



# The Baker County Press

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## Council sets 2015-2016 goals

• 2015-2016 goals adopted, Langrell lawsuit settlement finalized, fees and ordinances discussed

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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A dusting of spring snow fell on the metal rooftops visible through the Council Chambers' windows as Baker City's City Council met primarily to discuss 2015-2016 Council goals, City fees, and vote to finalize the

settlement in Councilman Richard Langrell's lawsuit against the City.

After a half-hour executive session to discuss legal matters per the agenda, the Council opened its general meeting at 7 p.m. The full Council was present, beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation led by youth pastor Luke Remboldt.

**Citizens' Participation**  
Yvonne Da Torre of Baker City, as well as two other citizens who arrived with her, spoke of their concerns about using herbicides such as 2,4-D,

particularly in the City's playgrounds and parks.

"I would like to see them banned in public spaces, especially where children play," Da Torre said.

Participants suggested that the City research the potential carcinogenic effects of herbicides and consider natural herbicides such as vinegar instead.

Public Works Director Michelle Owen will pull together more information about which herbicides are currently used. A City ordinance already requires posting notices in sprayed locations, but the citizens

who testified think this step isn't sufficient to protect against health hazards and lawsuits.

**Tree Board.**

Two applicants, Jeff Stahman and Christine Howard, applied to one position on the Tree Board. In a split 4-3 vote, Stahman was appointed. Howard was encouraged to keep her application active as openings occur regularly.

**Resolutions.**

All the resolutions on the agenda passed unanimously. Most included budgetary and fee issues.

SEE CITY PAGE 10



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Councilor Richard Langrell recused himself as the rest of the Council unanimously voted to finalize a \$50,000 settlement in his lawsuit against the City.



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

L-R: Julie McCormick, Lt. Kirk McCormick, and Bonnie McCormick say farewell to Baker City.

## Onward and upward!

• Local police lieutenant, Kirk McCormick, accepts Police Chief position in South Dakota

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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On Wednesday, co-workers, family and friends in the community held a farewell celebration in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall for Lieutenant Kirk McCormick, who is resigning from the Baker City Police Department after 20 years of service, in order to relocate to Scotland, South Dakota, to become its new Chief of Police.

Wyn Lohner, Baker City Chief of Police, said, "I want to thank everybody for coming down today. As you know, Lieutenant

McCormick is going to be leaving the department, leaving the city, and leaving the state of Oregon. He couldn't get far enough away, so, he's going all the way to South Dakota.

"I hope everybody understands what he's invested in this community over the last 21 years almost. He's gone from being a dispatcher, to working drug enforcement, into investigations. He's run investigations for a lot of years, and then, was promoted to Sergeant.

"He's been Operations Sergeant, Administrative Sergeant, and finally, this last year, he was promoted to Lieutenant, which, in effect, he's been for probably the last five or six years. I know he's made my job a whole lot easier. Someone that you can count on to be there, day in and day out. I probably never served with anybody in my career

that stayed as level and even-keeled the way that Kirk has. It doesn't matter whether it's a bad day or a good day as far as the calls or service, he's always the same person.

"He shows up every day, he enjoys his work, and I have no doubt that, when he goes back to Scotland, he's going to carry that with him. He's going to go back to a small community, with a lot of really good people.

"It's going to be a tremendous opportunity for him to go back there, and do what every one of us in law enforcement truly wants to do, and that's work with people to solve problems. I just want you to know how much I appreciate you've done for me, and especially for our community, because, that is why we're here, for this community. I know that's what you poured

your heart into for the last 20-plus years."

Mike Kee, Baker City Manager, said, "I agree with all of that. I've worked with you for five years, and actually knew you before that. We have shared a lot of good times. We've laughed together, uncontrollably. We've cried together. This is from the City, and I just wanted to express how grateful we are, Kirk, and how much we're going to miss you."

Kee presented McCormick with a desk plaque, which reads "In Recognition of Exceptional Service, Honoring Lt. Kirk McCormick, with sincere appreciation for your 20 years of dedication, loyalty and commitment. Thank you for giving of yourself, honorably serving the citizens of Baker City, OR."

SEE McCORMICK PAGE 5

## Marijuana debate hits County level

• Commissioners discuss marijuana dispensaries, appoint Natural Resource Advisory Committee members

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The full Baker County Board of Commissioners met Wednesday with an agenda spanning marijuana dispensaries to mining to committee appointments.

Attendees included Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, Baker County District Attorney Matt Shirlcliff, Baker County Assessor Kerry Savage, Baker County Assistant Assessor Shawn Berry, Attorney Dan Van Thiel, Haines Mayor Jim Brown, Blue Mountain Translator District Manager Beverly Beach, Ed Hardt, Ken Anderson, Wanda and Tork Ballard, Bobbie Danser, Chuck Chase, Gary Dielman and Bruce Morrison.

SEE COUNTY PAGE 4

## A haven for gamers is now open

• NEW BUSINESS, GAMER HAVEN, OPENS INSIDE AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH  
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Baker City now offers a dedicated gaming space and store: Gamer Haven.

Scott Violette and partner, Josh Neilson, rented out half of the American Legion building and did a soft opening of Gamer Haven about three weeks ago.

As explained on their website, gamer-haven.com, "For years Scot and Josh have been trying to figure out what is wrong with our beloved Baker City. After one of our famous bull sessions we have realized there are no havens for us gamers to play at!"

SEE GAMER HAVEN PAGE 3

**Friday** Clear and warm with a high around 70. Temperatures dropping to the upper 30s at night.

**Saturday** Another sunny day with highs in the upper 60s. Lows at night will be around 30.

**Sunday** Highs around 68 to round out a fully sunny weekend. Clouds increase as Monday approaches. Lows at night around 35.

### Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

Our forecast made possible by this generous sponsor:



2015 Annual Meeting Saturday, May 2 | John Day

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

MEDICAL SPRINGS: WOLVES v. ELK	Page 3
GRANT CO. FOREST ACCESS	Page 5
SAGE-GROUSE CCAA MEETING	Page 7
AMERICAN LEGION CHANGES	Page 8
ST. AL'S: FIVE YEARS IN BAKER CITY	Page 9
TRINDLE, SUMPTER RR AWARDS	Page 9



8