

Business & Ag

County: Commissioners discuss BLM, USFS, SWCD, NRCS, SAR, FBI and more

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held its second, regular session of the month, on Wednesday, January 20, 2015, at 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

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

Attendance also included Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Planner Kari Harris, Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) District Manager Whitney Collins, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) District Conservationist Misty Bennett, Baker County Emergency Manager Jason Yencopal, Baker County Veterans Service Office (VSO) Rick Gloria, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) Executive Director Lisa Dawson, EcoWest Consulting Senior Ecologist Leslie Gecy, County legal counsel Dan Van Thiel, Dave McQuisten, Cynthia Long, John and Ramona Creighton, Wanda Ballard, and JoAnne Marlette.

The meeting was called to order, followed by recitation of the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Shortly after that, the agenda was adopted, with a motion from Kerns, and a second from Bennett.

The Citizen Participation segment of the meeting included comments from Long, McQuisten, John Creighton, and Ballard.

Long expressed concerns about the route to Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, from the Haines side, at Anthony Lakes Highway, saying, "As we were driving out Saturday morning, the roads weren't plowed, and, from what I understand, we don't plow on the weekends." Long said it was a busy weekend for the highway and the resort, and, there was a significant amount of snow.

Bennett responded that, historically, there are limited funds for this, and, there is a requirement of a certain depth of snow before plowing, but he would speak with Baker County Roadmaster Jeff Smith regarding the issue.

McQuisten referencing the situation in Harney County with the Hammonds, and other incidents, discussed his concerns regarding the cooperative law enforcement agreements between the County and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and, the County and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

He said, "I have these contracts, and I read through one of them, and a lot of them have 'cooperation' written all through them, where Baker County will be known as a cooperator."

Harvey and Bennett both explained the agreements Baker County has with the USFS and the BLM,



Lisa Dawson of NEOEDD speaks to the Commissioners about economic development.

and, Harvey said his personal goal is for the Baker County Sheriff's Office to be the chief law enforcement department for the County.

Harvey said that the Sheriff's Office provides most of the services for the County, and the County is compensated for that.

"I just see this as taking a step further, and (the agencies) abusing that power," McQuisten said. "I just look at that thing in Harney County, where that Sheriff (David Ward) basically was in a similar situation, or, a similar agreement... Basically, he threw his hands up and said, 'I don't want to take care of it,' and, he handed it over to the FBI... That's what I don't want to see in Baker County... The Sheriff is supposed to stand between you and Big Brother."

Bennett said, "I think the Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in the County," stating that he didn't think Ash would willingly form an agreement that would force the County into a minor, cooperative role.

He suggested McQuisten discuss this issue personally with Ash.

McQuisten concluded his comments by reading from a copy of an interview transcript of retired Sheriff Richard Mack, speaking about the authority of the County Sheriff, the Constitution, the Harney County/Hammond situation, and the details largely ignored by mainstream media.

John Creighton agreed with McQuisten's comments, and, said, "One of the main things I got out of it was (the Harney County situation, and the grouped individuals voicing their opinions there), they felt fully betrayed by the Sheriff..."

He praised the Board for its efforts, which Harvey said are "proactive," in addressing potential similar scenarios.

Harvey said, "I believe he (Ash) will stand up for us, and we will stand up for him."

Ash said his door's always open to discuss the issue.

Ballard said, "The Constitution is not open to an individual interpretation."

The minutes from the

January 6, 2016 session were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Gloria provided the Board with a Veteran Services Department update. He spoke about VetraSpec, a user-friendly, secure online Veteran's Claims Management Software System, which streamlines the claims process.

He said there are approximately 2,000 veterans in Baker County (1,959, according to fiscal year 2014 information), and he has about 950 active veteran files currently with 418 of those already enrolled with VetraSpec.

He said he's attempting to reach out to the remainder of the veterans in the County with local newspaper and radio advertisements, which he said are paid for by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA).

Gloria also spoke about the veteran transportation services provided by Community Connection, a flexible system, allowing veterans more choices in seeking transport to facilities locations throughout the region.

He provided a federal expenditures handout for fiscal year 2014, detailing amounts paid to each county in Oregon.

In Baker County, with a veteran population of 1,959, the combined federal expenditure was about \$16.5 million, including compensation and pensions in the amount of about \$9 million, and medical care in the amount of about \$7.3 million.

The Board discussed a Baker County Sheriff's Office cargo trailer purchase approval with Ash. Baker County Search and Rescue (SAR) applied for, and was awarded, a Leo Adler Foundation grant in the amount of \$7,500, for the purpose of purchasing a covered trailer, used to house rescue sleds, ATVs, and miscellaneous rescue-type equipment.

Sheriff Travis Ash received three quotes, and, he stated SAR would like to purchase the trailer from Big T's in Baker City, which was quoted at \$8,092.

Funds from the SAR banking account would

make up the difference.

Two other quotes were given, both from outside of Baker County, of \$8,232 from Trailers Unlimited, and, \$8,168 from Mirage, Inc.

The purchase was approved with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Yencopal, Collins, and Misty Bennett provided the Board with a Cornet/Windy Ridge fire recovery update.

Bennett discussed addressing erosion control, lack of vegetation, and, funds for reseeding, and, she stated that NRCS provided \$500,000 for the recovery effort.

Collins said that, with the effort that includes the SWCD and NRCS, more reseeding will be accomplished—about 10,000 acres' worth—compared to less than half that, about 3,500 acres with a solo NRCS effort, and the partnership includes 16 private landowners.

She said that the seed, which includes winter wheat and grass, will be distributed via helicopter, at 30 pounds per acre.

For more information about the recovery effort, Collins can be reached at 541-523-7121, extension 109, or, whitney.collins@bakercountyswcds.com.

A final public hearing was held in the matter of Ordinance No. 2016-01 Amending Ordinances 2014-01 And 83-2, An Ordinance Adopting An Interchange Area Management Plan For I-84 Exits 302 And 306 By Amending The Comprehensive Land Use Plan And Zoning Ordinance. Holly Kerns summarized the ordinance, after Harvey read a hearing statement regarding the process.

Some comments were made, and details were explained regarding the ordinance, but no testimony was noted, and, the ordinance was adopted, by title only, with a motion from Bennett, and, a second from (Tim) Kerns. Holly read the ordinance by title.

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— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, January 15, 2016 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to week ago prices. The recent cold snap has increased sales. Many producers have decided to hold on to their hay for now, in hopes for higher prices. Snow has hit some of the hay producing areas.

No new sales confirmed. From last week:

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa —Large Square Supreme	98 225.00-225.00	225.00
Alfalfa —Large Square Premium	320 190.00-190.00	190.00
Alfalfa —Large Square Fair	250 125.00-125.00	125.00
Triticale—Large Square Good	300 90.00-90.00	90.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1655

Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 179.00 - 213.00	Top 225.00
400-500#	Bulk 161.00 - 209.50	Top 212.00
500-600#	Bulk 159.00 - 186.00	Top 188.00

Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 158.00 - 189.00	Top 190.00
400-500#	Bulk 153.00 - 188.00	Top 190.00
500-600#	Bulk 149.00 - 172.00	Top 174.00

Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 152.00 - 169.75	Top 170.00
700-800#	Bulk 146.00 - 165.00	Top 166.00
800-900#	Bulk 135.00 - 150.00	Top 152.50
900-1,000#	Bulk 121.00 - 131.00	Top 133.00

Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 139.00 - 154.00	Top 157.00
700-800#	Bulk 131.00 - 151.00	Top 152.00
800-900#	Bulk 121.00 - 129.00	Top 130.00
900-1,000#	Bulk 109.00 - 126.00	Top 130.00

Thin Shelly Cows	38.00 - 51.00
Butcher Cows	54.00 - 64.00
Butcher Bulls	65.00 - 82.00
Stock Cows Yng.	N/A
Younger Hfrts.	84.00 - 102.00
Stock Cows Older.	87.50 - 108.00

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Doug Fir	\$415.00/mbf
White fir	\$365.00/mbf
Ponderosa Pine	brought sold on diameter splits
6 to 11 inch dib	\$300 to \$310/MBF
12 to 17 inch dib	\$350 to \$375/MBF
18 to 23 inch dib	\$400 to \$430/MBF
24 inch plus dib	\$450 to \$500/MBF

DIB is diameter inside bark at small end of log.
MBF is thousand board feet lumber, net scale.
People interested in selling logs should call and get specific quotes from saw mills.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: 1,106.30

Silver: \$14.18

Platinum: \$821.45

Palladium: \$493.55

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn:	\$368.00/bu/USD
Wheat:	\$471.25/bu/USD
Soybeans:	\$871.75/bu/USD
Oats:	\$205.75 bu/USD
Rough Rice:	\$10.78/cwt/USD
Canola:	\$483.40 CAD/mwt
Live Cattle:	\$127.28/lb./USD
Feeder Cattle:	\$149.50/lb./USD
Lean Hogs:	\$66.80/lb./USD

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