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Former Baker City man sentenced to 35 years

• SEX OFFENDER WORKED AT YMCA, NORTH POWDER CHARTER SCHOOL

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Benjamin Nelson, age 27 and formerly of 1201 Reservoir Road in Baker City, was sentenced this week to 35 years in prison, and must register as a sex offender, according to

Multnomah County officials.

District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said that Nelson will also plead guilty to a charge in Baker County involving an elementary-school-aged child.

Nelson was accused this May of sexually abusing a number of underage children, using the babysitting site care.com as a way to lure the children to him. He was arraigned at that time and eventually pled guilty in August to charges

of attempted sex abuse, sodomy and encouraging child sex abuse.

As part of that plea deal, several additional charges were dropped.

The Multnomah County crimes were committed in January through April of this year, with a third victim somewhere between June 2014 and May 2015. His confessed victims included a boy under age 12, a boy under age 14 and a third victim with undisclosed details.

According to Shirtcliff, "Nelson has agreed to a joint plea agreement with our county as part of the deal. He has one count of Sex Abuse in the First Degree here in Baker County. The victim was age 7 at the time of offense. He (Nelson) will be transported to Baker this week and is scheduled to plead guilty and be sentenced to 75 months in prison."

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Photo courtesy of the Multnomah County Sheriff.

Convicted sex offender Benjamin Nelson.

Dredge celebrates another season



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Ranger Garrett Nelson leading the dredge tour during the end-of-season event in Sumpter.

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
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Saturday, October 31st will be the last day this year to visit the dredge in Sumpter. The Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage area closes for the season on November 1st. The Last of the Season event October 24th and 25th featured dredge tours, discounted merchandise in the Friends of the Dredge gift shop, and free coffee and pastries for dredge visitors.

Visitors over the weekend included Buzz and Bubba Howard. Their father, "Stubby" Howard, worked on the dredge as winchman and later as dredge master. The winchman was responsible for steering the boat and worked on the second story of the boat in the winch room.

Buzz Howard worked on the dredge as a stern oiler, keeping things in the rear portion of the boat lubricated. He explained that he was also educated in the head oiler's job, and said if the head oiler didn't show up, the other man would be responsible for doing the entire job. He remarked, "You always hoped the other fellow would show up!"

Howard also shared the memory of a favorite practical joke. He said if you climbed to the top of the dredge while someone was using the privy and dropped a rock just right, the water would splash up through the seat. He explained this saved on toilet paper.

SEE SUMPTER DREDGE PAGE 8



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Bubba (at left) and Buzz Howard stand in front of the Sumpter Dredge.

Baker County affects state political platform

• LOCAL DELEGATION HELPS SHAPE GOP GOALS FOR OREGON

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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"I feel like we really made a huge difference and represented the people of our county," said Baker County Republican Chair Suzan Ellis Jones.

A local delegation of elected precinct committee people (PCPs) from Baker County traveled to Bend at the end of last week to attend the Oregon Republican Party's biannual platform convention, which was followed by the state meeting. The goal of the convention was to draft the "planks" that make up individual sections of the statewide platform—the collection of guiding principles adhered to by the party.

Jones, Secretary Carole Dyke, Vice Chair Kody Justus, and PCP Heidi Justus were among the locals to attend. Jones also serves as the Alternate Chair for Congressional District 2 (CD2) and heads up the State Party's Natural Resources Committee. Dyke serves as CD2 Secretary. As such, Jones chaired the Natural Resources Caucus, which formed the plank for those issues. Dyke was Vice Chair of the Education section. Kody Justus participated in the Natural Resources caucus along with 37 others to start, which grew to 50 delegates by the end. Delegates sign up for the section in which they'd like to participate.

According to state Sen. Doug Whitsett, "The Natural Resources and Environmental Stewardship plank unambiguously supports a number of values that I strongly endorse. Delegates voted unanimously to oppose the breaching of dams. They support including all current and future hydropower generation in Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard and strongly encourage expanded water storage through construction of new or enhanced reservoirs. The delegates recognize that storage must be sufficient to provide sound water management and hydroelectric power generation while maintaining appropriate environmental policy based on reproducible, verifiable science."

Jones went on to add, "We were also successful in clarifying and strengthening the transfer of federal public lands to local control onto that plank. This is not to be confused with privatizing public lands by any means. We're talking local government control, excluding sovereign nations, as provided for in the Constitution. As a party we advocate, along with groups like Forest Access for All, for multiple use of our public lands. We understand the economic importance of our forests, livestock, agriculture and tourism industries in Baker County. We also added a new section supporting the coordination rather than cooperation process between local government entities and the Feds."

SEE PLATFORM PAGE 8

	Friday Cloudy with a chance of rain. Highs in the lower 50s, chance of precipitation is 40%. Lows at night around 40.
	Saturday Mostly cloudy with a chance for stray showers throughout the day. Highs in the lower 60s, chance of precipitation is 30%.
	Sunday Mostly cloudy and rainy. Highs in the lower 50s, chance of precipitation is 40%. Lows at night around the freezing mark.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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