

Business & Ag

County declares drought disaster

By Todd Arriola
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Last week, the Baker County Board of Commissioners, Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioner Mark Bennett and Commissioner Tim Kerns, voted unanimously to approve a Declaration Of Local Disaster, addressed to Oregon Governor Kate Brown, concerning the drought situation in the county.

At the time of the declaration, several reasons were cited for the request to Brown:

"Whereas, the County of Baker on this 18th day of March, 2015, has determined that the Baker County agricultural industry, and related economy is suffering widespread and severe economic damage, potential injuries, and loss of property resulting from extreme cyclical weather conditions within the county."

"Baker County's snow-pack is just over 50% of normal, and the snow water equivalent is less than last year, with some sites being less than half of what was there in 2014, in which a drought was declared."

"Phillips Reservoir, the largest water reservoir in the county, is only 31%

full at this time, which is 69% of average."

"The extended weather forecast for Baker County projects 'higher than normal temperatures, and below average precipitation.'"

"The county has a third of it in moderate drought, a third in severe drought, and a third in extreme drought, as represented from the U.S. Drought Monitor, information released March 12, 2015."

"These disaster conditions have resulted in loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for Baker County agricultural producers. In addition, this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased forest fuel moisture and resulted in early onset fire danger."

"Whereas, the Baker County Board of Commissioners has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the suffering of people and livestock and to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires.

The Commissioners requested that Brown declare "A Local Disaster and State of Emergency" exists within the county. Per this

declaration, expedited assistance is requested from Secretary Tom Vilsack of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to local agricultural industries/producers suffering extensive and continuing losses from the drought and associated wildfires. Also requested is availability of Temporary Transfers of Water Rights, Emergency Water Use Permits, and Use of Existing Right Option/Agreement, which are the three primary assistance mechanisms from the Oregon Department of Water Resources.

Baker County Emergency Manager Jason Yencopal said, concerning the declaration, "It's a little bit early, but it allows people to start planning, and getting ready for it. We don't have the snow pack. I've actually been out helping with that snow survey." He said he'd been to the Little Antone (at an elevation of 4,560 feet) and Little Alps (at an elevation of 6,360 feet) snow level hand survey sites last March, and observed at Little Alps a significant snow level there, but during the first part of March this year, the level was about seven inches, whereas February's level this year was around

fifteen inches. "There was so much ground showing," he said.

Yencopal said April 1st is the designated start of the agricultural grazing season, and because of the moderate to extreme drought conditions already in Baker County, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, federal and/or state assistance, including emergency funding to be determined, should be available after that point in time.

According to the declaration, a local disaster has been declared by the Commissioners within Baker County, and the Baker County Emergency Operation Plan (EOP), Drought Annex plan has been implemented.

Harvey said, "In the past, because of where the snow levels have been, etc., they've had declarations in even better conditions than we're in now," and he talked about other bordering counties already declaring a local disaster, Malheur and Harney, for example. The sooner the declaration, the better, he said, because it allows people in the county the flexibility to legally move water where it's needed, for irrigation purposes, etc.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, March 20, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

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

Teff - Large Square/Good, 32 tons, \$130 avg.
Triticale/Teff Mix, 55 tons, \$125 avg.

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, March 18, 2015
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,058

Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk 318.00 - 346.00 Top 355.00
400-500# Bulk 288.00 - 336.00 Top 338.00
500-600# Bulk 262.00 - 293.00 Top 295.00

Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk 283.00 - 316.00 Top 319.00
400-500# Bulk 263.00 - 293.00 Top 294.50
500-600# Bulk 234.00 - 263.00 Top 265.00

Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 234.00 - 266.00 Top 268.00
700-800# Bulk 201.00 - 219.00 Top 220.00
800-900# Bulk 177.00 - 189.00 Top 191.00
900-1,000# Bulk 161.00 - 173.50 Top 175.00

Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 208.00 - 218.00 Top 219.00
700-800# Bulk N/A Top N/A
800-900# Bulk N/A Top N/A
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows 81.00 - 93.00
Butcher Cows 94.00 - 106.00
Butcher Bulls 106.00 - 123.00
Stock Cows 1375.00 - 2300.00
Younger Hfrts. 116.00 - 151.00
Stock Cows Yng. - N/A

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— 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: \$1188.60
Silver: \$16.88
Platinum: \$1,140.63
Palladium: \$766.00

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$392.50/bu/USD
Wheat: \$523.00/bu/USD
Soybeans: \$976.50/bu/USD
Oats: \$281.00/bu/USD
Rough Rice: \$11.11/cwt/USD
Canola: \$461.60 CAD/mwt
Live Cattle: \$152.50/lb./USD
Feeder Cattle: \$217.60/lb./USD
Lean Hogs: \$73.70/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

Marilyn's Music moves on Main

By Meghan Andersch
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Damon and Mandie Rose, owners of Marilyn's Music, recently moved into a new space across the street from the original location. They said the move allows them to conduct business in a smaller, more intimate setting and also allows them to have their home and business in the same location.

The Rose family now lives in the same space as their store, with the store on the ground floor and the living quarters above it. Mandie said it's nice to have their home and work be together. Damon said he appreciates the opportunity for the kids to be in the same space as them but still be at home.

Marilyn's Music is open for business, with the Roses tentatively planning a "Grand Opening" event for sometime in the next couple of months. They are in the midst of constructing a recording studio and screen print shop in the back of the store. Damon said the screen print shop will be for "band merch," though they will also be willing to help if other groups need T-shirts. Da-



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Damon and Mandie Rose recently moved Marilyn's Music across the street.

mon said there have been a lot of late nights getting things put together.

They are also working on obtaining the VAIO building. Damon spoke of the possibility of a non-profit to offer low-cost and free lessons and Rock Camp type activities to kids.

He said he and Mandie have been occupied with the move so others, including a Board of Directors, are working on the non-profit piece of things at the moment.

Damon said they would like to be able to teach kids how to record their own albums and make their own T-shirts.

To that end, the VAIO building would have its own recording studio and screen printing area, but Damon said it would be more a "do it yourself" venue. The VAIO building would also be used for jam sessions, which the new space is too small to offer.

Marilyn's Music continues to offer the same services and merchandise

as before the move, but in a more intimate setting. Services include instrument repairs, recording, and music lesson referrals. Mandie said she really enjoys the new space and thinks it is a true reflection of Damon's style.

He did a lot of construction and arranging of the new store area.

Marilyn's Music is now located at 1832 Main Street and is open Mondays 12-6 p.m., and Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Foreign persons must report holdings

The Executive Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Baker-Grant County, Trent Luschen, reminds foreign persons with an interest in agricultural lands in the United States that they are required to report their holdings and any transactions to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

"Any foreign person who acquires, transfers or holds any interest, other than a security interest, including leaseholds of 10 years or more, in agricultural land in the United States is re-

quired by law to report the transaction no later than 90 days after the date of the transaction," said Luschen.

Foreign investors must file Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) reports with the FSA county office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located.

"Failure to file a report, filing a late report or filing an inaccurate report can result in a penalty with fines up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land," said Luschen.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more.

Disclosure reports are also required when there are changes in land use. For example, reports are required when land use changes from nonagricultural to agricultural or from agricultural to nonagricultural. Foreign investors must also file a report when there is a change in the status of ownership such as the owner changes from foreign to non-for-

ign, from non-foreign to foreign or from foreign to foreign.

Data gained from these disclosures is used to prepare an annual report to the President and Congress concerning the effect of such holdings upon family farms and rural communities in the United States. For more information regarding AFIDA and FSA programs, contact the Baker-Grant County FSA office at 541-523-7121 ex.106 or visit the USDA website at <http://www.usda.gov>.