

# Local

## 5J, Worksource reps attend Economic Development meeting

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
TODD@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The Baker County Economic Development Council (EDC) held its monthly meeting on Thursday, January 21, 2016, at 4 p.m., in the Baker County Courthouse Commission Chambers.

Present from the Council were Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Council Chair Craig Ward, City Manager Mike Kee, and Baker Technical Institute (BTI) Director Jerry Peacock. Baker City Council member Richard Langrell was absent.

Joining the Council were Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center (BMCC SBDC) Director Art Hill, BMCC SBDC Advisor Jeff Nelson, Baker County Economic Development Director Greg Smith, Smith's Assistant Julee Hicks, Baker School District 5J Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Business Manager Doug Dalton, District 5J School Board Chair Kevin Cassidy, District 5J School Board member Andrew Bryan, Catalyst Consultant Kat Davis, Oregon Worksource Region 13 Manager Debra Gargalis, BMCC Board member Bob Savage, Historic Baker City (HBC) President Larry Abell, and Baker City Council member Rosemary Abell.

The meeting was called to order, and the minutes from the previous EDC meeting were approved, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Peacock.

Bryan began a School District presentation with details praise for BTI, emphasizing the foundation for economic development—education.

He cited a lack of communication in the last ten years between the District and the EDC, stating that the District is at the heart of the community's vitality, with sound, financial footing, and is a dynamic enterprise, including the Baker Web Academy.

Elaborating on the subject of BTI, he said that most of the local population, not only youth, could benefit from career technical skills, and "soft" skills. He said the community would see benefits with not only middle school and high school education but also with post-secondary



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Soon to retire, Art Hill of BMCC shows off a copy of his new book.

options for education.

Dalton spoke about the difficulties with the recession, and bouncing back from that period with competitive skills in high demand in Oregon.

He said that the top five jobs in high demand in Oregon aren't Bachelor degree-type jobs—they're skilled jobs.

Dalton said that, when the usual course for Districts two years ago was to decrease investments, District 5J increased investing, building BTI, helping to build demand.

BTI courses were centered around agricultural science with more expansion to come, he said, including building a welding facility, and expanding on the already offered health services offerings, environmental services, engineering, and building trades courses.

Dalton explained the importance of a trained workforce, and, he said that BTI was, and is instrumental in training welders specifically for the type of work required by Behlen Manufacturing Company, in Baker City, allowing the company to grow.

Dalton said he's hoping Baker City can become a destination for a secondary school, and, the District is working with the Oregon State Board of Higher Education to petition to have BTI recognized as a post-secondary institution, which would include being able to accept financial aid,

issue college credits, etc.

The process, which would be in partnership with BMCC, may take three years or more, he said. Cassidy expressed the priority of this process to the District, and sustaining the quality of life in the community, and Kee said that the opportunity is exciting, and the District should proceed with its plans.

Hill said he will be retiring shortly from his position, and, displayed a new book he authored, "Venture Finance: The essential growth guide for startups and small businesses."

He will be heading to Croatia in September to teach college business, he said.

Nelson said it's difficult replacing Hill. He spoke about Hatch Oregon, located in the Baker County Chamber of Commerce building, and about the great potential for local businesses to invest in Community Public Offerings (CPO).

Davis spoke about her vision for the community, and, about issues with the economy. Those issues include the loss of core industries, such as logging, an aging population, smaller families, and the difficulties with finding and attracting new people to Baker County.

She cited a lack of marketing Baker County properly to the right demographic, and the tendency to market it to solely local

individuals and businesses. Harvey had been saying for a year and a half that the County's largest export has been our youth (who find better opportunities elsewhere), which is not a good thing, and what is offered here already needs to be marketed better, he said.

Smith discussed some details regarding economic development within the County. Among those: Fern Taylor, operator of Cover Works, in Baker City, is looking to retire, and the DeLong family, interested in the business, received a loan for \$150,000 through Eastern Oregon Small Business Development to assist with the venture; The Haines Stampede Rodeo Association, aggressively working to raise funds, around \$10,000, needed to address issues with rodeo grounds equipment, has been working with Economic Development in order to receive a possible loan; and, there is a tentative plan to hold another Eastern Oregon Mining and Aggregate Development Summit, after April 15, 2016.

The group discussed the need for more EDC members (the total is required to be an odd number), including the desire for, and the difficulties with recruiting younger members in the range of ages from mid-twenties to mid-forties.

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 18, 2016, at 4 p.m.

## Two more meth arrests made

On January 22, 2016 at about 10:30 p.m., Baker City Police Department officers stopped a 1997 Chevy Lumina for a traffic violation at Main and Campbell Streets in Baker City. During the stop, drug detection canine "Capa" was deployed on the vehicle and alerted to the odor of illegal narcotics in the car.

Subsequently, BCPD Officers searched the vehicle and located approximately two grams of methamphetamine and two firearms (handguns) that were concealed in the vehicle.

Arrested at the scene for Possession of a Controlled Substance Methamphetamine was:

- Thomas James Barger (12/04/1990)

Arrested at the scene for Possession of a Controlled Substance Methamphetamine and Unlawful Possession of a Firearm was:

- Desiree Marie Barnett (12/30/1986)

Baker City officers were assisted by an Oregon State Trooper during the investigation.

This investigation will be continuing and additional charges and/or arrests are likely.

## SE Oregon RAC meeting postponed

The latest meeting of the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council (SEORAC), scheduled for January 25 and 26 has been postponed.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) management, together with Council leadership, decided to postpone the meeting due to the expected absence of a quorum.

The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 1784.6-1) requires that a quorum of council members be present to constitute an official meeting of the council and for them to render any official decisions or recommendations.

The SEORAC is made up of 15 total members, dispersed evenly and representing three interest groups:

Commercial/commodity interests;  
Environmental/historical groups (including wild horse and burro and dispersed recreation); State and local government, Indian tribes, and the public at large.

The SEORAC Charter establishes at least three members of these five-member groups be present in order to satisfy the requirements for a quorum.

"We're disappointed to have to postpone the meeting, but the work of the council will continue," said Don Gonzalez, Vale District BLM Manager.

The next meeting of the council is scheduled for the first week of April.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.

## Farmers Market calls for artists

The Baker City Farmers Market is seeking artwork for the 2016 Market Poster. Submissions must be received by April 15, 2016.

Artwork should depict an aspect of Farmers Market (such as fresh produce or colorful vendor stalls) that will translate well into poster form. Prize awarded to selected artist.

For more information please call Ann Mehaffy, 541 519 0698. Baker City Farmers Market, PO Box 794, Baker City OR 97814.

## Dispatch to send help to Harney

The recent and ongoing events in Harney County have left that county scrambling to provide public safety services to the community it serves.

Law enforcement agencies including the Baker County Sheriff's Office and Baker City Police Department have provided mutual aid assistance to Harney County and now the local dispatch center will also.

Harney County Dispatch

is normally staffed with one on-duty dispatcher during most hours. With the influx of law enforcement personnel and a dramatic increase in telephone calls from the public and the media in particular that dispatch center's staff has worked literally non stop. They have worked extended hours and without days off.

"They have reached out to us, and other 9-1-1 Centers, for help and as

is true of public safety in general we have responded to the extent our resources allow," said Jerry Boyd, Interim Director Baker County Consolidated 9-1-1 Dispatch.

This weekend several Baker 9-1-1 Dispatchers, who have volunteered on their days off without overtime pay, will be assisting their brother and sister dispatchers in Burns, Oregon.

Given the emotional

and volatile environment surrounding this on-going event the dispatchers will not be identified by name. That is based on their safety.

"I hope all citizens of Baker County join us in urging that cool heads prevail in this matter and that it reaches a peaceful resolution," said Jerry Boyd, Interim Director Baker County Consolidated 9-1-1 Dispatch," said Boyd.

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