

2015: A Year in Retrospect

November

November 13

Albertsons to bid on Haggen. In a move that could land Albertsons the grocer's former home at 1120 Campbell Street in Baker City, the company submitted a bid on the 46,000 square-foot commercial building—the current location of Haggen store.

Locals prove vocal. Over 100 people, including many who voiced some strong opinions, attended a U.S. Forest Service-hosted public meeting at the National Guard Armory in Baker City, to discuss the topics of access, and increased wilderness designation, in association with the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR).

ODFW delists wolves. Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission voted on Monday afternoon to remove wolves from the state's list of endangered species—or delist them.

Huntington host Highland Games. The Bald Mountain Knuckle Dragers competed in the annual Huntington Highland Games. The event is held every year on the first Saturday of November in Lion's Park, this year being the 7th.

November 20

Assault on the pathway. Around 2 a.m. last Saturday morning, six men—two groups of three each—were involved in an altercation on the section of the Leo Adler Memorial Pathway that runs behind Thatcher's Ace Hardware.

Huntington man charged with sex abuse. Robert Lee Witter, 80, of Huntington has been arrested on multiple sex abuse-related charges.

Veterans honored in the Panhandle. Veteran's Day was celebrated in the Panhandle of Baker County with an annual breakfast served early that holiday morning, and a program held at the Pine-Eagle Charter School in Halfway, hosted by teachers, students and various members of the community.

Pedestrian struck by pickup. A pedestrian was struck by a pickup truck at the intersection of Clark and Campbell just before 7 a.m. Monday morning in Baker City. The victim, 79-year-old Alfred Berdahl, of Valley Avenue, was in the crosswalk when he was struck during his daily morning walk.

November 27

VFW Youth Shoot nearly doubles in size. On Saturday, the Veterans Memorial Club in Baker City was host to the fourth annual Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Youth Shoot, with a significant increase in participation, up from last year's 43 youths, to 70 this year.



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Top shooter Ethan Jensen holds his prize, a .17 Super Mag.

City Council: The pot odor issue was placed on hold, and Councilor Augenfeld resigned at the Nov. 24 Baker City Council Meeting.

City, Police respond to lawsuit. Robert E. Franz, Jr. out of Springfield filed the initial legal response on behalf of the City of Baker City, ten "Doe Officers," and Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner. The response addresses the federal lawsuit filed last month by reporter Brian Addison, formerly of Baker City. Addison's suit centers around retaliation and defamation claims stemming back to an opinion piece he authored, which ran in *The Record-Courier* newspaper in 2008. Addison states the piece, which was critical of local police, triggered retaliatory actions that violated his civil rights over the course of several years.

Christmas tree team makes Main Street merry. Jeff Nelson of Historic Baker City, Inc. (HBC) said that last Saturday morning's cutting of the Main Street Christmas tree happened on "a perfect day."



Photo courtesy of Jeff Nelson, HBC, Inc.

Baker City's Main Street Christmas tree was loaded onto a truck provided by Superior Towing. The process involved volunteers and staff from OTEC and multiple City departments.

December

December 4

Former Grant Co. deputy wants to increase voter turnout. Oregon State Representative Sherrie Sprenger traveled from her home base in Linn and Marion Counties, to Baker County, on a mission Tuesday.

Economic development warns against \$15/hour wages. The proposed \$15 per hour Oregon minimum wage, local businesses and the empty Haggen store were the key topics as the Baker County Economic Development Committee (EDC) held its regular meeting on Monday.

Deadlines extended in Pine-Eagle lawsuit. An order was granted to extend the deadline for discovery in the ongoing lawsuit filed by former Halfway teacher Linda Mallery McLean v. Pine-Eagle School District 61; et al. regarding the 2013 active shooter drill at the school.

Bennetts to receive OCA/ODFW award. Mark Bennett and wife, Patti, were recently notified that they will receive the Riley Freeman award for stewardship at the upcoming Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) awards dinner in Bend.

December

December 11

Barreto tours BTI. 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 member Andrew Bryan.

Distracted drivers posing increased risk. "Oregon's cell phone law has had at least one unintended consequence," said Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner. "Increased texting while driving."

Lawyer says prayer before county meetings is legal. 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.

New Chamber Director announced. 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.

December 18

Police nab third Boise robber suspect since 2004. Last Friday afternoon, for the third time in recent memory, local law enforcement nabbed yet another Boise-area bank robbery suspect who had fled to Baker City.

County, USFS meet again. The Baker County Board of Commissioners held another government-to-government coordination meeting with representatives of the United States Forest Service (USFS) on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

Forest Service publishes travel management reports. The U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region released 17 travel analysis reports this week that outline existing road systems and identify opportunities to achieve a more sustainable system of roads for each national forest in the Pacific Northwest. These travel analysis reports are part of nationwide requirement involving national forests across the country.

There and back again. In the debut issue of *The Baker County Press*, January 3, 2014, the article "To Russia with Love" chronicled David and Elizabeth "Betty" Huntsman's departure on a church mission, initially landing them in Yekaterinburg, Russia. Last Saturday the Huntsmans celebrated their return to Baker City at the LDS Church, packed with a couple hundred of their closest friends—and a massive cookie exchange.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

A large group filled the gym at the LDS Church in Baker City Saturday night as Elizabeth "Betty" and David Huntsman were welcomed home. L-R: Glenda Mastrude, Betty Huntsman and Sheila Valentine.

December 25

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