

Local

Transient Lodging Tax Committee disperses grants

• \$6,750 HANDED OUT TO THREE MORE EVENTS

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The Baker County Transient Lodging Tax Committee (TLTC) met for its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 21, at 10 a.m., in the Commissioners Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse. Present from the Committee were Chair Carrie Folkman, Beverly Calder, Kathy Reedy and Chelsea McLagan.

Attendees included Timothy Bishop, Baker County Tourism Marketing Director, Karlynn Dolby, Baker County Payroll, Bill Harvey, Baker County Commissioner, LeAnne Woolf, City of Sumpter Councilor, Brian Vegter, Baker County Cultural Coalition Committee, Lea Hoover, Baker Heritage Museum Director, Paula Moe, Baker County YMCA Aquatics Director, Jeff Nelson, Cheryl Martin, and Cassie Petrucci, Baker County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, Karen Spencer, Baker County Parks and Recreation Director, and Alice Trindle, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association Executive Director.

After roll call, the minutes from the March 17, 2015 meeting were approved, with a motion from Folkman and a second from Calder.

Three grant applications were considered by the Committee during this meeting: Baker City Cycling Classic, in the amount of \$3,000; We Like 'Em Short Film Festival, in the amount of \$3,000; and Baker Dine-N-Dash, in the amount of \$1,000. All of these grants were requested on April 17, 2015.

Vegter spoke about the Baker Cycling Classic, June 26-28, 2015. He said that Sumpter is the planned Start and Finish location, and that next year is the 15th anniversary of the race. Folkman discussed the budget and revenue sources with Vegter, and she informed the attendees that grants awarded this year so far have been in the amount of \$27,250, with a balance left of \$750. The total requested amount for grants this year was \$46,885. Folkman said that, as an option, in the case of approval of any of the grants requested at the meeting, funds could be used from next year's budget, available after July 1st.

Calder praised Vegter for his marketing efforts regarding the race, including gaining more local



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Karen Spencer (front left) and Alice Trindle pose with awards in hand.

sponsorships, as costs have increased for the event.

Vegter also spoke to the Committee about the We Like 'Em Short Film Festival. He said last weekend, during the Pendleton Real West Film Festival, he met with Tim Williams of the Governor's Office of Film and Television, and that Williams plans to speak at the We Like 'Em Short Film Festival about the film industry and its effect on Oregon's economy.

Vegter said last year, there were about 65 films submitted for the festival, including 13 locally produced, and this year, so far, that number has more than doubled, to over 144.

Vegter said he would like to spend \$1,800 this year on advertising, and that last year, the amount spent was about \$600.

Moe discussed the Baker City Dive-N-Dash, to be held May 3-4, 2015. She said about 40 swimmers from out of the area, from Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, will be included in the attendance, for a total of around 80 registered for the event so far, she said. She said the number of swimmers is steadily increasing each year, and while it's a volunteer-driven event, the grant funds would be used to pay for a referee, including fuel costs, training, and lodging, and to pay for trophies.

Calder moved to approve \$750, the remaining grant funds, to be awarded for the Baker Dive-N-Dash event, and Folkman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Folkman moved to approve \$3,000 to be awarded for the Baker City Cycling Classic event, and Reedy seconded the motion. The motion carried. The funds will be dispersed after July 1st, which is the end of the fiscal year.

Folkman moved to approve \$3,000 to be awarded for the We Like 'Em Short Film Festival, and Calder seconded the motion. The funds also will be dispersed after July 1st.

Hoover spoke with the Committee about her experience as the new museum Director. She said she's excited about the opportunity, and the museum opened in March, with many visitors so far this season. Hoover mentioned she is looking to increase marketing efforts, and she said that around a month ago, crew members representing the Travel Channel filmed a segment for the show *Mysteries At The Museum* there. She said that crew has shown an interest in returning in the future to film more segments.

Bishop and McLagan talked with the Committee about the Governor's Conference on Tourism, held in Eugene, April 12-14, 2015, and emphasized that it was a successful event, and that more networking with different people was accomplished. Bishop congratulated Trindle for receiving the Governor's Tourism Award, and Spencer for receiving the Oregon Heritage Tourism Award for the Sumpter Valley Railroad (SVRR), both awards presented at the conference. He said the conference is scheduled to be held in Pendleton next year.

Trindle talked about what an honor receiving the award is, and read from her plaque: "In recognition of your tireless dedication to the future of Oregon's tourism industry. Thank you for providing the quality experience Oregon's visitors enjoy daily." She spoke about the state of tourism in the state, and about the major contribu-

tions from and recognition needed for eastern Oregon, and praised Bishop for his efforts concerning the tourism industry.

Spencer spoke of her excitement in receiving the award, and said the timing is great, since the SVRR's wood-burning locomotive has been in service for 100 years. She also praised Bishop for his efforts, and talked about what tourism offerings there are locally. The Committee congratulated both Trindle and Spencer, and thanked them and Bishop for their efforts.

Nelson handed out flyers for a Business Resource Meet and Greet, presented by the Baker County Chamber of Commerce and the Baker County Small Business Development Center, held at Lefty's Taphouse, 1934 Broadway, in Baker City, on Wednesday, April 22. This presentation was the first one of the year of the monthly series Pub Talk, and provided an overview of the resources and programs available to businesses in Baker County. Nelson also mentioned that Woolf is a newly-elected Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors member.

Dolby and the Committee discussed the need to advertise for a vacant position on the Committee, since Deborah Webb had previously resigned. The member would preferably be from an outlying community. Folkman said a tourism background is desirable, but wouldn't be required.

The next regular TLTC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., with the location to be determined. This will be the last meeting until September.

Firefighter training

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With Governor Kate Brown declaring Baker County in a state of emergency with drought conditions already, wild land fires are a realistic threat to the local area.

The wildland urban-interface scenario included firefighters from the United States Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and Bureau of Land Management fire crews from around the Baker area.

Another skill station was in the vicinity of OTEC and Cutter's Edge at the Baker City Fire Department Training Center. The scenario at this stage was a firefighter rescue from a basement.

"This is a great exercise it really adds to the ongoing training that we have to do. We have a lot of opportunities to keep up on skills and learn new skills. Just last week we did a forcible entry class. Learning different ways to breach a doorway, size it up, what's the construction of it? Does it swing in or does it swing out? What tools are you going to take to breach that door? Cutter's Edge on the outside of town; they manufacture rescue saws and different equipment. They're really good about letting us use facilities out there and props to train with," Jason Bybee of Baker City Fire Department said.

The fourth and final skill station of the day was staged at the Baker City Municipal Airport. The Neff family participated as victims of a crash in this scenario and later in the day were thanked for doing an amazing job.

The Airport scenario included a simulated air show plane crash into the parking lot, which involved, said Gary Timm, Fire Division Manager of Baker County Emergency Management, "An airplane fire, vehicle fires patient extrication, and medical triage for approximately six community role players."

At this final skill station, Bowen Valley and Baker Rural worked together putting out a car fire successfully.

"Each year we create realistic and challenging scenarios but the overall goal is to allow agencies to evaluate and improve response skills, and ultimately enjoy the day," said Timm. "While this exercise could be seen as a fire service preparedness exercise, I'm hoping it will also be viewed as dedicated local firefighter coming together from around the county to enhance their abilities to respond within their own communities."

Baker City Fire Department Chief Mark John said earlier in a press release, "This interagency exercise allows agencies to come together and review incident stabilization techniques and best practices. It's also an opportunity to reinforce common operational platforms that can lead to the development of standardized practices throughout the county."

After the teams completed all of the skill stations, everyone gathered back at the Baker City Fire Department for a late lunch that consisted of donated Subway sandwiches and Pizza Hut pizza. Participants were also awarded gift certificates that were donated by Sorbenots and Barley Brown's. "Don't forget when you redeem these make sure to let them know they were donated for this event and thank them for their support. Same thing when you go in for a Subway sandwich, because you will," Timm reminded everyone. "They have supported us from the beginning."

In an exciting twist of events, as the winner was about to be announced, a report came in of a service vehicle fire with possible explosives in a vehicle on Chandler Lane, calling out Baker Rural as support for Haines Fire.

There was a buzz of excitement throughout the crowd, as fire service men and women prepared to answer what turned out to be a very real emergency call. No one was injured in the fire, but the scorch mark is still visible.

Coincidentally, Baker Rural Fire Protection District, which was called out for that vehicle fire, was also announced this year's winner of the Fire Service Task Performance Exercise.

The four-foot trophy was set aside to be presented once that team was available to accept it.

The fire services are always interested in bringing on new personnel. Those interested in joining and or volunteering for a local fire department/district are encouraged to contact their local agency.

Past Winners of the Baker County Fire Service Task Performance Exercise are:

- 2005 Keating Rural Fire Protection District
- 2006 Baker City Fire Department
- 2007 Baker Rural Fire Protection District
- 2008 Keating Rural Fire Protection District
- 2009 Baker Rural Fire Protection District
- 2010 Baker Rural Fire Protection District
- 2011 Baker City Fire Department
- 2012 Baker Rural Fire Protection District
- 2013 Baker City Fire Department
- 2014 Eagle Valley Fire Protection District
- 2015 Baker Rural Fire Protection District

NEOEDD seeks civics projects

It's time to submit projects for the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District's (NEOEDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Economic- and community-development projects for Baker, Union and Wallowa counties should be submitted by city and county governments and non-profit

organizations by Friday, May 8.

NEOEDD, which is updating its five-year plan, seeks projects that will have a positive impact on economic and community development and that are likely to be implemented in the next three years.

Projects must be submitted each year to remain on the current project list.

Transportation projects should only be included if there is a strong link to economic development. Private projects are not eligible.

The 2013-2018 CEDS and the 2014 update are available here: <http://www.neoedd.org/content/comprehensive-plan> Use the following link to submit project information:

<http://tinyurl.com/nctg7sr>

After May 8, NEOEDD will ask stakeholders and the public to rank the projects by importance. The Northeast Oregon Economic Development District's mission is to provide resources and facilitate quality decision-making for the benefit of entrepreneurs, businesses and communities.

Eagle Valley trees, weed spray giveaway soon

The Eagle Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, in conjunction with the Baker County Weed Department, will hold the annual Eagle Valley Tree and Herbicide Giveaway on Friday, May 8th at the "Y" in Richland. SWCD staff will give away trees beginning at 8 a.m. this year. Free trees will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Folks will also want to bring a five-gallon container suitable for herbicide transport (such as a plastic fuel container, etc.) The limit is five gallons of herbicide per landowner, and one gallon of mixed herbicide is enough to kill weeds in a 14,000 square foot area. Remember not to spray when the wind is blowing.