

Local

County: spay/neuter fund, public lands transfer, sage grouse, etc.

• FLYOVER SCHEDULED ON MONDAY OVER CEMETERY

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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On Wednesday, the Baker County Board of Commissioners held a regular, bi-monthly session to discuss an assortment of topics and appoint members to various committees.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioner Mark Bennett, Commissioner Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Attendees included Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) District Manager Whitney Collins, Mollie Atwater and Friends Spay/Neuter Fund Co-founder and Program Manager Suzanne Fouty, Ed Hardt, Lorri Harvey, Ramona and John Creighton, Chuck Chase, Bobbie Danser, Wanda and Tork Ballard, House District 64 Representative Kerry White from Montana and Marty Stroy.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the Invocation. The agenda was adopted.

For the Citizen Participation segment of the meeting, Chase was given the floor first, and he explained and discussed a five-page handout he provided to the Board and the attendees, Baker County Republican Central Committee Resolution No. 15-01, a document which emphasizes the transfer of title of public lands to States, including Oregon, for more local control. This resolution had been previously presented by the Republicans to the Commissioners last week.

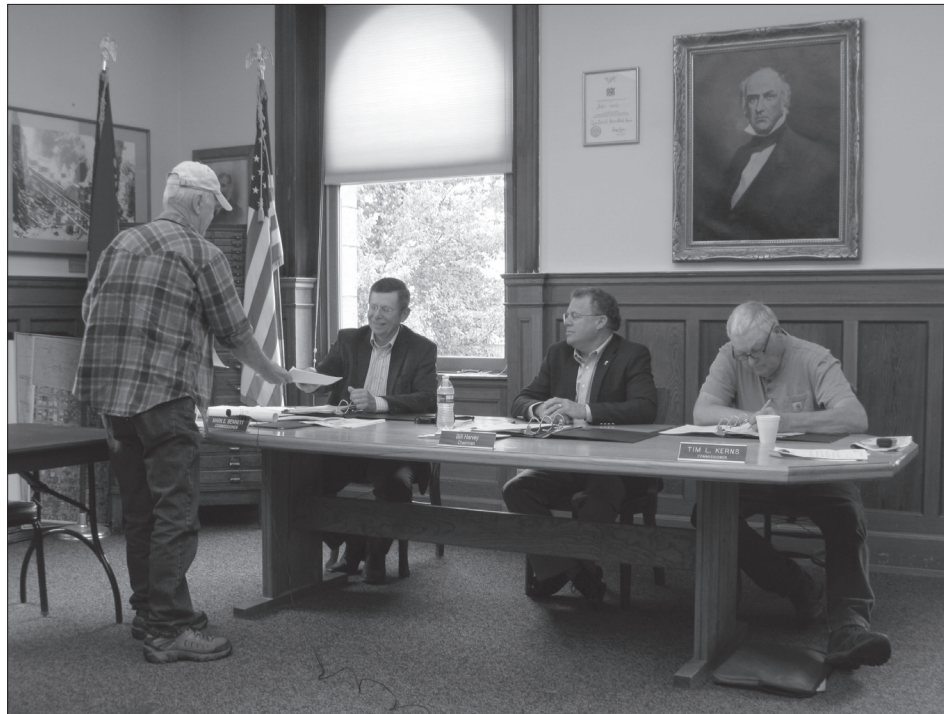
Hardt also discussed his concerns with adequate public input regarding the transfer of public lands, citing specifically problems with U.S. Forest Service-related land restrictions. Harvey and Bennett both responded that several committees are working on the issues, but it may be an uphill battle when they're addressed at the U.S. Senate stage.

After some discussion, Harvey stated that he believes Oregon has the same rights as any other state, with preferably less federal management of public lands.

White provided his input to the Board and attendees concerning the topic, and he said he's dealt with the same types of issues in Montana. He encouraged the Board to craft a plan for the next Legislative session, regarding possible watershed and other projects that could be implemented under the U.S. Farm Bill, within the County.

The Wednesday, April 29, 2015 special session minutes were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The Wednesday, May 6, 2015 minutes were approved.

The Board discussed with Fouty the Professional Services Agreement (PSA) between the County and Mollie Atwater and Friends Spay/Neuter Fund. She



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Chuck Chase hands the commissioners copies of Baker County Republican Central Committee Resolution No. 15-01, regarding public lands transfer.

explained the processes involved, including funds dispersal, which is in the form of vouchers, providing partial assistance with the cost to spay or neuter cats and dogs, to members of Baker County and North Powder, especially individuals with limited or fixed incomes. Fouty showed the Board thank you notes and positive comments from the community, and press releases, and said the organization is now listed in the Halfway telephone directory, as well as the publication "Health and Wellness."

She said the press releases will be sent to area newspapers, as updates during the year. This is part of the effort to expand awareness about cat and dog homelessness, and the organization is available to help, Fouty said. She said in January, students at Baker Middle School were asked to create advertisements, and some of these will be chosen from the 120 submissions, to help raise awareness about the issue. One of the more notable ones Fouty displayed to the Board and attendees had the caption, "Dogs can't add, cats can't subtract, but they sure can multiply."

Fouty said efforts are being made to secure personnel for more permanent help. The agreement, with some minor changes noted, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The period of the agreement is from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. The Board thanked Fouty, and praised her for her efforts. For more information about the program, Fouty can be reached at 541-523-2541.

The Board approved the PSA between the County and Bud Zunino, FNP (Family Nurse Practitioner), as Jail Medical Provider, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Zunino will be paid \$1,000 a month for the services provided, during the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

The Board discussed the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) 2015 Wolf Compensation And Financial Assistance Grant Agreement. Martin said that originally, around \$60,000 was requested from the ODA, but only \$17,315 was dispersed, per the grant. She said last year, one range rider was hired, and this year,

there was an expectation of hiring two, but the granted funds aren't adequate, a sentiment echoed by the Board, though the granted funds will be accepted. The exact dispersal of the granted funds will be a decision to be made by the Baker County Wolf Compensation Committee. With a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns, the grant agreement was approved.

Collins and Bennett discussed with the Board and attendees the potential listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse as an endangered species, after Bennett handed out copies of an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Sage-Grouse Core Areas map for Baker County. Bennett noted the significant portion of Baker County identified as core habitat and low density areas, which includes farmland. Collins explained the process for landowners to form an agreement with the Baker County SWCD, basically a type of free, 30-year "insurance policy," called a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), as protection in the event the Sage-Grouse is listed. Bennett noted that the listing decision will unfortunately be a political one, and if the Sage-Grouse is listed, at that point, it will be too late for a landowner to enter into a CCAA with the SWCD. Collins can be contacted at 541-523-7128 for more information regarding the CCAA.

Collins said she plans to request \$12,000 from the County in the next fiscal year (after July 1, 2015) to assist with implementation of the CCAA program.

Order No. 2015-118, Appointing Members To The Baker County Travel Management Committee, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Chuck Chase and Page Frederickson were appointed, their term set to expire on February 1, 2018.

Order No. 2015-119, Re-Appointing Members To The Water And Stream Health Committee (WASH), was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Fred Phillips, Clair Pickard, Marion Crow, and Mac Kerns were re-appointed, their term set to expire on May 1, 2018. Kerns noted that these are volunteer positions.

Order No. 2015-120, Appointing A Member To The Transient Lodging Tax Committee, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Lea Hoover was appointed, her term set to expire on August 1, 2017.

Order No. 2015-121, Appointing Members To The Baker County Fair Board, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Cliff Schoeningh and Cynthia Norton were appointed, their term set to expire on August 1, 2018.

Order No. 2015-122, Appointing A Member To The Northeast Oregon Economic Development District Board, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Bob Parker was appointed, his term set to expire on December 31, 2015.

Resolution No. 2015-1002, Appropriation Of Unanticipated Funds To Be Expended In The Sheriff Department Of The County General Fund, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The amount of \$8,000 is listed as revenue from the Leo Adler Foundation, to be applied toward Search and Rescue.

Resolution No. 2015-1003, Appropriation Of Unanticipated Funds To Be Expended In The Tobacco Prevention Department Of The County Health Fund, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The amount of \$1,000 was received from the James G. Tyler Foundation, to be applied toward miscellaneous.

Resolution No. 2015-1004, Appropriation Of Unanticipated Funds To Be Expended In The Family Planning Department Of The County Health Fund, was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett. The additional amount of \$8,000 was received by the State of Oregon, to be applied toward travel and office supplies.

Harvey informed the attendees that the Courthouse will be closed on Monday, May 25, for the observance of Memorial Day, and he has the honor as speaker at the Veterans of Foreign War's service presentation at Mount Hope Cemetery, at 11 a.m. with a flyover scheduled for 12 p.m.

Local law firm gets new partner

The law firm of Coughlin & Leuenberger recently announced that it is bringing on a new partner, attorney David R. Auxier, formerly of Yturri Rose, LLP.

Auxier's move to Baker City was effective April 15. He is licensed in both Oregon and Idaho.

Auxier specializes in family law, personal injury, business law and real estate matters. He will also operate out of an office in Fruitland, Idaho.

The name of the firm in Baker City will remain unchanged.

Haggen opens

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Checkout spaces have become wider with new flooring beneath. The deli has expanded. The care center that was installed and opened last year near the from of the Albertsons store has been removed with no plans to reopen. The store's pharmacy has successfully transferred records to its new system, and will also offer price-matching. The new pharmacy phone number is 541-524-1125.

According to the Haggen web site, the company's background is: "Founded in 1933 in Bellingham, Washington, the company currently operates stores in Washington, Oregon and California, and is in the process of acquiring 146 stores and establishing a second headquarters in Irvine, California. With this acquisition, Haggen will expand from 18 stores with 16 pharmacies to 164 stores with 106 pharmacies; from 2,000 employees to more than 10,000 employees; and from a Pacific Northwest company with locations in Oregon and Washington to a major regional grocery chain with locations in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada and Arizona."

4-Hers compete at state-level shooting event

The Patriots 4-H Club will be sending 8 members to participate in the 4-H State Shooting event at Albany, OR, June 17-19th. Eight youths will be competing in archery, 5 in shotgun and one in small-bore rifle. Additionally, one member will also travel to the 4-H National Championships in June to compete in shotgun.

The club has been conducting fund-raising activities, including a pop-can drive and firearm raffles, to cover travel expenses. The club would like to extend a special thank you to the OHA, as well as The Little Pig for their generous help in making this possible.

OTEC delivers capital credit allocation notice

This week, OTEC will be mailing all members their annual notification of capital credit allocation. OTEC, as a not-for-profit electric cooperative, delivers electric service to our members at cost. In the event that revenues exceed the operational expenses of providing electricity, OTEC allocates these operating margins back to its members.

OTEC Board of Directors President, Greg Howard said, "Allocating and retiring excess revenue to members helps distinguish the cooperative business model. This is an underlying principle of the cooperative model and is one more way we keep your electric rates as low as possible. We're proud to support our communities by putting money back into the local economy—and into the pockets of those we serve."

The amounts shown on the notice represents each members' share of the operating margins realized by OTEC in the previous year, as well as, the cumulative unpaid capital credit balances. These funds are returned to the members as the Cooperative is deemed financially able by the Board of Directors.

These notifications are a record of each OTEC members' ownership in the Cooperative and should be preserved. The announcements are for informational purposes only, are not negotiable and cannot be applied to a member's electric bill.

Livestock Producers scholarship open

Applications are now available for the Baker County Livestock Producer's Foundation Scholarship for the 2015-2016 school year. Must be a resident of Baker County, a sophomore or higher in college. Deadline is July 15. Must be pursuing an agriculture-related course of study.

Contact the Extension Office at 541-523-6418 or Kay Markgraf at 541-523-2203 for more information.