there," he said.

Smith discussed the road and street projects completed last year, including Pochontas, Chico, Chandler, Resort and Best Frontage, and the removal of the Extension Service building in the fall. He explained that a piece of the building will be located elsewhere for Road Department storage use. Smith said this year's projects includes the application of surface gravel to roads in Baker Valley, Richland, and Halfway, an Anthony Lakes Highway chip seal project in its last phase, extensive road work planned for the Richland and Halfway areas, and a Sag Creek project. Smith explained the advantages of using the asphalt plant in Halfway as a source for road work, and asked the Board about available funds from the County. Harvey asked Smith to provide a project list, in order to have a complete, detailed picture of what's needed.

Ed Hardt mentioned a problem to Smith with the gravel associated with a cattle guard in the Elk Creek area, and Smith responded that he'd investigate the issue.

B2H.

Bennett emphasized that March 17, 2015 is the deadline for Boardman To Hemingway (B2H) Transmission Line Project public comments, and said it's very important to get those in by that date. He handed out flyers about a workshop which will be presented on Monday, March 9, 2015, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., in the Commissioners Chambers, titled "Constructing Effective Comments For Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)." Mary Anne Nash, Public Policy Counsel for Oregon Farm Bureau, will be the host, and the public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Law Enforcement Agreement.

The Board discussed the Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreement Between The Baker County Sheriff's Department And The USDA Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Agreement No. 15-LE-11061600-004. The purpose of the agreement is to provide additional

funding to the Sheriff's Department for services provided on National Forest System Lands.

Bennett moved to discuss the agreement further, and Kerns seconded, as there were issues pointed out with the arrangement and funding.

New Sheriff Process.

The Board discussed Baker County Sheriff Mitchell Southwick's resignation, and Bennett moved to accept it, with a second from Kerns. The motion carried. The Board discussed the appointment process for the next Sheriff, and decided that next Wednesday, March 11, at 9:30 a.m., the public would be invited to a special session to submit questions to the applicants for the position (there are currently two), along with questions from the Board. This would be the only item on the agenda, Harvey said.

Harvey moved that this special interview session take place, and that, during the next regular session, March 18, 2015, at 9 a.m., a decision concerning the position would be made. Bennett seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Lime.

Harvey discussed the status of the former Lime cement plant, explaining that he, Baker County Emergency Manager Jason Yencopal, Baker County Facilities Manager Dan McQuisten, and Smith visited the site recently. Both Harvey and Yencopal are Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEODD) Board members, along with Bennett, and Yencopal is also with Baker County Community Development.

"We looked at the possibilities of what we're up against, with the potential of removing the liability that Baker County has, and owns," Harvey said. "We own that property, because of foreclosure years ago, and it is a dangerous situation there, and we have had a DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) representative meet with us, and some other people, as well." He talked about seeking potential funding, in order to assess the situation. This type of property is referred to as a "brownfield," a property for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the potential or actual presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Harvey said securing the funding to complete an assessment of the site is the first step, before proceeding on to anything else. "It's a massive project," he said. He explained that some of the buildings on

the site are six stories high, constructed with concrete and rebar. "We would love to clean the site completely, and make it available to someone else in an industry, because it has a natural gas main line on-site, and it has power from Idaho Power, through the property, and you have two exits and entrances from the freeway, right there, and you have a railroad site, as well."

He said it's a good potential industry site, and it needs to be developed, and that Huntington would also benefit greatly, because of the potential for employment. "It would be a great opportunity for us to take care of an eye sore, and a dangerous situation," Harvey said. He said there's some asbestos on the site, but it's minimal, and any other potential for hazardous material needs an assessment, in response to Wanda Ballard's question about the subject.

Bennett said that the project ideas for the site from potential developer Steven Golieb were not realized in recent years, because of different issues. There is no current potential developer.

Appointments.

The Board approved Order No. 2015-106, Re-Appointing A Member To The Baker Valley Vector Control Board, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The Board re-appointed Gordon Colton, whose term is set to expire on December 31, 2017.

The Board approved Order No. 2015-107, Appointing Members To The Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) Board, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett. The Board appointed Harvey, Bennett, Yencopal, Elizabeth Burton, and Richard Langrell.

The Board approved Order No. 2015-108, Appointing A Member To The Northeast Oregon Housing Authority Board, with a motion from Bennett, and second from Kerns. The Board appointed Harvey, whose term is set to expire on May 20, 2020.

The Board approved Order No. 2015-109, Appointing A Member To The Northeast Area Commission On Transportation (NEACT), with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The Board appointed Harvey, whose term is set to expire on July 31, 2016.

The next regular Commission session is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 9 a.m., with the special session scheduled as mentioned previously.

Haines chili feed raises \$8,000



Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press.

Haines residents raised \$8,000 for their school at this year's chili feed.

By Sunny Werner

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If the entire town of Haines didn't attend the School Fundraiser, then the twenty-five who missed it must have been sick or out of town. Total attendance was 375. Haines's population is approximately 400.

The school gym was packed, with all spaces filling as soon as they emptied. Families, single folk, older couples, everyone came to show their support, enjoy the great food, and vie for the items offered in the silent auction and raffle.

Jacque Cobb, volunteer organizer, explained that this is the school's main fundraiser. "Usually, we see just about everybody in town," she said. "We're just a small community, but we really do pull together to support our kids."

The Chili Feed annually brings in enough funds to provide for the 115 pre-K through 6th grade students who attend to supply Christmas gifts for all the children, special programs, and "Beach Party Day" in winter.

The monies also go towards special projects, such as renewing the tennis courts (built in the 1950s) and adding hopscotch and foursquare areas.

Cobb explained that twelve families had donated their time and the contents of twelve roasters of chicken, others had donated the chili in various degrees of "heat," and others the corn bread and other fixings. The Haines Mutual Improvement Club donated the desserts.

Community members and businesses donated the raffle and silent auction items with values ranging from \$10 to \$100 each. With hundreds of items donated, the auction, raffle and Chili Feed succeeded in raising over \$8,000 this year.

"This was a huge support for our school," said Cobb.

That support averaged \$20 per Haines resident for a total of \$8,000.

Halfway man found with stolen firearms

On March 2 at about 1:20 p.m., Baker County Deputies served a search warrant at 190 Main Street in Halfway, Oregon. James Grove (06-08-1977) was contacted at the residence and arrested for Assault IV/Domestic and Interfering with a 911 call.

During the search of the residence and property, Deputies recovered three firearms that had been stolen from a residence in Halfway on 02-11-15.

Grove was also charged with Felon in Possession of Weapons and Possession of Stolen Property. Investigation continues and additional charges are pending.

Hunter ed classes offered

Baker County Hunter Education Instructors have set some dates for classes to offer in 2015. Registration in advance is encouraged to ensure the students place in the class. This can be done via the local license outlets or online via the ODFW website.

A traditional class begins on April 10th at 5:30 p.m. at the Baker County Library Conference room. This class will meet five additional nights (April 14, 15, 21, 22, and 23)

with the final test April 23. The range activities for the class are scheduled for April 24 at the Powder River Sportsman Club Virtue Flat Range.

An independent study field day is scheduled for April 25th. This field day is for students who have completed the online Hunter Education program or the home study workbook and meets the requirements for independent study students to be certified. This field day begins at 8

a.m. at the Powder River Sportsman Club Virtue Flat Range.

Further information on these classes can be obtained from Dick Haines at 541-523-3554 or Bill Taylor at 541-403-0900.

The next scheduled class will be held in August beginning on the 17th and ending on the 29th with an independent field day offered also. Additional information will be available on the website for ODFW Hunter Education

and when closer to the start date of this class. Classes will also be offered in Huntington and in Halfway during the summer and possibly another class in the Baker area if needed. Students are encouraged to check the website frequently as class sizes are limited.

The course fee is \$10 for the traditional Hunter Education class. The online course's fee varies is available on the ODFW Hunter Education web page.

Local delegates attend ORP state meeting

Delegates Chris Dunn and Suzan Ellis Jones from the Baker County Republican Party attended the ORP's state meeting today in the Portland area. Bill Currier was elected as the new ORP Chair, Tyler Smith as Vice Chair, Chris Barreto of Cove as Secretary and Ken Taylor of Prineville as Treasurer. Outgoing Chair Art Robinson left the meeting early. Current Marion County Chair/past ORP Chair Kevin Mannix helped conduct the meeting.