

# Local

## Commissioner candidate holds meet and greet

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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Around 40 members of the community gathered for a “Meet and Greet the Candidate” event in the lounge of the Baker City Golf Course on Tuesday evening, for Bruce Nichols, who is campaigning for Baker County Commissioner, a race which also includes candidates Kody Justus, and Jeff Nelson.

The event kicked off at 5:30 p.m., and his wife, Kelly, was also present, to assist with his campaign, “Minding the County’s Business,” as well as volunteers Jan Kerns, and Brenda Holly, both of whom provided and prepared finger foods.

Nichols, a local CPA, of Nichols and Mitchell (Stan Mitchell), is vying for County Commissioner seat No. 1, which will be left vacant by current Commissioner Tim Kerns, at the end of this year. Kelly is a 2nd grade teacher at Brooklyn Elementary, and the couple have three grown children.

Speaking about what plans he has, if elected, Bruce said, “I haven’t said much on that yet, but, I will pretty soon. I don’t know if I want to change anything; I just want to make it (County operations) run a little better, maybe. That’s really what

I’m about, is efficiency.”

Kelly said, “I’ve never done this type of campaigning,” explaining that she and Bruce are in the initial stages of their ambitious goal, which includes visiting and speaking with members of every City in Baker County, according to Nichols. He said that he’s been to every City before, though, because he’s been an auditor, and he’s familiar to community members and City Councils throughout the County. This week would have included trips to visit with City Council members of Richland, and Halfway, to discuss their concerns.

Nichols explained that his expertise is in dealing with government entities, experience which he’s had over the course of 35 years. “I know about budgets, and I know a lot about budget law, and as far as the County operations... We need to stay focused on managing the County.” He said this is his focus, and why he chose his particular slogan.

“I just want to lend my expertise to the County,” he said. Bruce said that he’d like to discuss some issues, and resolve those, and as Commissioner, he would be in a better position to accomplish that.

“I had an idea that I wanted to discuss with the County, and somebody

basically said, ‘No,’ and I thought, ‘Let’s see about that,’” he said, speaking about what inspired him to run for Commissioner. “They heard the idea, they just didn’t want to take any time with it, and I think I want to take some time with it...It’s just one of my ideas. Do I have an agenda? Yes, I want to talk about this issue I have. I’m not going to bring it up yet, for quite some time, because it’s a long process, to get it done...”

He said it’s an issue in need of discussion, one he’ll mention closer to election time, because he doesn’t know whether the solution ultimately is feasible. He said that it would require a committee, to begin the process of solving the issue, and, “It’s going to take minds greater than mine, to do it. It’s something that, I’m not sure has been done in this State before...I think everybody will benefit, if my idea comes to fruition...It’s going to take years to get it done. It’s a vision I’ve had for a long time...” Bruce said there will be some resistance to the idea, so he desires to keep details to himself for now.

He said he’s never campaigned before, noting that, “I don’t want to be called a politician...” He spoke about the desire to keep the County clear of



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press  
Bruce and Kelly Nichols.

lawsuits, the case of Baker County vs. David McCarty, aka Columbia Basin Helicopter, Inc., in which McCarty prevailed, costing the County over \$300,000, as one example.

“That’s maybe the type of thing that can be prevented in the future. Who knows,” Nichols said. “It’s something that’s going to make it tougher on the County yet,” he said, noting future funding issues for County departments.

Nichols spoke about a company he was a key part of, Baker Industry and Resources Corporation (now defunct), which provided vital economic growth within the County, including donations of real estate, funding, and assistance with loans.

Nichols also has served in the United States Air Force, as an electro/mechanical communications equipment repairman, stationed in Texas, Montana, Colorado, and Turkey.

## Translator District discusses flat fee, OPB reports

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The Blue Mountain Translator District (BMTD) Board of Directors met for its monthly meeting, on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, noon, at Denny’s Restaurant in La Grande. Present were BMTD District Manager Beverly Beach, Board members Tim Wallender, Anna Dean, Christina Wood, and Katy Thomas. Board member and Baker County Commissioner Tim Kerns was absent. Also attending the meeting were Mike Elliott, and Steve Hendrix, of Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), Steve Antell, and Mike Dean.

Wood made several motions, seconded and passed, including the following:

An Amendment to Resolution No. 3, regarding refunds to taxed members who did not own District households at the time of mailing, was adopted; a proposed Job Description for District Manager was accepted; a letter, regarding State statute revisions, addressed to District representatives, and other committee members in Salem, and the Oregon Association of Broadcasters, with at least one Board member signature on each letter, was approved; and the set up for automatic withdrawal, on a monthly basis, of Oregon Trail Electric Coop (OTEC) utility invoices for transmitter sites, was approved.

Changes to statutes includes resolving funding issues, with a (voter-approved) potential flat fee for District coverage areas, including Cities. Beach said that most of the funding for BMTD—about 95%—comes from rural members in Baker, and Union counties, however, this doesn’t currently include, according to statutes, Cities, such as Baker City, which has cable TV coverage from Charter Communications. She said that one of the issues is, Charter receives and redistributes to cable TV customers the District’s broadcast channels, but, BMTD is not compensated for this. There also has been an issue with the lack of District signal users within the Cities (via over-the-air antennas, a significant amount noticeable within City boundaries) compensating BMTD for receiving the signal (currently \$100 a year, the notices of which are sent each June).

An OPB report included a discussion regarding Beaver Mountain (the broadcast site located south of Baker City, just east of Dooley Mountain) issues, and power boost from Mt. Fanny (the broadcast site located above the town of Cove), to help alleviate broadcast problems BMTD was experiencing. The receive array is expected to be rebuilt this summer, and the new fiber optic system, the result of a year-long effort to improve reception of the signal, continues to have some issues, apparently weather-related, in addition to the need for a better Mt. Fanny dish. The third broadcast site, Mt. Harris, is located east of Imbler.

Skyline Towers is sending a crew next week, to better secure the receive dish, as well as looking into a stronger receive dish, expected to be installed at a later date. Beach will continue a discussion with Elliott, regarding a remote switching system the District needs for Mt. Fanny. BMTD, a non-profit government municipality, is governed by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 354.605 to 354.715, and the District’s technical engineering is contracted out to OPB.

A District report included the completion of opt-out input (for yearly member taxes), and updates to the out-of-District database, making the system ready for the upcoming March and April updates from both Baker, and Union counties (District coverage area). Baker County represents about a third of the District’s funding, with about two thirds covered by Union County members.

It was announced that KOINTV will be adding a new channel, 6.3a, soon, called Decades TV; BMTD received numerous calls, emails, and Facebook messages this month, regarding issues with the signal; BMTD is working with Titan TV, regarding a program listing; Beach will be seeking bids for electrical and AC unit work, to be completed at Beaver Mountain, this summer; Beach provided the Board with a handout, regarding the possible installation of a radio station, on Mt. Fanny; and the Board was given a proposed Personnel Policy, and asked to review it over the next month for possible adoption at the next meeting. Sections of the Policy to be reviewed are Vacation Benefits, Sick Leave, Uniformed Services, and Jury Duty.

Antell, of the Mt. Emily Nordic Club, asked whether the District would sell its sno-cat to the club, for which he’s offering \$7,000. He said the sno-cat would be available, if the District needed it for emergencies. The Board decided to allow Antell to test drive the sno-cat, and Beach will complete further research regarding the value of the machine.

Beach, the District’s sole, half-time employee, has an information sheet, with general details about BMTD, and broadcast channels, including the following:

From the Beaver Mountain site, 2.1, KATU/ABC, from Portland; 6.1, KOIN/CBS, from Portland; 7.1, KTVB/NBC, High Definition (HD), from Boise; 7.2, KTVB/NBC, from Boise; 7.KGW/NBC, from Portland; 12.1, and KPTV/FOX, from Portland. From the Mt. Fanny site, all of the aforementioned channels, plus 32.1, KRCW/NW32, from Portland; and 49.1, KPDX/PDX, from Portland. From the Mt. Harris site, 2.1, KATU/ABC, from Portland; 6.1, KOIN/CBS, from Portland; 8.1, KGW/NBC, from Portland; and 12.1, KPTV/FOX, from Portland. Also available from all three sites are 13.1, OPB; 13.2, OPB Plus; and 13.3, OPB Radio (NPR, Music and Jazz). With the implementation of the fiber optic system, the following channels are also available: 2.2, MeTV; 2.3, CometTV; 6.2, GetTV; 8.2, JN; 8.3, Estrella (Spanish); 12.2, CoziTV; 12.3, LaffTV; 32.2, AntennaTV; 32.3, ThisTV; and 49.2, EscapeTV.

# BLOOD DRAW

Participate in blood panel screenings offered by  
Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City

Thursday      Friday      Saturday

March 17 18 19



Join us!

7:00 a.m.—9:30 a.m.

Saint Alphonsus  
Medical Center—Baker City  
Powder River Conference Room

Use Administration entrance (old care center entrance) located in the back of the hospital near the ER entrance.

**Basic Package:** Lipid panel—\$0 (no charge)

**Comprehensive Package:** Lipid panel, CBC, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel—\$20

TSH: \$10

No Appointment Needed.

**IMPORTANT:** Please abstain from all food and drink at least 12 hours before your blood screening. Drinking plain water is encouraged.

Your results  
will be mailed to you.

\*Insurance will not be billed. You will receive a receipt and description of the tests.

Individuals are responsible for checking with their insurance carriers for possible reimbursement.

If you have questions, call Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

because it’s all about *you.*

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Medical Center**  
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