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PUBLIC ASKS QUESTIONS DURING SPECIAL SESSION

Choosing an interim Sheriff



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Travis Ash (left) and John Hoopes fielded public questions Wednesday morning, both competing for the interim sheriff's position.

By Todd Arriola
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Attendees filled the Commissioners Chambers at the Baker County Courthouse on Wednesday, March 11, when the Baker County Board of Commissioners held a special session—a public interview process for the position of interim Baker

County Sheriff. The two applicants for the position are Lieutenant Travis Ash, and Patrol Deputy John Hoopes.

Sheriff Mitch Southwick's resignation goes into effect April 30 and the appointee will finish his term.

Because the Sheriff's position is now nonpartisan, the replacement is

selected by the three men who comprise the Board of Commissioners.

Present from that Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioner Mark Bennett, Commissioner Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Harvey explained the interview process, stating the candidates would first each be asked a series of ques-

tions, previously prepared by the Commissioners.

These questions were provided to the applicants at an earlier date, and they prepared and read their answers to the attendees at this session, with details about experience, background, future goals, etc.

See **INTERIM SHERIFF** / Page 9

Council takes turn toward dispensary ban



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Fire Chief Mark John, seated at right, prepares to address the Council.

By Gina K. Swartz
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In an unexpected turn of events at Tuesday evening's City Council meeting, the Council chose to hear a first and second reading of a previously dismissed ordinance, ordinance #3336, which would ban marijuana dispensaries in Baker City limits.

The ordinance was first proposed at a meeting in early February but dismissed as the Council moved toward adopting ordinance #3337 addressing City Business Licenses, instead.

The underlying goal of #3337 requiring city businesses to obtain a license to legally operate in the city following all local, state and federal laws was to prohibit marijuana dispensaries from operating within city limits.

See **MARIJUANA** / Page 5

Transfer of public lands

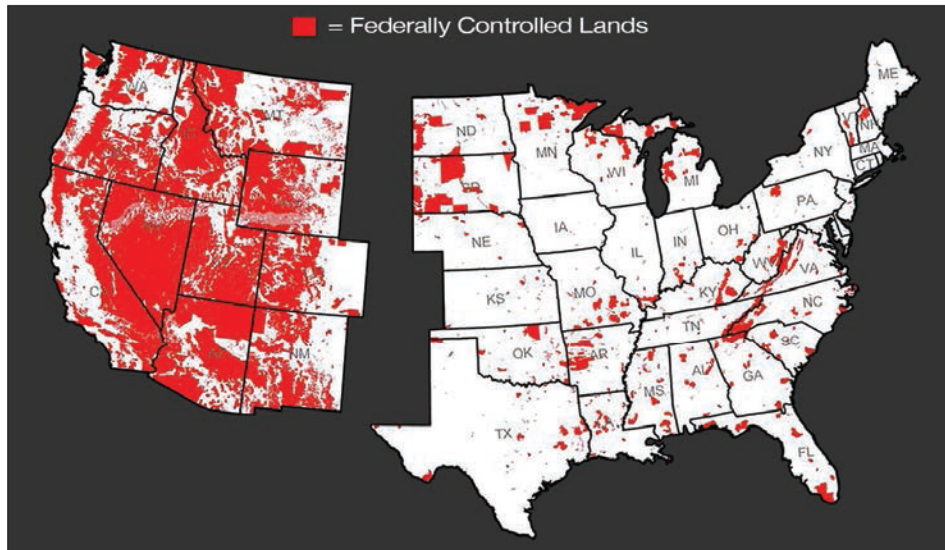
NEW OREGON HOUSE BILL, LOCAL RESOLUTIONS SUPPORT RETURN OF LANDS FROM FEDS BACK TO STATE CONTROL

By Kerry McQuisten
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A fact, according to the American Lands Council, is that 53 percent of Oregon's lands are federally controlled by agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States Forest Service (USFS). This acreage includes a huge chunk of Baker County—over half of its land as well.

As evidenced by new House Bill 3444 in Oregon, a statewide and local push is steadily growing toward the effort of taking those lands back into State control, which would have a huge local economic impact.

Last September 13, Utah State Representative Ken Ivory, who is also president of the nonprofit



Submitted Photo.

This map from the American Lands Council shows the amount of federally controlled lands in red.

American Lands Council mentioned above, gave a day-long seminar in Baker City with "Transfer of Public Lands" as the topic.

The Baker County Press

provided exclusive coverage of the event.

Months later, Ivory's message has grown with both the Baker County Republican Party and

members of the Oregon Legislature in the continuing stages of the movement to support Transfer of Public Lands.

See **TRANSFER** / Page 5

Cooperative law enforcement agreement awaits signature

SOUTHWICK, HARVEY DISAGREE ON CONCEPT OF COUNTY CITATION

By Brian Addison
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A Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreement between the Baker County Sheriff's Department and United States Forest Service (USFS) awaits only the signature of Bill Harvey, chairman of the Baker County Board of Commissioners.

The agreement was signed by Baker County Sheriff Mitchell Southwick on Feb. 12, 2015.

A law enforcement agreement between local and federal law enforcement agencies has been in place for many years and typically provides an additional \$6,500 per year to an annual County Sheriff's Department patrol budget of \$1.2 million, according to Southwick.

See **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT** / Page 5



Friday

Sunny and warm with a high around 65. Increasing clouds in the early evening give way to cloudy skies overnight. Lows around 40.



Saturday

Cloudy with a high near 60. Cloudy with a chance of a spotty shower overnight. Lows in the mid-40s.



Sunday

Rain possible with the chance for a thunderstorm mixed in. Chance of precipitation is 70%. Chance of thunderstorm is 30%. Highs around 60. Low around 40 at night.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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