

# 2015: A Year in Retrospect

## June

June 5

**New lieutenant sworn in.** On Friday, May 29, Patrol Sergeant Dustin Newman was sworn in as the Baker City Police Department's new Lieutenant.

**Toddler on road to recovery.** Caleb and Wesley Kerns, in third and second grades respectively, saved their little brother, Thomas, from a near drowning.

**Baker City man missing since May 18.** The family of a Baker City man, Ken Street, recently filed a missing persons report with local law enforcement.

**Citizens come out to prepare.** A diverse group of individuals and organizations came together Saturday, May 30, to offer the Baker City community the first Emergency Preparedness Fair.

June 12

**Class of 2015 graduates.** Baker High School awarded high school diplomas to 109 graduates of the Class of 2015 Sunday, June 7 within Bulldog Memorial Stadium.

**Local pilot escapes crash uninjured.** On the sunny Sunday morning of May 31, seasoned pilot Troy Woydziak of Baker Aircraft was busy hauling his first load of the day up to the Minam River Lodge, not yet knowing he was in for one intense ride...

**Walden's local staff changes.** Kirby Garrett, formerly Field Representative for US Representative Greg Walden in the La Grande office, has moved on to join Walden's staff in Washington D.C. Jordan Noyes will now fill his role.

June 19

**Eight Baker County Search and Rescue volunteers participated in Eastern Oregon Search and Rescue (EOSAR) Region 5 training.** The training was held June 5-7 at Bully Creek Park, just over the county line in Malheur County.

**Sumpter lawsuit.** Myron Woodley, Pat Lindrose, Karen Peters, Verne Hollopeter, and Connie and Ed Marshal filed suit against defendants City of Sumpter and individuals John Young, Marlene Bork, LeAnne Woolf, and Myrna Clark.

**Oregon Sniper Challenge.** Baker City competed against several of the world's top marksmen last weekend in an elite event unlike any this area has seen in the past.

**Electric car charger station to open.** This Sunridge will be the home to Tesla Motors, Inc's Superchargers' new contiguous electric vehicle charging system.

June 26

**BCPD's drug dog to retire.** On July 1, 10-year-old Turbo will be retiring due to the passing of measure 91 legalizing marijuana.

**WWNF Subpart A draft complete.** Supervisor Tom Montoya thinks the newly revised Blue Mountain Forest Management Plan, the document guiding all activities on the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur national forests, will be completed and signed by the Region 6 Regional Forester sometime around the end of 2016.

**Locals rise through GOP ranks.** Two Baker County women, Carole Dyke of Baker City and Suzan Ellis Jones of Bridgeport, recently took a major step up the political ladder, becoming part of the Congressional District 2 (CD2) executive team.

**Bronze saltlick dedicated.** Baker City's community was invited to the dedication of the bronze salt lick sculpture by Whit Deschner from 4-6 p.m. last Saturday in Court Plaza. Deschner crafted the bronze sculpture as a way to raise awareness for Parkinson's disease.

## July

July 3

**2A rally turns racially charged.** Locals and Sheriff Joe Arpaio faced off against paid protesters in Salem last weekend as the crowd turned racially charged.

**'Surviving America' films here.** The Sumpter area will again be featured on a reality television show airing on a major network this fall. The town played host last week to a group filming a new show called *Surviving America*. The cast and crew lodged at the Depot Inn in Sumpter.

**Kiss tribute band to perform at Barley Browns.** Phantom Kiss will kick off the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally this year.

**Cattlemen talk water supply.** The Baker County Livestock Association (BCLA) hosted a meeting on Wednesday, June 24, at the Best Western Sunridge Inn, the focus of which was a presentation by Baker County Soil and Water Districts (SWCD) District Manager Whitney Collins, regarding the critical water supply situation in the Rock Creek drainage area, west of Haines.

July 10

**A blues legend passes.** Baker City's own Jimmy Lloyd Rea was born Oct. 6, 1951 and died in a Nampa hospital on June 30, 2015 from complications caused by diabetes.

**Truck used in chase recovered.** The May 12th high speed chase during which Damon Robinson led law enforcement near the rugged Marble Creek trailhead may have ended with the suspect in jail—but that left the problem of removing the abandoned white 1997 Dodge 3/4-ton pickup from its resting place 2,130 feet down the mountain-side.

**Haines Rodeo captures audience despite heat.** Unseasonably hot temperatures marked the Haines Stampede rodeo grounds over the Fourth of July weekend.



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Lt. Dustin Newman shows a softer side, hugging his mom who traveled to witness his swearing in.

## July

July 17

**Sanctuary or not?** Baker County has found itself in the spotlight along with several other eastern Oregon counties after landing on a list of "sanctuary" counties and cities—over 275 nationwide—following the murder of a woman in San Francisco by an illegal resident who had been released due to that area's sanctuary policy.

**County told to pay legal fees.** Umatilla Judge Ron Pahl has awarded Columbia Basin Helicopters, Inc. "reasonable attorney's fees" from Baker County.

**High-speed chase reaches 125 mph.** Last Monday morning, around 4:06 a.m. Officer Mike Lary, accompanied by Reserve Officer Dan Batchelor, noticed a 2007 Kia with a cracked windshield in Baker City. Moments later they found themselves in a high-speed chase across town and out onto the freeway headed east.

**One soggy rally.** Record-setting rains, thunder, lightning and a little hail greeted riders from the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally (HCMR) last weekend.

July 24

**Predatory sex offender returns.** Convicted predatory sex offender, Travis Scott Jones, age 43, returned to Baker City a few days ago, immediately creating community-wide concern not only about his presence, but his seemingly ever-changing address.

**New School Board chair elected.** Board Vice Chair Kevin Cassidy was elected for the position of Chair, and current Board member Melissa Irvine as Vice Chair.

**Captain America visits.** Allen "Captain America" Mullins plans to collect \$500,000 in donations or to log 500,000 miles by 2020, in order to help make improvements on and build new facilities for the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Warm Springs, Oregon.

July 31

**Reality series features cabin with Unity ties.** Two days ago, "Unplugged Nation" on the FYI Channel featured a cabin in Hells Canyon owned by Dale and Betsy McGreer of Clarkston and built in part by the Alexander family from Unity.

**None hurt by envelope.** The Baker County Sheriff's Department was one of numerous government offices targeted for envelopes with a suspicious substance.

**Beloved band teacher to move.** Jeff Sizer has accepted a new job beginning this 2015/2016 school year.

**Sumpter politics abound.** Forget speculation over upcoming presidential races. Those interested in political intrigue need look no farther than Sumpter, Oregon, where one completed and three prospective recall petitions have been filed.

## August

August 7

**Shrine All Star game played.** The East team ran to victory by a score of 25-0 in Oregon's 63rd Annual East West Shrine All-Star Football Game, August 1.

**Eastern Oregon counties protect local interests.** Several counties are enacting coordination with federal agencies. Attorney Fred Kelly Grant will highlight these laws in a 3-day workshop.

**NRA competition held in New Mexico.** Local competitors Gauge Bloomer, Braden Staebler-Siewell and Ben Spaugh scored high in the shooting event.

**Relay for Life lights luminarias to music.** For the seventh year in a row, Baker City's Jason Jordan Smith volunteered to play the bagpipes, walking around the Baker High School track as the luminarias were set aglow.

August 14

**Inside the first GOP presidential debate.** Cove's Rep. Greg Barreto and wife, Chris, who also serves as his legislative assistant, flew from Oregon to attend, as did Oregon Republican Party (ORP) Chair Bill Currier and ORP's National Committeeman Solomon Yue, all of whom have spent time in Baker City on multiple occasions.

**Baker County burns.** Two large fires ignited on Dooley and Burnt River Canyon. The Cornet Fire created a level-three evacuation for Stices Gulch and other areas of the county, sending residents out of their homes.

**Sumpter recalls.** More recall elections will proceed in the City of Sumpter, as recall petitions on Council members Toni Thompson, Ada Oakley, and G. LeAnne Woolf were turned in and signatures verified by County Clerk Cindy Carpenter this week.



Suzan Ellis Jones / The Baker County Press

The Windy Ridge-Cornet Fire swept through Bridgeport Valley, burning this pole and several others in half, knocking out power in the community.

August 21

**Ag producers gather to discuss fire losses.** "We're looking at a potential of 20 permittees whose allotments were affected," said Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Officer Lori Wood on Monday.

**Wildfire bravery and survival.** As fire crews begin to maintain perimeters around the Cornet/Windy Ridge Fire, early stories of bravery, loss, and heartache begin to surface.

**Wildfires:** 120,000 acres scorched in Baker County. Fire near John Day/Canyon City becomes nation's number one priority.

**Stices Gulch residents return home.** The mood was remarkably cheerful as about 35 residents who had been evacuated from Stices Gulch, and firefighting volunteers, met at the Greater Bowen Valley Rural Fire Department's firehouse for a briefing and update on the Fire Management Plan by Fire Chief Jim Devlin on Monday evening.