

Local

Huntington food bank gets donation from Ore-Ida

• A PALLET OF FRENCH FRIES WILL GO TO THE NEEDY

BY EILEEN DRIVER
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The Huntington Food Bank was the grateful recipient of a pallet of frozen crinkle cut french fries in a donation from H. J. Heinz Company's Ore-Ida plant in Ontario, Oregon.

"This donation will go a long way toward helping us feed the low income families in this area," said to Food Bank Coordinator Allan Driver.

The Heinz Frozen Food Company was founded in Ontario, Oregon in 1951. The company purchases 1.1 million pounds of potatoes annually from 250 potato growers in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The Ontario Ore-Ida plant employs about 1000 local workers and has an annual payroll of over 17 million dollars. The Ore-



Eileen Driver / The Baker County Press

An Ore-Ida employee operates the forklift to unload the pallet of frozen fries received at the Huntington Food Bank.

Ida employee who loaded the pallet onto the pickup for the food bank was a very shy man named Lalo who told Allan Driver to "Come back any time, we enjoy giving back to the community."

The Huntington Food bank, sponsored by the Huntington Christian Church and the Huntington Lion's Club who run the day to day operations, has had an increase in need for supplemental food over

the past several months and will continue to look for donations of food and funds to meet that need from other generous companies such as Ore-Ida who believe in supporting their communities.

1-63 heats up

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Part of the "yes on 1-63" committee is Democrat Elliot Averett, who said his involvement has been limited to creating the group's online campaign presence. Averett declined to answer how he initially became involved. Averett is a college student and Baker City native who resides in St. Paul, MN. "I care deeply about what happens to Baker County and would love to live there should the local economy allow for it after I graduate," Averett said.

Averett and Joseph referred this reporter to the remaining committee members: Kate Rohner, Sharon Defrees, Mary Jane Guyer, and Hayden Perkins. The group emailed back a decision via Averett to decline response to the questions asked, and referred to their web site, which contains prepared statements and a letter from Rohner describing her family's roots in the area. "We care about Baker County! That's why we're encouraging everyone to vote yes on Baker County Measure 1-63," Rohner writes. "My love for Baker County is based on the people who make this community great, not its politics. A nonpartisan commission will give voters who don't identify with the two-party system a greater voice in our future."

One declined question included mention of the open primary measure in Salem right now that would open the primary to NAVs (non-affiliated voters) in the primary without changing Baker County's County commissioner positions, and asked if the group could get behind that measure instead. Another question asked simply how they each became involved in this effort.

One final question the committee declined to answer was, "Have you considered a county home rule structure as opposed to our current county structure? Would that structure have negated a need, in your opinion, for the 1-63 movement?"

County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, wasn't hesitant to weigh in, however. He said, "I am absolutely against the nonpartisan push for County Commissioner. The partisan system has worked for over 240 years and continues to serve us well in presidential, congressional, gubernatorial and County Commissioner elected positions. Any political party gets to choose their candidates for the primary election. Every single voter gets to vote in the general election. I would hope that unlike the 2014 Primary election, the Democratic, Liberal and Independent parties would bring forth their candidates in the next election."

Baker County Republican Chair Suzan Ellis Jones explained how they entered the fight to oppose 1-63. "In the spring of 2014, Chief Petitioner Randy Joseph, who is also an unsuccessful County Commissioner candidate, along with his wife and other Democrats filed and started to circulate petitions. The Baker County Republicans discussed this issue at length and voted to oppose it and also adopted a resolution that passed unanimously against nonpartisan commissioners."

Local businessman Tom Van Diepen heads the Republican's subcommittee against 1-63. "When I found out about the nonpartisan initiative, I became concerned. Russia in 1917 came to mind and Germany in 1936. 1948 in China was not a happy day for freedom. More recently we can consider North Korea and Iran. I am sure there are other examples of single party developments in the world, but these were enough for me to see a trend. I think it should be stopped now," he said.

Jones added, "Nonpartisan candidates have a lack of accountability to the voters as they are not tied to a platform or core beliefs of an organized party. To ignore the fact that political philosophy guides decision-making is a thinking error! Baker County is a conservative county. We need to maintain that culture and vote against this move to a one-party system."

Jones said, "The 'yes' crowd does not even seem to understand the different forms of County government. They mix apples and oranges when they talk about how so many counties have nonpartisan commissioners. The surrounding counties who went nonpartisan— one has a County Court system and the other two are like Baker: general law county commissioners. Those who lived in those counties last fall when they went nonpartisan say this issue got lost in the middle of the election of candidates, and now they are looking at how to reverse those nonpartisan decisions."

A third type of county government is "home rule," which allows a County to set many of their own rules of operation, such as an open primary but with partisan commissioners while still maintaining local representative control during any necessary appointment of a new commissioner should one leave office midstream

Regarding such a replacement, one sticking point for opponents is the statement on the proponents' web site, "there is no change to the current process" for when a Commissioner resigns. The site cites ORS 236.225.

"I don't think any of that committee has ever been through a nominating convention to replace a county commissioner, and it's apparent they don't understand the process," said Jones. "We, however, have all been through the process just two years ago when Carl Stiff resigned. We know in person and from experience how it works—how amazingly well it works. The 1-63 committee should have looked at ORS 236.215, ORS 236.217, and so on. If 1-63 passes, it will eliminate much of our local representative appointment process. Right now up to 50 people elected from all corners of Baker County screen, interview and nominate the finalists for a commissioner replacement, then present those nominees to the County. That representative process will go away."

Van Diepen said, "The community seems to agree (with us) because when some saw a 'no on 1-63' sign next to my office, they began to come in and ask for signs to put up. They had seen some yes signs and felt they needed representation for their position. I was able to hand out about ten signs to people. I wish we had more signs. I fervently hope this bad idea goes down in May."

Ballots hit the mail on April 29 for the May 19 election.

League of Oregon Cities meets in Sumpter

• SMALL CITIES FORUM NETWORKS RURAL AREAS

BY EILEEN DRIVER
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The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Small Cities Forum quarterly meeting for Eastern Oregon Region 8 was held on Thursday, April 16 at the Sumpter Community Center, the Old School House in Sumpter at 11:00 a.m.

These meetings are essential for small rural city officials to network together to find help and advice on problems facing their respective communities or to report projects that are going right and how they made it happen.

The meeting was called to order by Sumpter Mayor Melissa Findley with, "We in Sumpter are very pleased to host this meeting and to have you all attend." She then introduced Charles Conrad, the LOC Research Coordinator who started off the meeting

with a discussion of City Budgets and how each city handles the budget process. Both John Day and Halfway reported that they use a CPA to prepare their annual budgets and find the expense to be well worth it. All cities reported that finding ways to make the City dollar stretch and keep up with ever-changing state regulations is getting harder all the time.

Explaining the City budget to the populace so they can understand it was also of concern. The consensus was that good communication about any changes that need to be made to the budget and why those changes need to be made are very helpful in streamlining the whole process.

Other topics discussed were the complexities of the new marijuana laws as well as cities' possible income from local taxes on marijuana sales, the benefits of hiring a grant writer versus writing grants themselves, having monthly dump fees or a per-use dump fee, the percentages of prop-

erty taxes countywide, the pros and cons of system development charges as well as how they work and the gearing up of the whole region for the upcoming tourist season. One of the main concerns of many of the cities but especially the City of Halfway is the possible closure of forest roads, which will virtually end their tourist trade as hunting, fishing and camping will no longer be as accessible or in some cases totally cut off to the people who come there for that purpose.

All of the cities represented at the meeting are very concerned about the fact that new state laws are not helping Eastern Oregon to recover from the economic downturn and they all need help to find new ways to survive.

Also included on the agenda was an explanation by Charles Conrad of the tools available to all League of Oregon Cities members on the LOC website including the Finance Toolkit for creating charts and graph, the budget

resource page, the water rate study report and the marijuana laws research pages. The new Regional Representative for Baker County of the Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA) Shauna Bailey was present and introduced as well.

Lunch was served and included baked chicken and mushrooms with gravy served over rice as well as a green salad and fudgy brownies for dessert.

City officials and employees from Haines, Halfway, Huntington, John Day, Seneca and Sumpter were present as well as representatives from Anderson Perry Engineering, the Department of Environmental Quality, Holaday Engineering and Infrastructure Finance Authority.

Everyone was reminded of the Mayors Meeting, which will be held on May 21 in Halfway.

The next Small Cities Forum meeting was set for July 16 in Huntington and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

— OBITUARIES —

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William F. Shelley
Baker City, 1921-2015

William F. Shelley, age 94, passed away on April 14, 2015. He was born on March 29, 1921 in Yreka, CA. After a childhood spent mostly in Yreka, William joined the Army Air Corps and served from Sept 1939 to Sept 1945. During his time in the military he flew 39 missions as an aerial photographer. He was awarded numerous honors including medals for Good Conduct, American Defense Service, Asiatic Pacific Campaign,



William Shelley

European African Middle Eastern Campaign, Distinguished Flying Cross, and World War II Victory.

Returning from war found him also returning to school. He received bachelors and masters degrees from Eastern Washington University and University of Washington, respectively. William spent his career in education in Washington State. Initially as a teacher and later in administration, ultimately as a school district superintendent. He was especially proud of the music programs and studies that showed students taking music classes had improved test scores in other subjects.

William moved to Oregon in the early 90s, Florence and later Baker City. He enjoyed a lifelong love

of airplanes, flying, music and photography. In semi-retirement he continued to do some travel and model portfolio photography for many years.

Always an avid reader, it was difficult when much of his eyesight was lost to macular degeneration. He possessed a remarkable attitude and the ability to adapt and make the best of any situation.

He retained an interest in national and world events, and appreciated the Congressional Talking Books program that enabled him to continue reading. He maintained a lifetime membership of the Masonic Lodge in White Salmon, WA.

Known most of his life by the nickname Bill, at 91 years of age he chose to

use Will instead, because why not?

Cherished as a man with a very generous, giving, kind, and unselfish nature, William will be greatly missed by many friends and family. He had an innate ability to positively touch the lives of virtually everyone who knew him.

A potluck celebration to remember him will be held at 5:30 p.m. on May 7, 2015, at Settler's Park, 2895 17th St, Baker City, OR.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Casey Eye Institute, Macular Degeneration Center, 1121 SW Salmon St. Suite 100, Portland, OR 97205, or send them through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, Oregon 97814.