

Local

County signs \$8K per month contract with Gregory Smith & Company, LLC, talks high local tobacco use, ODOT snow fence move

• CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FOCUSES ON USFS MEETINGS

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a special session on Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

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

Attendance included Baker County Health Department Director Robin Nudd, Baker County Road Master Jeff Smith, Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Planner Kelly Howsley-Glover, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Project Leader Sean Mahoney, ODOT Roadway Designer Mark Kightlinger, ODOT Area Manager Craig Sipp, Ed Hardt, John Creighton, Ramona Creighton, Wanda Ballard, Ken Andersen, Art Sappington, and Suzette Sappington.

Shortly after the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation, the agenda was adopted, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett.

During the Citizen Participation segment, Ramona Creighton shared some comments regarding two of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) forest access workshops held recently which she attended, in Enterprise, and John Day. She said attendance was good at the workshops, but she noted that, at the one held in John Day, there were issues pointed out to the USFS concerning a suitable landing strip for Search and Rescue (SAR) purposes.

Harvey pointed out issues with road and area name changes initiated by the USFS, resulting in future difficulties and confusion with SAR emergencies and other scenarios.

John Creighton commented that, while he and Ramona had attended one of the meetings, USFS staff had stated that Walla Walla County is unique, in that it is the only county in the state with a Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC). He said that he and others immediately

informed those attending that that information is incorrect, and that Baker County has had an NRAC for many years.

Art Sappington discussed a presentation made recently in Union, sponsored by Oregon State University (OSU), regarding timber, mining, and agricultural research, during which partnership with local livestock and other producers was solicited for data collection, etc., but refused, he said.

Nudd provided the Board with a Health Department update, including a discussion of the role of the department. She said some of the program elements the department handles are communicable diseases, including sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), tobacco prevention and education, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Bennett asked Nudd about addressing marijuana regulation along with tobacco issues, since recreational use of marijuana was legalized on July 1st of this year.

Nudd responded that it's important to have a unified message about smoke-free facilities, campuses and areas in the county, and possibly vapor-free policies implemented also.

Nudd said the county ranks among the highest in the state, as far as tobacco use is concerned, noting that a significant portion of that is among pregnant mothers.

She said, because of the department's funding sources and associated agreements, she and other staff are not allowed to teach tobacco prevention in area schools, which didn't make sense to Harvey.

Nudd discussed other topics, including programs administered by the department, including Babies First!, Oregon Mother's Care, and immunizations for children. She also noted that she would like to see the Health Department, on Pochontas, more centrally located within Baker City, and a better facility that meets the department's needs. Bennett said he'd like to see a Trolley stop included for the department's current location.

Smith provided the Board with documents regarding a Road Department purchase bid, for a 2006 Kenworth T800, from Bowman Trucking, Inc., in La Grande, for \$41,000.



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Citizen participation at the Commissioners' session this week focused on public access and USFS workshops held recently. Standing, John Creighton, seated in front Ramona Creighton, seated in back Wanda Ballard.

Smith explained that the funds would be available from the department's budget, and, from the four total bids provided, the truck bid from Bowman Trucking represents the exact type of vehicle needed, at the lowest cost, resulting in an upgrade for the department's belly dump fleet. The purchase was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Smith also noted a future need to purchase another vehicle, and said funds would be available for that. The Board approved the future purchase, with a limit of \$20,000, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

The Board discussed a Professional Services Agreement between Baker County and Gregory Smith & Company, LLC, for contract services to facilitate the implementation of Economic Development.

The term of the agreement, from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017, includes monthly payments of \$8,000, for a yearly sum of \$96,000.

Harvey emphasized that there was public confusion previously regarding this contract, and that Smith as an individual is not paid the total, but the \$96K per year is paid to Smith's company. Smith pays for his company's staff, materials, etc. at his discretion. Smith's company also contracts with other neighboring and presumably competing Oregon counties to provide similar

business development services to those provided Baker County.

Smith's contract was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Lea Hoover, Baker Heritage Museum Director, was not present to discuss a requested spending authority approval, so Martin discussed the details with the Board.

She said that the requested approval is for \$25,000 in flexible spending within the museum's budget, which will be used for various purposes. The request was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Holly Kerns and Howsley-Glover discussed with the Board, during a public hearing, the second reading of Ordinance No. 2015-04, An Ordinance Changing The Zone Of Tax Lot 4001 In Township 8 South Range 38 East, From Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) To Timber Grazing (TG). As this matter involves individuals related to Commissioner Kerns, he recused himself during this hearing. The ordinance, in title only, was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Harvey.

Sipp, Kightlinger and Mahoney talked about an ODOT snow fence project, as an informational discussion, with the Board, and provided maps detailing the locations. This includes fencing already installed south of Culley Lane, east of I-84, called Site 1, which is

expected to be extended south. Site 2, which would include fencing north of Culley Lane, also east of I-84, would prove more challenging, because of possible interference with a privately-owned pivot irrigation system, due to public right-of-way.

All three members of the Board voiced concerns about interfering with the pivot system, and explained that any landowners involved would need to receive a fair deal negotiating with ODOT, which could include compensation for any losses incurred, or modification to the pivot system.

Any landowners involved would need to have agreements with ODOT, and issues would need to be resolved with them satisfactorily, before the Board would address the issue, all three Commissioners explained.

Sipp, Kightlinger and Mahoney responded that all efforts were being made to lessen impacts, and to arrive at solutions acceptable to everyone involved.

Order No. 2015-134, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Weed Board, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Kathy Thompson was appointed, her term set to expire on April 1, 2018.

Order No. 2015-135, amending Order No. 2015-133, Re-Appointing A Member To The Baker County Cultural Coalition, was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett.

Aletha Bonebrake was re-appointed, her term set to expire on July 1, 2018.

Kerns discussed a recent Tri-County Weed Board meeting he attended, stating issues with coordination and communication voiced by some between that Board and Arnie Grammon, Baker County Weed Department Manager. Kerns and Bennett said it's important to keep working together with Tri-County, but Bennett and Harvey noted that they still had not received information regarding expenditures of government funds within Baker County by Tri-County.

Harvey said the funds should be used to utilize local people to address weed issues, rather than using out-of-area staff. Kerns said he would keep the Board informed of future developments from the Tri-County Board.

Harvey discussed with the Board a request from the Greenhorn City Council, for \$80,000, through funding or other services, from Baker County, for improvements to the city's water supply system, a city park project, and an emergency landing strip project.

The City Council included a request for Baker County, which owns lots in that area, to donate those. The discussion was tabled for now pending further investigation into associated issues, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Kerns.

Oregon's digital newspaper project moves ahead

The Oregon Digital Newspaper Program (ODNP) is an initiative to digitize historic Oregon newspaper content and make it freely available to the public through a keyword-searchable online database.

The initial phase of the program, through the University of Oregon, has concentrated on newspapers published between 1860 and 1922, with approximately 150,000 pages made freely available online in the first two years (2009-2011).

The ODNP was also constructed to help facilitate the digitization of Oregon newspapers by outside organizations/individuals. The program will deliver access for people who can't get to a library to use microfilm.

The resulting product will be an open state-wide resource for historic Oregon newspapers online.

This year, newspapers through the present year are at last being uploaded to the project's Google Drive for inclusion in this online database.

These papers do include most newspapers published in Baker County.

Several hundred thousand newspaper pages can be found online at already at: <http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu>.

The Oregon Digital Newspaper Program is committed to providing free online access to historic Oregon newspapers. This is made possible with the support of federal and state grants, the UO Libraries, and through private donations.

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Outside	70°	75°	80°	85°	90°
After:	In-Car Temperature (°F) Rises to:				
5 min	82	88	92	95	100
10 min	89	94	99	104	110
20 min	99	104	109	114	119
30 min	104	109	114	119	124

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