



The Baker County Press

75¢

TheBakerCountyPress.com

All local. All relevant. Every Friday.

Friday, April 29, 2016 • Volume 3, Issue 18

'Gold Rush' begins filming, cast says community has been welcoming

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The cast and crew of The Discovery Channels' mega-hit show "Gold Rush" are settled in Baker County, and according to one of the series' stars, Todd Hoffman, "It is unbelievable how welcoming the people around eastern Oregon have been."

Over the past couple weeks it hasn't been uncommon to hear about cast

sightings at local stores including Napa, Baker Electric, Gentry Ford, Ace Hardware, and a local office supply and furniture store or two. Safeway, of course, is a given.

The camera crew sometimes slips by with less visibility—when their British and Irish accents don't give them away.

"We've spent thousands at Ace Hardware alone," said Hoffman. "I can't believe how much they

have."

Hoffman paused during this interview, wind whipping across the hillside on which he stood—and his cell phone. Though the mine, owned by the Wirth family and located in the Hereford area, is not yet open or being worked yet, filming began right around 1:30 p.m. this Tuesday afternoon.

"Our goal for this year—" said Hoffman in between wind gusts and calls from

the production crew over his radio, "—We're hoping that we can beat the Klondike right here in Oregon, and really show everyone just how cool Oregon is. It's our home, you know. Sumpter was the first place I mined. When I was 12, I won a rooster crowing contest in Sumpter!"

He added, "The camera and production guys can't say enough good things about being here."

SEE GOLD RUSH PAGE 8



Submitted Photo.

Reporter Todd Arriola ran into Todd Hoffman at the place all roads lead to these days: Safeway.

Fire Department hires its first female lieutenant



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

History in the making as Sara Blair becomes the Baker City Fire Department's first female lieutenant. L-R: Alan Blair, Sara Blair, David Blair and Fire Chief Mark John.

• 107-YEAR-OLD BAKER CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES A HISTORY-MAKING FIRST

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

"In the long history of this fire department, this is really a very significant event," said Baker City Fire Chief Mark John.

After nearly twelve years of service, Sara Blair has risen through the ranks from firefighter and paramedic to become the department's first female lieutenant.

"It's history-making,"

said John.

"I'm excited," said Blair. "It's a new concept for me—there's a lot of responsibility."

"Total responsibility," John pointed out with a laugh, for when Blair is the senior officer on a shift from here on.

The lieutenant position was left open with no plans to fill it for "six to eight years," according to John. The position was restored about a year and half ago.

John said Blair went through a "fairly extensive" testing process spanning two days and including tactical simulation, a written test, conflict resolution, employee issue solving, and the like.

SEE BLAIR PAGE 5



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Alan pins on the new Lieutenant's badge in front of the BCFD at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

Rural FD break-ins still under investigation

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Two cases involving the break-ins at two separate rural fire departments are still under active investigation, said Sheriff Travis Ash on Tuesday.

On April 21, 2016, Baker County Sheriff's Office responded to the Keating Rural Fire Department to investigate the theft of fire department equipment. The initial investigation revealed someone had entered the fire department building and stole fire-fighting and life-saving equipment valued at over \$100K.

On April 22, 2016, Baker County Sheriff's Office responded to the Pocahontas Rural Fire Department to investigate another break-in. When deputies arrived they found someone had entered the fire department by force and stolen fire-fighting and life-saving equipment. A dollar amount of the items was not yet available.

The fire departments are in the process of inventorying equipment to determine all the equipment stolen and the replacement cost.

The theft of the equipment will restrict Keating Rural and Pocahontas Fire Department response to emergency calls for service, the recovery of the equipment is crucial to their effective response.

Anyone with information leading to the recovery of the equipment please call Baker County Sheriff's Office at (541) 523-6415.

City Manager finalists announced

As the City Manager recruitment process moves forward, the City Council has scheduled interviews for May 9th and 10th.

The Council has also scheduled an opportunity for the public to meet the finalists. A meet and greet will be held in the City Council Chambers on May 9th at 5:30 p.m. The candidates who were chosen by the City Council as finalists to interview were:

• Cheryl Beatty - Currently the Assistant City Manager/ Finance Director of the City of Junction City, Kansas. She has held several other City Administrator positions since 1997. She holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration.

SEE CITY MANAGER PAGE 9

Friday Mostly cloudy with possible showers. Chance of precipitation is 40%. Highs near 60. Lows at night around 40.

Saturday Mostly cloudy with breezy conditions. Highs near 60. Wind diminishing at night with lows around 35.

Sunday Mostly sunny and warmer. Highs near 70. Mostly clear and cooler. Lows near 40.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.

Our forecast made possible by this generous sponsor:

LG DWS
Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

OREGON TRAIL ELECTRIC CO-OP

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Cattlemen: Wildfire assistance	Page 3
420ville expands customer base	Page 3
Senate candidate visits Huntington	Page 9
Commissioners: Hop Heaven	Page 10
AAUW has candidates forum	Page 11
Sumpter hosts candidates forum	Page 12

7 0148 74383 8