

# Local

## County: B2H special session



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Front right going counter-clockwise: Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, NRAC Chair Doni Bruland, County Commissioner Mark Bennett, and Planning Director Holly Kerns peruse the maps along with others.

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Harvey and Bennett provided an introduction to the session and process, which included discussion with those present about the details of the aforementioned alternative route for the proposed transmission line. A map was displayed on the county's interactive Smart Board, showing aerial views and other layers, for the route, after Bennett explained that the County Planning Department was also involved in the process.

Gonzalez said that the current map (paper copies of which were printed later for attendees) is unavailable online, because details could change, which wouldn't necessarily be updated regularly on the B2H-associated website. He said he didn't want too many versions of the map, which would confuse people.

He said, "The whole purpose of what we're doing right now is for the cooperating agencies (including the Board), not so much for public comment. The public gets to make

comments—that's when the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) comes out."

Cathy asked whether there would be a version of the map the BLM would feel confident about releasing to the public, and Gonzalez said not until the FEIS came out, though the cooperating agencies would receive one during the process.

"While we have a preferred alternative, that doesn't mean that that is what's selected," Gonzalez said, when a decision is eventually made. He said that the value of input regarding routes is huge, and there have been up to three variations of alternative routes.

Gonzalez said that, the deadline to receive comments from the cooperating agencies had been originally set as January 8, 2016, however, with requests from Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, that has been extended to January 22, 2016. Harvey and Bennett requested public comments to the Board be received by January 18, 2016.

Owen asked why it

didn't appear that anyone were present conducting an environmental assessment on his property, through which the alternative route would run, and Gonzalez responded that information could have been gathered via other methods, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), previous inventories, etc.

Ann asked about taking inventory of raptors' nests and whether they're occupied, and Gonzalez said that they would be considered occupied for a couple of years, and they should be easy to locate. In response to a question from her about the types of comments desired, he said, "The best kind of input that we can get through the cooperators (including the Board) right now, is to hear what the specific concern or impact is," with as much detail as possible.

In response to a question about concerns regarding right-of-ways from Owen, Maffuccio responded that Idaho Power, the B2H applicant, would discuss with any landowners the topics of compensation, construction time, potential impacts, road building,

etc. Owen said that the difference in the sale of a portion of land could be \$100,000 less with the constructed power line through it, asking whether that's something he could possibly be compensated for, to which Lane said that he could, if justified. "We're not trying to short-change anybody," Lane said.

Bennett interjected that the County could be part of that process, where desired, to ensure landowners are treated fairly.

Buchanan asked if the areas burned by wildfires would have an impact, as far as the placement of the route is concerned, and Gonzalez responded that the line wouldn't change for that reason.

As the map was displayed on the Smart Board by Holly, she explained the Preliminary Environmentally Preferred Alternative Route (the main topic of discussion), along with the Idaho Power Proposed Route, and Alternative Route. Harvey said, "It's just an option... They're still all on the table," to which Gonzalez concurred.

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## Scouts to pick up trees

Baker City Scouts will be picking up Christmas trees the morning of January 2 beginning at 9 a.m.

Residents can leave their tree near the curb in plain view from the road. Scouts will collect the trees and deliver them to bins, donated for use by Baker Sanitary Service. Baker Sanitary Service will utilize their equipment and facilities to recycle the trees.

Donations for this service are appreciated, but not required. They may be placed in an envelope and attached to the front door of the residence where Scouts can retrieve it. Checks can be made payable to "BSA."

Contributions will stay local, supplementing Baker County scouting activities, camping and supply purchases.

For more information, contact Emily Braswell, Eastern Oregon District Executive, at 541-519-7677, or search "Baker City Christmas tree pick up" on Facebook. Web address for Public Facebook event: [www.facebook.com/events/1176301212400039](http://www.facebook.com/events/1176301212400039)

## Train collision proves fatal

Oregon State Police (OSP) is continuing the investigation into Tuesday afternoon's fatal collision involving a train and SUV south of Union in Union County. The names of the three occupants will be released following confirmation of family notifications.

Preliminary information indicates that on December 29, 2015 at approximately 2:54 p.m., a Union Pacific Railroad train was traveling eastbound and approaching the Curtis Road and Miller Lane crossing when for unknown reasons, a blue Jeep Cherokee was traveling east on Curtis Road and turned left onto Miller Lane, in the path of the train. The train struck the Cherokee and all three occupants, as well as a dog, were ejected and pronounced deceased at the scene.

The rural area train crossing displayed crossing signs with a stop sign but did not have crossing gate arms. The train did not derail and no injuries were reported aboard the train.

OSP was assisted by Union County Sheriff's Office, Union Fire and Ambulance, La Grande Ambulance, and Union Pacific Railroad representatives.

This is an ongoing investigation and more information will be released when it becomes available.

## Christmas Day search and rescue success

Baker and Union County Search and Rescue (SAR) teams responded to the area of Anthony Lakes early Christmas morning to search for an overdue snowmobile operator, Travis Cannon, age 45.

Travis Cannon and Duane Chandler had been snowmobiling on the 73 road around midnight.

Cannon failed to return to the parking lot and the Baker County Sheriff's Office was contacted around 1:47 a.m.

SAR members from Union and Baker County responded to the scene.

Cannon was located by snowmobile teams at 8:15 a.m.

Cannon was in fair health and had a fire started where his snowmobile was stranded. Cannon refused any medical treatment and left the scene in his vehicle.

## Community Bank raises \$24K in annual charity drive

The annual Charity Drive was conducted in Community Bank's full-service branch locations during November, through December 18th. The program is an effort to collect donations in branches to benefit charities in that same area. This season a grand total of \$24,116.03 in donations and bank matches were dispersed to charities assisting local citizens in need.

Community Bank matches up to \$50 per branch at \$.50 on the dollar. The goal this year was to raise a minimum of \$1,000 at each branch location in order to have the maximum bank match achieved and to provide at least \$1500 for each charity. The goal was reached in 6 of the bank's 13 participating branches: El-

gin, Wallowa, Enterprise, Joseph, Milton-Freewater, and Baker City.

Following are the amounts the charity organizations are receiving the week of Christmas as a result of the Charity Drive.

Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar and include funds raised in the branch and the Community Bank match. Community Connection Food Bank (Enterprise & Joseph branches): \$9,522; Elgin Food Bank (Elgin branch): \$3,526; Wallowa Food Bank (Wallowa branch): \$3,038; Milton-Freewater City Light and Power Energy Assistance Program through the Salvation Army (Milton-Freewater branch): \$1,975; Walla Walla's Senior Center, Center at the Park (College Place & Walla Walla

branches): \$1,622; Baker City Food Banks (Baker City branch): \$1,500; EOU Foundation Scholarship Fund for regional need-based scholarships (La Grande downtown & Valley branches): \$1,105; Neighborhood Center Food Bank (Heppner branch): \$790; Neighbor 2 Neighbor Warming Station (Pendleton branch): \$525; Martha's House (Hermiston branch): \$510.

Since 2010 the Community Bank Charity Drive has provided over \$119,000 to charities in the region. Community Bank would like to thank all the people and clubs that donated to the fund raising efforts.

"We are thankful for what these organizations do for our communities and glad to assist them with additional support,"

said Tom Moran, Community Bank President/CEO, "We couldn't do it without our generous customers and communities - so thank you for your help."

The Clarkston branch of Community Bank opted to facilitate their second annual one day pet-portrait fundraising event for the Lewis Clark Animal Shelter which raised about \$530 in donations at their location in early December.

About Community Bank. Headquartered in Joseph Oregon, Community Bank has \$373 million in assets as of 11/30/15. The Bank has 14 full-service branches throughout Eastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington. Community Bank is an Equal Housing Lender and Member FDIC.

## High-speed chase

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The Saab had crashed into a 2011 Dodge pickup, operated by Becky Harrell, age 55, of Baker City, and a 2013 Ford pickup, operated by Nathan Hull, age 48, of Baker City, at the intersection of Hughes Lane and US Highway 30.

Yattaw fled on foot onto 10th Street and into the Oregon Trail Livestock parking lot where troopers took him into custody without further incident.

Yattaw was taken to the Baker County Jail for Attempt to Elude in Vehicle, Attempt to Elude on Foot, Reckless Driving, Reckless Endangering, Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants, Assault II, Attempted Assault II, and Assault on a Public Safety Officer.

One Trooper received minor injuries after being dragged and thrown to the ground by Yattaw while he fled the scene of the traffic stop. Harrell received minor injuries and Hull was not injured.

OSP was assisted by the Baker City Police Department and the Baker County Sheriff's Department.

Lohner said the BCPD's drug K9, Capa, was brought to the scene and did alert. A search warrant was initiated but to date, has not yet been executed nor a search of the Saab conducted. More information will be released when those steps are completed.