



# The Baker County Press

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## Rep. Barreto tours BHS's Baker Technical Institute

• ENTREPRENEUR GIVES ADVICE FOR BTI PROGRAM

BY SUNNY WERNER  
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On Tuesday, Dec. 8, Rep. Greg Barreto of Cove met in Baker City with Baker Technical Institute (BTI) Principal Jerry Peacock and 5J School Board mem-

ber Andrew Bryan. The purpose was a tour of the BTI facilities, and discussion about the direction and goals of the Institute.

BTI offers "career pathways" with a mission statement that, "The Pathway Programs are rigorous courses of study to assure strong academic and technical preparation providing students with critical learning and hands-on-skills. Students who focus on a

Pathway acquire the skills necessary for entry into well-paid careers with high potential for rapid financial growth, increased levels of responsibility and a high degree of personal satisfaction."

The discussion covered the needs of students preparing to enter the workforce with skills to earn a living wage, the needs of the community at large to have a skilled workforce

who would be able to provide services locally, and the needs of locally large employers who depend on the schools to prepare their upcoming employees for more than the basic, entry level positions.

Barreto asked Peacock, "Are you working to develop a thirst for these students to go further?"

SEE BTI PAGE 10



Sunny Werner / The Baker County Press  
L-R: Andrew Bryan, Rep. Greg Barreto and Jerry Peacock.

## McEwen Bible Fellowship puts a wreath around it



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

The McEwen Bible Fellowship hosted its annual ladies' wreath party December 5th. Greenery was provided and participants brought finger foods to share. The ladies also participated in an ornament exchange after the wreaths were completed.

## Distracted drivers posing increased risk

• POLICE PLAN FOR SATURATION PATROL TO EDUCATE AGAINST DISTRACTED DRIVING, PARTICULARLY TEXTING

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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"Oregon's cell phone law has had at least one unintended consequence," said Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner. "Increased texting while driving."

Lohner referred to "ORS 811.507 Operating motor vehicle while using mobile communication device."

Lohner believes that because it's easy for law enforcement to spot a cell phone in the hand or up to the ear of a driver—even easier to spot a device's glow at night—drivers have taken to hiding their phones down lower, and texting, in order to avoid the cell phone law.

After the last meeting of the Baker County Transportation Safety Committee, Lohner and Lt. Sean Belding from the Oregon State Police discussed a future saturation patrol effort to help educate about the dangers of not just using a cell phone, but of texting while driving. Distracted driving-related accidents are on the rise across Oregon, oftentimes with texting to thank.

"While talking on your phones is risky, texting is even more dangerous than holding a phone up to your ear," Lohner said.

SEE DISTRACTED DRIVING PAGE 5

## Lawyer says prayer before County meetings is legal

• COUNTY HEARS MORE ON IN-STREAM WATER RIGHTS, COUNTY HEALTH ISSUES

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held an informal work session on Wednesday to discuss in-stream water rights, county health issues and statistics, and a citizen's complaints against prayer before the

County's public meetings. Present from the Board were Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Also in attendance were legal counsel Drew Martin, of Yturri Rose LLP, Baker County Health Department Director Robin Nudd, Baker County Tobacco Program Coordinator Torie Andrews, Ed Hardt, Gary Dielman, Chuck Chase, Bobbie Danser, John and Ramona Creighton, Doni Bruland, and Wanda and

Tork Ballard. **Water Rights.**

Martin explained there is a coordinated effort among the irrigation districts in Baker County, via filed protests, to address an in-stream water rights application, filed in the 1990s, by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Part of the issue, he said, is that ODFW has asked for more water than would be currently available, or is likely to be available in the future.

Martin said that the

negative effects of ODFW being granted those water rights could include interference from ODFW whenever an irrigation district deems changes necessary in points of diversion, for example. He said that currently he believes the County has legal standing, but, that process doesn't involve litigation at this point. He said that alternatives are being discussed.

Hardt said, "Irrigation districts can coordinate, agency to agency."

SEE COUNTY PAGE 5

## New Chamber Director hired

The Baker County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau have announced the hiring of Shelly Cutler as the new Executive Director. Cutler will take over the reins, following the departure of Debi Bainter, of the Chamber on January 4, 2016.

A liberal studies graduate of Eastern Oregon University, Cutler brings experience in communication, writing, and marketing. She is also the new co-owner of Tropical Sun Bronzing Spa located on Court Street.

Cutler is proficient in media relations, is creative and innovative, and passionate about the community and county.

SEE CHAMBER DIRECTOR PAGE 8

	<b>Friday</b>	Mostly cloudy with snow showers possible. Chance of precipitation is 30%. Little to no accumulation. Highs in the mid to upper 30s.
	<b>Saturday</b>	Mostly cloudy with a chance for snow. Chance of precipitation is 40%. Light accumulation of snow possible. Highs in the mid 30s, lows in mid-30s.
	<b>Sunday</b>	Rain/snow mix likely with mostly cloudy skies. Chance of precipitation is 70%. Highs near 40. Lows in the low 20s.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Sumpter City Council coverage	Page 4
Santa Claus visits Mayday, Inc.	Page 7
5J holds community meetings	Page 7
Historic Homes tour this weekend	Page 8
City: Disc golf and Justice Court IGA	Page 9
Twilight Parade photos	Page 12



8