

Business & Ag

Businesses gather to air desired future changes to the HCMR

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"I thought it was a positive meeting overall, as we heard thoughts from a very diverse group," said Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner after a Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally (HCMR) debriefing meeting Tuesday afternoon. "There's no event that's perfect and I think the information from this meeting will help all of us work toward creating an even better Rally for our citizens, the business community and the participants as we move into the future."

Lohner organized the meeting, which was held at 1 p.m. in the Baker City Hall Council Chambers. Roughly 35 people attended—a group composed of business owners and managers from across Baker City, representatives from the Baker City Council, Baker City administration, rally organizers and supporters, and generally interested citizens.

The overall consensus of those present was that the HCMR is a welcome event in the community, but perhaps some "tweaking" could be done in terms of vendor placement and how much of the Main Street business area is closed off to traffic during the event.

If held last week, the meeting may not have gone so smoothly. False reports flooded social media, claiming one Main Street business owner wanted to see the Rally disbanded. A group formed planning to attend Tuesday's meeting in protest—until the rumor was debunked.

Dennis Hackney from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) spoke first, stating that from ODOT's perspective, the rally had been a successful event. He received no complaints at his office.

"One of our big concerns is that if there's commercial truck traffic trying to get through town ... how do they find a way to Hwy. 7?" He said they were continuing to work through those "small issues."

Michelle Owen, Baker City Public Works Director, said the reader board addition helped guide freight safely through the detour. Owen also said, "We had some preliminary issues with the detour route on 2nd Street with trees being in the way." She said the issue was resolved, and the route, while not ideal, will work unless freight mobility complaints start to come in.

Lohner interjected with an "attaboy" and mentioned one rally participant had lost a \$5,000 hearing aid down a storm drain. Public Works was able to pull the grid off and retrieve the hearing aid literally right before the deluge hit.

Mayor Kim Mosier and City Council member Jim Thomas attended simply to listen to feedback, as did City Manager Mike Kee, while Council member Rosemary Abell attended in a dual-role with husband, Larry, as a representative of Historic Baker City (HBC).

Kurt Miller, rally organizer, then spoke to the direction he'd like to see

the rally go in the future and gave a summary of the 2015 event.

"Clearly our numbers were down, but we knew that in advance because this is the 75th anniversary of the rally in Sturgis."

He also cited this year's poor weather as a factor in the lower numbers, and stated that the rally over in Pendleton "pretty much flopped with only 200-250 people."

Miller said that based on feedback posted on their Facebook page, riders had enjoyed Baker City and wished to return.

Miller said the HCMR attended a tradeshow in Boise and that he has other appearances lined up, including a presence at a booth at the Oregon State Fair in Salem this fall.

Larry Abell of HBC said, "We really love the rally. The issue was—having our information booth in the middle of it allowed visitors to see Baker City. I love the promotion of it, and I love that our Board of Directors supports having the Rally in downtown Baker City."

Abell appreciates that unlike in years prior, sidewalks are open and handicap access was easier.

Abell said HBC planned on contacting a sampling of downtown businesses in the near future to get more Rally feedback, and at Lohner's suggestion, agreed it would be a good idea to expand that effort to all downtown businesses.

Abell mentioned a desire to see the Rally attract more and better vendors.

Miller agreed with Abell and said he'd turned down some vendors and is working on getting more motorcycle-related vendors this coming year. He also stated he didn't want to "eliminate or discriminate against" any vendor from the local area. He believed that the booth fee of \$150 was low enough to allow local businesses to participate. In contrast, he said, a booth at the Pendleton Rally ran around \$400.

From there, the conversation, taking up half of the hour-long meeting, focused primarily on the placement of vendors, and whether they should again be mixed with the motorcycles on display down Main Street, or moved to a side area.

The overarching theme was that no matter how the event is organized, businesses will be affected. Some businesses with products that might not attract bikers opted to simply shut down for the event.

While the conversation was professional and civil, it was apparent that opinions ran strong.

Chelsa Mitchell of The Mad Habit, for example, reported a 30-40% drop in sales each Rally weekend causing her to shut her doors this year. The owners of Zephyr also took the opportunity to travel out of town for the weekend.

Mitchell emphasized she'd like to see the event's vendors moved off Main Street with just the motorcycles remaining there. "This is the main artery of our town. I would love to see it opened ... I'm not against the Rally but I'd like to see changes made."

Toni Herman from No.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

HCMR organizer and Truck Corral co-owner Kurt Miller (left) discusses the organization of the rally each year. At right, Jerry Shaw of the VFW.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Dennis Hackney of ODOT said the event was positive from his organization's perspective, with no complaints called in.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner listens to Michelle Owen discuss ideas about the truck route.

1911 said, "I agree with everything Chelsa just said." She also mentioned concern that this year's setup seemed like a potential hazard to her, should a fire occur, as first responders would have difficulty reaching the scene.

Other businesses, such as local hotels and restaurants, however, reported spikes in sales on event weekends.

Jerry Shaw of the VFW reported brisk sales specifically due to the Rally and expressed his support of the event.

"We always do really well during the Rally. A lot of the bikers are veterans and they of course, come to see us," Shaw said. He suggested better signage to businesses during the Rally, an idea that seemed popular in the room.

Tyler Brown of Barley Brown's said the event was a good one as far as Barley's was concerned. "90% of our business is local. They find a way to get there."

He added, "As long as there's adequate parking in the area, people seem to find us just fine." He noted that the Ace Hardware lot did over-fill.

Brown said they resorted to plan B when the Phantom Kiss concert was moved inside due to rain, but in future years, weather permitting, it could become "a great outside event."

J.R. Streifel, owner of Grumpy's Repair and Charley's Ice Cream said, "I was really blown away by all the people who came here who weren't bikers."

Streifel noted several non-riding tourists from out of the area—as far as Seattle and Salt Lake City—"who spent the whole weekend here just hitting all the little shops and boutiques."

"I thought it was well-organized," Streifel said. "The weather could have been better, but then the weather affected everybody."

Paul McNeil of Zephyr said although they closed for the weekend, they "loved the event." He suggested the rally focus more on "the art of the motorcycle."

McNeil would like to see the vendors shifted to side streets or Central Park, "leaving Main Street to showcase the motorcycles."

Numerous business owners around the room nodded in agreement, many stating they either felt or heard the same sentiment during the rally.

Barbara McNeil of Zephyr also suggested that local restaurants in other areas of town set up as food vendors on Main Street rather than bringing in vendors from outside.

Miller said it was his belief that most local restaurants weren't interested due to the amount of setup trouble, which was met with many attendees shaking their heads "no" and a couple nodding "yes."

Lisa Wilson and Alan Mendenhall attended from the Sunridge Inn/Best Western.

Wilson thanked Lohner for holding the meeting and Miller for organizing the Rally. "We really benefit from it," she said. "Obviously there are space issues. We have a lot of it. I'll just put that out there. We're willing to share it. We would love to be a great partner with you guys. As far as changes, embrace all the vendors. Competition is good for everybody."

Discussions will surely continue.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, July 24, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity increased slightly this week however many producers are still busy in the field with the second cutting. Some areas of Oregon received rain this past week, with some hay suffering rain damage.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa — Large Square		
Fair 2000	150.00-150.00	150.00
Alfalfa/Orchard Mix — Small Square		
Premium 2	187.00-187.00	187.00
Timothy Grass — Large Square		
Good 200	115.00-115.00	115.00
Barley — Large Square		
Good 200	130.00-130.00	130.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 231

Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 262.00 - 298.00	Top 301.00
400-500#	Bulk 241.00 - 268.00	Top 270.00
500-600#	Bulk 232.00 - 253.00	Top 255.00

Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 223.00 - 267.00	Top 274.00
400-500#	Bulk 214.00 - 246.00	Top 250.00
500-600#	Bulk 218.00 - 237.00	Top 241.00

Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 223.00 - 234.00	Top 235.00
700-800#	Bulk 203.00 - 209.00	Top 212.00
800-900#	Bulk 196.00 - 205.00	Top 207.50
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 211.00 - 221.00	Top 223.00
700-800#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
800-900#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	76.00 - 89.00
Butcher Cows	94.00 - 105.00
Butcher Bulls	117.00 - 136.00
Stock Cows Yng.	N/A
Younger Hfrts.	114.00 - 132.00
Stock Cows -	N/A

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Doug Fir	is \$415.00/mbf
White fir	is \$365.00/mbf
Ponderosa Pine	is brought sold on diameter splits
6 to 11 inch dib	\$300 to \$310/MBF
12 to 17 inch dib	\$350 to \$375/MBF
18 to 23 inch dib	\$400 to \$430/MBF
24 inch plus dib	\$450 to \$500/MBF

DIB is diameter inside bark at small end of log.

MBF is thousand board feet lumber, net scale.

People interested in selling logs should call and get specific quotes from saw mills.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1094.10

Silver: \$14.78

Platinum: \$984.70

Palladium: \$615.80

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— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn:	\$379.50/bu/USD
Wheat:	\$497.75/bu/USD
Soybeans:	\$945.55/bu/USD
Oats:	\$239.00 bu/USD
Rough Rice:	\$11.07/cwt/USD
Canola:	\$490.10 CAD/mwt
Live Cattle:	\$147.08/lb./USD
Feeder Cattle:	\$212.15/lb./USD
Lean Hogs:	\$66.38/lb./USD

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