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# The Baker County Press

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

GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY HELD MONDAY

## Pavilion construction begins



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

15 golden shovels hit the ground Monday at noon to break ground for the new bandstand in the park.

By Gina K. Swartz  
Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

It has been a long time coming! The Baker City Geiser-Pollman bandstand pavilion project began as only a conversation nearly 10 years ago.

Monday saw a celebration of all the dedication of those who either were in the conversation from the start or joined along the way.

Members from the bandstand committee along with members from the contributing Soroptimists International, Baker County, Architect Larry Abell, Contractor Mark Johnson of Sid Johnson & Com-

pany and City Councilors Mike Downing, Rosemary Abell, Richard Langrell, and James Thomas all wielded golden shovels in a ground-breaking ceremony.

Bandstand committee chair, Bob Hunsaker, addressed the crowd that gathered to watch the symbolic ceremony. He began by welcoming everyone and told the crowd “103 years ago John Phillip Sousa played in this park and in all likelihood he played in an almost new band shell that was put in in 1910.”

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Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Phyllis Badgley and Al Durgan, part of the project since its start, show off their shoveling skills.

## Controversial gun control bill moves toward law

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT WEIGHS IN ON SENATE BILL 941



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

SB941 is a hot topic this week in Salem.

By Kerry McQuisten  
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Monday, the most recent gun control bill fraught with controversy, Senate Bill 941, swept through the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee on a three-to-two vote, strictly along party lines. Democratic Senators Floyd Prozanski and Ginny Burdick are SB 941’s chief sponsors.

Prozanski has attempted similar bills in the past, but the Democrats had a smaller majority than now. Current numbers in the Senate mean the controversial bill is almost sure to receive enough votes on the senate floor to pass. Rather than go from the Senate floor to the House’s Judiciary committee, which is standard protocol, the bill has been tapped to go through the Democrat-controlled House Rules Committee instead, ensuring a path to the House floor where, again, it is almost sure to pass.

The bill “declares an emergency,” meaning instant implementation, and requires any private person to complete transfer of firearm by appearing with the transferee before a gun dealer to request a criminal background check.

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## Commissioners clarify stance on coordination vs. cooperation

LETTERS, ARTICLE CREATE FIRESTORM OVER EASTER WEEKEND



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Baker County’s three commissioners talked Wednesday about their stance with the USFS’ Travel Management Plan.

By Todd Arriola  
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Last Friday, an article published in *The Baker City Herald* with the headline, “Bennett, Kerns thank USFS” launched a flurry of calls and emails spanning hundreds of eastern Oregon citizens, including members of Forest Access For All (FAFA), media and various other groups and residents.

In the center of the controversy, whether letters mentioned in that article signal a departure from Commissioner Mark Bennett’s former pro-coordination stance regarding the United States Forest Service’s (USFS) Travel Management Plan—a

departure that might have left Chair Bill Harvey as the lone voice against the County taking a secondary role to the USFS through cooperation.

Bennett clarified this week, though, that he has not moved away from coordination.

The first letter from Bennett to Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya, dated March 30, 2015, in its entirety, reads:

“In follow up to our phone conversation on March 30, 2015, I appreciated the extension of 90 days granted to Baker County to submit additional data from the December closure date.”

See COMMISSIONERS’ LETTERS / Page 9

By Kerry McQuisten  
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

After the trial date of April 2 was cancelled in the case of former Baker City Mayor and current City Councillor Richard Langrell and his wife Lynne versus the City of Baker City, it was evident a settlement was on the way.

A recent ruling by Judge Ron Pahl from Umatilla, excluded presenting what the City considered important evidentiary materials at trial.

After the past week, negotiations between the City’s Attorney, Brent Smith from La Grande and the Langrell’s attorney, Rebecca Knapp from Enterprise, were successful and a settlement amount of \$50,000 was reached.

Almost \$17,000 of the settlement amount is reimbursement for past sewer and water fees, which were paid by the Langrells and their business, The Always Welcome Inn.

The portion of the settlement amount will go toward recuperating payment for court fees, but the rest of the settlement will provided reimbursement for Knapp’s attorney fees.

The amount spend in attorney’s fees by the City in defending the suit was unavailable in time for print.

**Friday** Mostly sunny with highs in the mid-60s. Cloudy and mild at night with a low around 37.

**Saturday** Cloudy with an increased risk of rain showers. Chance of precipitation is 30%, highs in the mid 50s. Low around 35.

**Sunday** 30% chance for rain and snow showers, no accumulation is expected. High of 47, low of 29.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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2015 Annual Meeting Saturday, May 2 | John Day

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