



# The Baker County Press

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## Greater sage-grouse not listed as endangered

• EASTERN OREGON CELEBRATES—CAUTIOUSLY

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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Tuesday morning's announcement from Interior Secretary Sally Jewell came with welcome news: the Greater Sage-Grouse

will not be placed on the federal endangered species list.

"This certainly takes the pressure off," said Mark Bennett, Baker County Commissioner.

Bennett has worked "off and on" from 2010-2013 and "full steam" since 2013 on the impacts of the Greater Sage-Grouse issue and its Baker County impact, in anticipation of a potential listing. Bennett has been part

of "SageCon," the Sage-Grouse Conservation Partnership, which is composed of dozens of public entities, ten nonprofits and four private companies.

Love or hate the approach, the goal of the SageCon Partnership was "to present USFWS with a unified all-lands approach to sage grouse conservation in Oregon. The process is intended to be a series of focused but coordinated discussions

to address sage grouse conservation in the face of multiple threats and within multiple jurisdictions (federal, state and local) in Oregon," according to their web site.

Interestingly, the decision this week suddenly garnered praise from Republicans and Democrats alike, with Oregon Governor Kate Brown calling it a "big win" for Oregon.

SEE SAGE-GROUSE PAGE 5



Photo courtesy of the Department of Interior.

The Greater Sage-Grouse will not be included as an endangered species, came this week's announcement from the Department of the Interior.

## Cell towers: meeting tackles hot issue



Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press

About 30 citizens gathered at City Hall to hear the first of what will be multiple meetings addressing the potential of two cell towers currently being reviewed by the City Planning Commission.

BY SUNNY WERNER  
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On Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015, the Baker City Planning Commission reviewed the application from Verizon to install two, 100-foot cell towers within Baker City limits.

Approximately 30 residents of Baker City were present. Drew Martin, City Attorney, informed the Commission of the regulatory standards set by the Federal Communications Commission for the review of applications for cell phone towers.

Included in these standards is Section 332(c)(7) of the Communications Act: "The statute (also) preempts local decisions premised directly or indirectly on the environ-

mental effects of radio frequency (RF) emissions, assuming that the provider is in compliance with the Commission's RF rules."

Upon hearing this limitation, many attendees were visibly frustrated.

The Planning Commission has been reviewing two separate applications from Verizon—one for a new 100-foot tower to be located close to the Leo Adler ballfield on East Street in a residential area, and the other on 11th Street in an industrial area.

The issue at hand was the request for a conditional use permit to allow the height of the towers. The current restriction for height in a residential area is 38', and 50' for industrial.

SEE CELL TOWERS PAGE 9

## Huntington: pot ban enacted

BY EILEEN DRIVER  
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Citizens of Huntington have begun a "Ban the Ban" protest in response to last Tuesday night's Huntington City Council decision to ban marijuana dispensaries, following in the footsteps of Baker City and Baker County.

After a long, complicated and controversial debate, the City Council, in a four to two vote, banned both medical and recreational marijuana dispensaries within city limits.

After three public meetings lasting more than three hours each, and the testimony of dozens of people in favor, and one person against marijuana, the Council's decision was met by boos and groans of protest.

As quickly as the day after the decision was made, a petition started circulating in Huntington, asking for signatures to put the decision to an election of the people, and take it out of the hands of the Council.

SEE HUNTINGTON BAN PAGE 5

## Halfway: Pine-Eagle lawsuit inches forward

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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This month, a potential schedule was set in the ongoing case of former Pine-Eagle School District elementary teacher Linda Mallery McLean vs. Pine-Eagle School District 61; Alpine Alarm Communications and Construction, LLC; the members of the Pine-Eagle School Board at that time—John Miniarch, Mark Butler, Krista Dennis, Bill Johnson, David Schmitt, Dwight Saunders, Robert Seal; Superintendent Mike Corley, school Principal Cammie deCastro and District Safety Officer Shawn Thatcher.

The case stems from circumstances surrounding the April 2013 active shooter drill at the school in Halfway.

As ruled and filed on September 4, a request for production of documents and interrogatories are due by October 2. Depositions are to be completed by November 13. Discovery closes on December 30 of this year.

SEE PINE-EAGLE PAGE 8

**Friday** Sunny and mild, highs in the lower 80s. Partly cloudy and cool at night, lows in the mid 40s.

**Saturday** Mostly sunny and not as warm, highs in upper 70s. Partly cloudy and cool at night, lows in the lower 40s.

**Sunday** Mostly sunny and continued cooling. Highs in the mid 70s. Partly cloudy at night, lows near 40.

### Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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