

Local

Commissioners hear presentation from Rep. Cliff Bentz

• PRODUCTION COMPANY TO MAKE HISTORIC DOCUMENTARY ON McCARTY GANG

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On Wednesday, the Baker County Board of Commissioners held its first regular session of the month, which included a presentation given by District 60 Representative Cliff Bentz regarding the 2015 Oregon State Legislative Session.

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

Attendees included Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant/Parole and Probation Supervisor Will Benson, Ed Hardt, Art Sappington, Ken Anderson, Wanda Ballard, John and Ramona Creighton, Lynn Shumway, Curt Martin, and Wes Morgan.

After the Pledge of Allegiance and optional Invocation, both led by Harvey, the agenda was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and second from Kerns.

For Citizen Participation, Sappington discussed a letter he drafted to Region 6 Forester Jim Peña on July 22, 2015, in response to Peña's letter dated June 16, 2015, regarding previous correspondence from Sappington with claims about the United States Forest Service's (USFS) violation of laws and the agency's mandated duties.

Among other points, Sappington told the Board he saw inconsistencies and avoidance of his questions in the latest letter from Peña, and, that Sappington claims funds dedicated to Baker County for the cost of fire suppression on public and private lands were mismanaged by the USFS. Bennett asked Sappington to schedule an appointment with Baker County District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff, to discuss with him any alleged criminal violations of laws within the County, which Sappington claims.

Ballard and Ramona Creighton asked about the individuals who applied for the position of Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) Coordinator, and Harvey answered that there were three who were interviewed.

Harvey informed those present that the regular NRAC meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 6, was rescheduled for Thursday, August 13, at 3 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the County Courthouse.

Hardt expressed some concerns about Senate Bill 838, which has been signed into law (effective January 2016), stating that there will be a significant effect to his personal mining operation, and Harvey said that he believes Hardt's stance is strong, and that he would do everything possible to support Hardt's efforts.

The minutes from the July 1, 2015 and July 8, 2015 Commission sessions were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Holly Kerns gave the Board a Planning Department update, including highlights from this year.

In January, she said, Baker County hosted an all-County meeting, which included the topic of grant funding for wastewater treatment. She said that the cities of Richland, Halfway, and Huntington have been able to take advantage of that opportunity, with water system upgrades in different phases in each area.

Holly Kerns remained present for a public hearing in the matter of the first reading of Ordinance No. 2015-05, Amending the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan Map Adopted by Ordinance 84-1. The first reading of the ordinance by title only was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Continuance of the hearing to Wednesday, August 19, at 9:30 a.m., was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Bentz gave an hour-long presentation, using the County's ActivBoard, with a detailed analysis of this year's legislative session,

and what next year's ballot may include. Some points from his presentation include:

There are 91 individuals in Salem making legislative decisions for the State--25 Republicans and 35 Democrats in the House, 12 Republicans and 18 Democrats in the Senate, and Democratic Governor Kate Brown.

The 2015 District 60 Legislative Team consists of State Representative Bentz (\$1,921 salary per month), District Director Andrea Dominguez (\$2,900), Legislative Director Cassie Passon (\$2,850), Receptionist Nicole Crane (\$2,240), and Legislative Interns Garrett Kitamura, Kieran Colahan, Lauren Boyd, Melina Rebaum and Erika Bentz (unpaid).

1,712 bills were introduced by the House, 1,079 of which were passed, and 1,087 were introduced by the Senate, 1,003 of which were passed. The bills passed by both the House and Senate totaled 921, and the bills signed by the Governor, as of July 31, were 797.

Ten of Bentz's introduced bills were signed into law, with one pending: HB 2958, HB 2980, HB 3011, HB 3015, HB 3164, HB 3166, HB 3168, HB 3492, SCR 16, SB 800, and HB 3089 (pending).

Bentz's legislative assignments included: Co-Chair of Public Infrastructure Commission; Energy Coalition; SageCon--monitoring; Legislative Counsel on River Governance; 2015 Transportation Package Work Group; Tax Haven Work Group; Charitable/Not For Profit Taxation Work Group; and Return on Investments/CO2 Reduction Standards Work Group.

Next year's ballot could include: President, Oregon Senators, Congressman, Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Labor Commissioner, and up to 16 ballot measures.

Intergovernmental Agreement #5109, between the State of Oregon and Baker County, regarding post-prison supervision, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Agreement #30903, 2015 Fund Exchange



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

L-R: Rep. Cliff Bentz, Commissioner Mark Bennett, Commission Chair Bill Harvey and Commissioner Tim Kerns.

Agreement, Hot Mix and Oil Purchase between the State of Oregon and Baker County, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

A Personal Services Agreement between Nurse Practitioner Karen Andrus and Baker County was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett.

A Personal Services Agreement between Physician Assistant Gina Glaubke and Baker County was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett.

Order No. 2015-136, Order Designating A Paper For Publication Of The Annual Foreclosure Of The Tax Liens As Shown By The Baker County Foreclosure List, was approved, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett. The Baker City Herald was designated.

Order No. 2015-137, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Transportation/Traffic Safety Commission, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Cass Vanderwiele was appointed, her term expiring on July 1, 2017.

Order No. 2015-138, Appointing A Member To The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Committee, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash was appointed, his term expiring on November 1, 2016.

Order No. 2015-139, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Planning Commission, was approved, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Bennett. Tom Van

Diepen was appointed, his term expiring on September 1, 2016.

A letter from former proprietor of York's Grocery, Dennis Dorrah, regarding his local audio/video production corporation called Huckleberry Productions, was read by Harvey to those present.

According to the letter, it is "...a request for your group's support of a film documentary project which will preserve and bring awareness to a little known segment in the history of Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties, and will provide a beneficial economic impact through increased tourism."

The letter states that the documentary will be about the McCarty gang, led by the oldest of three brothers, Tom McCarty. The gang's base of operations was a family ranch northeast of Haines. The gang committed a number of significant robberies in this area, which included the Sumpter Valley Railroad, Sparta Mercantile, Summerville Bank, Enterprise Bank, and an attempted robbery of the Warshaur (Geiser Grand) Casino. Robberies and livestock theft were also committed by the gang in Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona.

The request included the following:

1) We would like to make a presentation in order to make you more aware of what we are doing, receive feedback from your group, and answer any questions you may have. 2) We would like to have a letter from your group supporting this endeavor; it is our intention to apply for grant funding and local support

of this project will be vital. 3) We ask for any financial support that you may be able to provide since most grants we are applying for will require matching funds.

In closing, the letter stated, "It is our intention to create this film because we have the passion to do so and we believe the story of Tom McCarty and his gang needs to be told and that its telling can only benefit Northeast Oregon."

Shumway and Martin made a presentation to the Board concerning in-stream water rights issues, emphasizing the standing the County has, and the concern about environmental interest groups involved with the process and issues.

After the discussion, Bennett moved, with a second from Kerns, to designate Yturri Rose, LLP as County Counsel, in order to be involved with the process, and to address in-stream water rights issues.

Harvey gave copies of a flyer to those present, concerning the Fred Kelly Grant Group Coordination 101 3-day Workshop, to be held Thursday, August 20, 2015, through Saturday, August 22, 2015. The cost is \$150, which includes lunch for all three days, workbook and brochure, intensive training, and interactive problem solving.

The workshop will be held at the Baker County Event Center, 2600 East Street, in Baker City. Registration is at 7:30 a.m. on August 20, and the presentation begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information, Lorrie Harvey can be contacted at 541-519-5470, or lorrieharvey@gmail.com.

Arraignment made in VFW assault case

On August 3, 2015, in the Baker County Circuit Court, Austin Edward Scott (dob 08-26-1993) of 2335 Baker Street #1, Baker City, Oregon, was arraigned on a Secret Indictment handed down by a Baker County Grand Jury.

Scott was indicted on one count of Assault in the Second Degree, a Class B Felony, and Assault in the Fourth Degree, a Class A

Misdemeanor.

The charges stem from an incident that occurred at the VFW in Baker City on December 11, 2014. Scott was alleged to have struck a victim in the face with a metal T square object that was being used as part of a shuffleboard game which led to the Second Degree Assault charge.

Scott was also charged with Assault in the Fourth Degree for punching

another victim in the face during the altercation.

The case was under investigation for several months as the State was awaiting crime lab results regarding blood testing that was submitted to the Oregon State Police Crime Lab.

Scott posted \$3,750.00 bail. The case was set for an entry of plea on August 17, 2015, at 8:15 a.m.

Star party scheduled for Bates State Park

The night sky over Bates State Park will set the scene for a Star Party Aug. 14 at 7:30 p.m. Local amateur astronomers and volunteers from Redmond will join the party with telescopes for visitors to view summer constellations, star clusters and planets.

"We are fortunate in rural eastern Oregon to have incredible dark night skies, with little to no light pollution," said Park Manager Dennis Bradley. "Add a new moon and the Perseids meteor shower to the mix, and we have the perfect formula for an unforget-

table evening."

The Perseids meteor shower produces up to 60 bright meteors per hour from mid-July through late August, peaking this year Aug. 12-13.

The night sky will be darker than usual on Aug. 14 because the new moon will not be visible and thus no moonlight.

That evening, stargazers can also enjoy an old-fashioned campfire and hear stories from folks who lived in Bates when it was still a thriving logging town.

Visitors can sing campfire songs, roast mars -

mallows and munch on s'mores provided by the park. The event and day-use parking are free.

Saturday morning take a tour of nearby Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area and the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Area museum in John Day.

Both the dredge and museum are free.

Bates State Park is 30 miles northeast of John Day located on Middle Fork Lane off Highway 7, one mile north of its intersection with U.S. 26 at Austin Junction.