

Local

Pie auction and dinner raises \$3K for fair

• TYLER BROWN HIGH BIDDER OF A \$300 PIE, FAIR FAMILY ANNOUNCED

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Tuesday evening, over 70 people came together in the Event Hall at the Baker County Conference & Event Center, to attend the 2015 Baker County Fair Pie Auction and Dinner, donations for which generated just over \$3,000 from the event.

At 6 p.m., a lively social hour began with community members present, including former County Commissioner Fred Warner, Jr., and current County Commissioners Bill Harvey and Tim Kerns.

Tyler Brown, of Barley Brown's Brew Pub, provided and served two types of beer during the event, Coyote Peak Wheat and Pallet Jack IPA, and Dan Warnock, Jr. and other volunteers outside barbecued the beef for the dinner, which also included salad, baked beans, and refreshments.

Ron Rowan, Baker County Fair Board Chairman, introduced Fair Manager Angie Turner, and Rochelle Adams, Assistant Manager. Fair Board

Members includes Dean Defrees, Vice Chairman, Christina Smith, Michelle Kaseberg, Mark Johnson, Cynthia Norton, and Cliff Schoeningh. Staff Members includes Bruce Smith, Maintenance/Janitorial. Fair Advisory Board Members includes Terri Siddoway, Janice Cowan, Rob Ellingson, and County Commissioner Mark Bennett.

Rowan said, "Once again, so much of this is volunteer, giving from the community, donating every year, so, I'd like to give a big round of applause," followed by enthusiastic applause from those present. He also thanked other volunteers, including Warnock, Jr., for their efforts, and for the many donations over the past years to Friends of the Fair.

Rowan introduced Kari Borgen, publisher, who said, "*Baker City Herald* is proud to sponsor the Fair Family of the Year. We've been sponsoring the Fair Family since 2001 (she displayed copies of newspapers showcasing the Fair Families from previous years on the wall behind her). Congratulations to everybody... Without further ado, I would like to introduce Chuck Buchanan. Chuck's was one of the dominating letters, and Chuck, let us know why

this year's fair family is special."

Buchanan, who is also a reporter for *The Baker County Press*, talked about how he and his wife, Cheryl, decided to nominate this year's Fair Family, Dan, Haley, Drew and Morgan Morris, and he read their nomination letter:

"To whom it may concern, We are delighted to nominate Dan and Haley Morris to be the 2015 Baker County Fair Family.

"The Morris family were both born in Baker County, and as a result, they know what family support for kids' activities is all about. The extended Morris family has always made their presence know at any event that Drew and Morgan, Dan's kids, were involved in.

"When Haley joined the family, she brought not only her own enthusiasm, but her parents and grandparents became the ultimate cheerleading squad for Drew and Morgan.

"Together, the group makes an incredibly strong support unit for not only the Morris kids, but for all of Baker County's 4-H and FFA kids. Dan served on the Baker County Fair Board for a number of years, and was Swine Chairman for the Baker County Fair, even after Drew graduated from high



The Morris Family is 2015's Fair Family.

Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

school, and Morgan opted for a beef project.

"At the same time, Haley was Dan's right-hand woman, lending her assistance to any and every volunteer job that Dan takes on.

"Whether it be for livestock judging, or preparing a meal, Haley is always there and always smiling. A true fair family is there for the kids. Not just their own kids, but all the other kids in the livestock barns.

A true fair family is there to volunteer, and is there to cheer on not just their own kids, but all the kids. And because of Dan and Haley, Drew and Morgan, and for that matter, a lot of other kids who they're not even related to, have had a shin-

ing example of just what that true fair family is.

"Drew and Morgan graduated high school and began lives of their own, but you'll still see Dan and Haley stepping up and helping at the fair, all the while cheering on your own nieces and nephews... And, for the above reasons, we believe that Dan and Haley Morris should be chosen as the 2015 Baker County Fair Family."

Buchanan congratulated the Morris family, and Borgen presented them with awards sponsored by the Fair Board. Dan's parents, Larry and Rochelle ("Rocky") Morris, were also seated with the family.

Warner, Jr., and his brother, Scott, provided

some lively entertainment as auctioneers during the pie auction. Brown was the high bidder of the evening, purchasing a peach and huckleberry pie for \$300.

Previous Fair Families of the Year included: Markgraf family (2001); Barr family (2002); Bunch family (2003); Wendt family (2004); Cockram family (2005); Rohner family (2006); Jacobs family (2007); Phillips family (2008); Gerald and Bonnie Colton (2009); Coomer family (2010); Crabill family (2011); Rob and Dianne Ellington (2012); Warner family (2013); and Siddoway family (2014).

NRAC further revises natural resource plan

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Tuesday, the Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) met to further revise the County's Natural Resource Plan (NRP), a finalized version of which may be adopted at the County Commission's next regular session, on August 5.

County Commission Chair Bill Harvey was joined at the meeting by NRAC Chair Doni Bruland, and members Ken Anderson, Chuck Chase, Jan Kerns, Cynthia Long, Jan Alexander, Alice Knapp, Eileen Gyllenberg, Lyle Defrees, Dick Fleming, and Kody Justus.

Guests included Carmelita Holland, Craig Bruland, Wanda Ballard, and Jorden Noyes, Rep. Greg Walden's Field Representative in the La Grande office.

Bruland called the meeting to order at 3 p.m., and there were introductions made by all those present. She asked if there were any public comments, as members of the public are allowed five minutes initially to discuss topics related to natural resources. Hearing none, she asked Anderson to speak next.

Anderson said, "As all of you mining people know, we recently had a law go through our legislature (Senate Bill 838) with which, supposedly, they think they're going to protect the environment

What they've done, they say you cannot mine within 300 feet of a stream, and this law was ill-conceived by people who had little knowledge of mining, and no concept of what the scope of this thing is going to be."

The bill, signed into law last year by then Governor Kitzhaber, limits the number of suction dredge mining permits issued in Oregon to 850 statewide, and puts into the Governor's control regulation regarding how, where and when suction dredging can occur.

The number of miners along a river would also be limited to one every 500 feet, and mining would be prohibited in salmon spawning areas year-round.

Anderson said, "First of all, modern mining doesn't create a serious impact to the environment. It's little or none in the long run. We don't do things like they did back in the 1900s or so. So, it's not really a problem. Mining creates more new wealth than any other industry, per dollar, that comes out of the ground."

He said that these and other important points, including the hit to the economy of the state, weren't taken into consideration when the bill was drafted, and that he urged strong objections to it from members of the NRAC and the County Commissioners.

Alexander said that, for now, it's the law, but



Members of the County's NRAC meet Tuesday to move forward with the County's Natural Resource Plan, a document that can be adjusted to suit future needs.

Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

in February, legislatures would take another look at it, and decide whether changes could be made.

Fleming made a suggestion that individuals with mining claims who are affected could file lawsuits as a class, as a way to generate effective attention regarding losses due to the legislation.

Alexander said, "I say, miners just need to be diligent. Lawsuits cost money. It takes ten years or more, and then, they're moot, because of something else. Miners just need to be extremely careful, they need to be aware of what this law says, and not impact vegetation in a manner that could risk impact to water quality."

Alexander and Anderson discussed the topics of vegetation, water quality, and sediment impacts, and Alexander pointed out the issues with some small-scale, "casual use" mining

operations, resulting in impacts to the environment.

Long mentioned that some good news recently was heard from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) headquarters in Washington, D.C., via an instruction memorandum, regarding Categorical Exclusions (CEs) and renewing mining permits.

After some discussion about the format of the copies of the different sections of the NRP given to the committee members, including some concerns from Alexander and issues about taking too little time hearing from Kerns.

Harvey responded that, "In order to start working on plans (with government agencies), we need to have our plan (NRP) finished. This is not something that is in solid concrete. It is going to be revisited every year for readjustments needed by this committee, so we need to have a plan

in place in order to start working with the Forest Service, on a daily basis."

The committee members broke up into sub-groups for about 45 minutes, discussing each of the various topics in the NRP and making revisions, while Noyes discussed some issues with Harvey.

Harvey said that from August 20-22 (Thursday through Saturday), Fred Kelly Grant will be in Baker City with other guests (to be determined) to present information on the topic of coordination with government agencies.

The presentation is scheduled to be at the Baker County Conference & Event Center, on East Street, with lunch provided each day.

Harvey said that, as more details are received, they'll be released, including the fee for the presentation and the guest speakers.

He said that the public is

invited to attend the event, and he plans to invite Commissioners from other counties.

Bruland informed the group that the Baker County Travel Management Committee, a separate committee associated with NRAC and the NRP, which met on July 21, 2015, had completed the revising of the Access and Recreation and Tourism sections of the NRP.

Noyes stood and made some comments to the group about his background and current experience as the new Field Representative in La Grande, and discussed the status of some bills introduced by Walden.

The next NRAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 25, at 3 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.