



# The Baker County Press

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## Nichols says he'll look at consolidating City police and County Sheriff

### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT WEIGHS IN

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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At an April 1 meet and greet in Halfway for County Commissioners candidates, candidate and Baker City CPA Bruce Nichols was asked by a member of the audience to address rumors circulating that he

would explore consolidating the Baker City Police Department and the Baker County Sheriff's Office should he be elected.

Nichols' answer regarding local law enforcement consolidation? A definite maybe.

Nichols responded as transcribed from audio of the meeting, "I brought that up and I said something I shouldn't have because I didn't want to bring that up at that time."

Nichols was alluding to a

statement he made during a meet and greet last month.

He continued, "But now that you did, I will answer the question. Ah, I'm in favor of consolidating as many organizations as I can, but I don't know whether that's feasible or not. And if we have an idea to help people of Baker County and save the people of Baker County money, by operating more efficiently and effectively, why not take a look at that? And, in other words,

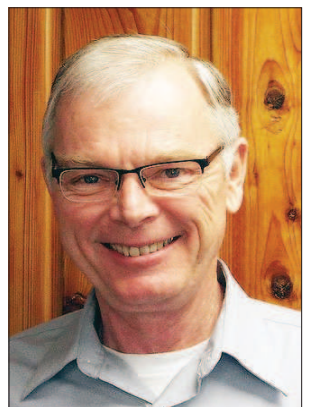
I think we need to ah, get a committee to study the issue ... In other words, we need accountants. We need attorneys. We need fire chiefs. We need police chiefs. We need union people, ah, all this kind of stuff. And sit down and have a discussion and start studying and see if maybe we can have emergency services that will save the people money... maybe.

"It may not work; it may be illegal. We may not do it. I don't know.

"[We could] possibly create another district outside of the committee, ya know, I don't know whether it would work, it just needs to be talked about and have further discussion. It may work and may not. I'd like to find out."

Local law enforcement consolidation is not a new idea—nor is one they endorse, say some local law enforcement and elected officials.

SEE CONSOLIDATION PAGE 5



Submitted Photo.

Bruce Nichols.

## Fundraiser begins for regional SWAT team robot



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

L-R: Baker County dispatcher Ruthie Boyd, Chris Boyd of RoboteX, 'Editorial Assistant' Vivien McQuisten at the control, NE Oregon Regional SWAT commander Sgt. Gary Bell, Sgt. Dusty Perry of the La Grande PD and Baker County Reserve Program Commander Jerry Boyd show off their dream robot, the Avatar III.

### NE OREGON REGIONAL SWAT TEAM SAYS \$25K NEEDED FOR POTENTIALLY LIFESAVING ROBOT

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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"It looks like something out of 'Transformers,' doesn't it?" asked RoboteX trainer Chris Boyd.

Last Saturday, Boyd demonstrated the Avatar III robot, which is the model the Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT team hopes to purchase—what they say is a vital piece of equipment that will add to the safety of their team members, victims and even crime suspects.

About a dozen members of law enforcement gathered in the morning to familiarize themselves with the robot, with a media-only demonstration following.

"The robot is so intuitive," said Boyd. "There's just not a lot of training time up front." Boyd, a 28-year law enforcement veteran in San Diego County, has been demonstrating the Avatar for three years now.

The problem? Purchase of the robot, priced in the same range as a small car, depends strictly on donations.

SEE ROBOT PAGE 5



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

With a built-in camera and audio, the robot shows an armed suspect out of an officer's line of sight.

## 'Gold Rush' cast to attend local events

BY KERRY McQUISTEN  
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Todd Hoffman of the popular Discovery Channel series "Gold Rush" has confirmed that he and a few other members of this season's cast are looking forward to attending several Baker County events over the summer and fall.

This season of the hit show will film in Hereford.

Hoffman and crew will be seen on the Baker County Republican float during Miners Jubilee during the parade. They will then be available at the Republican booth in the Geiser-Pollman Park—that booth sits next to the Eastern Oregon Mining Association display, which is the cornerstone of event each year.

Major event appearances both prior to and after Miners Jubilee are currently in the works.

Hoffman is also scheduled to attend the Wicked Ways Masquerade Ball at the Geiser Grand on Saturday, October 29. Tickets for this event will go on sale in May at the front desk of the hotel and at www.theBakerCountyPress.com.

## Standoff ends safely

On Tuesday, April 12, at approximately 5:33 p.m., Baker City Police Officers made contact with a male subject in Baker City's Mount Hope Cemetery, 1000 S. Bridge St. after a family member reported concerns the male was suicidal.

According to a press release from Lt. Dustin Newman, officers attempted to make contact with the male, who was seated in the driver's seat of his vehicle, but the male would not respond to officers.

Officers were able to see the barrel of a rifle in the vehicle, which confirmed an earlier report made by the family member. After approximately a three-and-a-half hour standoff the male surrendered himself to Officers on scene at 9:14 P.M. without incident. The male was transported to St. Alphonsus Emergency Room for evaluation following his surrender. A consent search of the vehicle revealed a rifle, pistol and shotgun.

The Baker City Police Department was assisted by the Oregon State Police, Baker County Sheriff's Office and members from the Crisis Negotiation Team, which is part of the Northeast Oregon Regional Swat Team.

There are no criminal charges pending at this time.

**Friday** Mostly sunny, highs in the mid 50s. Clear and cool, lows in the mid 20s at night.

**Saturday** Sunny and warmer, highs in the mid 60s. Clear and not as cool at night, lows near freezing.

**Sunday** Mostly sunny with continued warming trend. Highs in the mid 70s. Mostly clear at night. Lows in the upper 30s.

### Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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