

# Local

## Commissioners hear about Hop Heaven expansion plans

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a special work session, on Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers, of the Baker County Courthouse, with the main topics of an Industrial Park property purchase offer, the Columbia Basin Helicopter settlement, and support of the American Stewards of Liberty.

Present from the Board were Commission Chair Bill Harvey, and Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns. Baker County Administrative Assistant Shay Sells sat in for Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Also in attendance were Baker County Administrative Service Director Christena Cook, and Joellen Lindstrom.

The session was called to order, followed by the optional Invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance, both recited by Harvey. There were no previous meeting minutes to review, and after Harvey noted two additions to the agenda, it was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. There were no comments offered during Citizen Participa-

tion.

Harvey began the discussion regarding a 2.74 acre parcel of County property, in the Industrial Park area, for which the County has received an offer to purchase, from Ted and Jodie Hausotter, owners of Hop Heaven. The Hausotters also own Natural Structures.

Their letter, dated April 20, 2016, detailed Hop Heaven's intent to purchase the vacant property, which is described as Map No. 09S4007D, Lot No. 407, for \$42,180, which is the assessed value. They stated that payment could be made upon acceptance, and that the offer would expire in 30 days.

According to the letter, Hop Heaven would combine its storage facilities, which are currently spread over the Northwest in the hop growing regions, to one facility in Baker City.

If the offer's accepted, a processing facility will be built this summer, to be in use by September 2016. The first phase of the building process, a 4,000 square foot industrial building (50' x 80'), will be set up for packaging operations, cold storage, and pellet processing. The building size will increase with future phases, including a larger capacity

pelletizer, and more cold storage.

Hop Heaven started in 2008, selling 200 pounds of hops, and experienced significant growth, exceeding 50,000 pounds currently. "As you can see, sales continue to grow, and brewers enjoy the hops. We are searching for a home for the company. With my ties to Baker County, we would prefer to stay in the area," stated the letter.

The decision was made to proceed with a formal purchase agreement for the property, for the stated value, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Resolution No. 2016-1004, Appropriation Transfer Within The Non-Departmental Department Of The County General Fund, was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. According to the document, \$326,748 was transferred from the Contingency fund, to the Legal Settlements fund, previously \$0, in order to settle the Columbia Basin Helicopter (aka David McCarty) case. The resulting balance of the Contingency fund, previously \$674,765, is \$348,017, after the transfer.

Cook discussed the document with the Board prior



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L-R: Commissioners Mark Bennett, Bill Harvey and Tim Kerns.

to approval, stating that \$324,347.94, plus interest, for a total of \$326,748, is the amount, as of Wednesday, owed to the prevailing party, David McCarty, for attorney fees and costs, in the Baker County vs. David McCarty, aka Columbia Basin Helicopter case. Cook said the check for the amount would be issued the same day of the session.

Prior to the resolution's approval, Lindstrom commented that interest would be due through Friday, though the check was issued on Wednesday, since there would be a delay in actually receiving the funds. Cook said she's aware of that detail, and that would be included.

Resolution No. 2016-

1005, Supporting The American Stewards Of Liberty Coalition Of Counties For The Purpose Of Opposing The BLM Proposed New Rules Changes In Planning 2.0, was adopted, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Bennett. Harvey explained, prior to approval, that there are issues with proposed rules regarding commenting periods, and County input, and American Stewards of Liberty would be an asset, in assisting with rejecting the BLM's (Bureau of Land Management) draft Planning 2.0, and requesting the BLM follow the coordination legal process instead, including planning efforts on Baker County natural resources, as a

stand-alone plan, and not combined with other planning of other counties.

Bennett spoke about an Oregon Military Department (OMD) agreement with the County, regarding property exchange, in the National Guard Armory, and Event Center areas, a topic previously discussed. He said the Baker County Fair Board has asked the Board to ratify the agreement, and the decision was made to authorize the deed transfer, and to ratify the agreement at a future meeting, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. The transfer would include a payment from OMD to the Fair Board, of \$500,000, for anticipated, and unanticipated costs, etc.

## City Council

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Owen presented an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Well Use Report, which is required

each April, in the form of a public meeting, regarding anticipated well use, for the upcoming peak water demand season.

Owen said she's always chosen to hold the meeting during City Council meetings (she noted, at the time, there was no attendance from the public).

This requirement is part of issuance of the Recovery Permit, in 2009.

Per the permit, the City is authorized to inject water into the well, from November 1st, to July 15th.

The City can inject up to the 200 million gallon capacity, or until July 15th, whichever comes first. She said this year, the goal was to inject the water (200 million gallons has already been injected, the maximum) prior to the

irrigation season, to avoid issues with usage.

The ASR well is used to help the City meet public water demand, by providing additional water when daily use is very high, in the heat of the summer, and when the mountain water has turbidity (cloudiness, or haziness, affecting water quality) issues, during spring snow melt.

Switching between

injection, and use requires significant water quality testing, she said.

Owen said the snow pack this year, compared to last year, is much better.

Keel said that City Manager position interviews are set for May 9, and May 10, 2016, with a social Meet and Greet, on May 9, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. All of the four finalists (there were six originally) have

been notified, he said, and a press release has been sent, with their names, and short bios about each.

Keel said he's been working with Nelson Real Estate, and the Elkhorn Industrial Park is ready to be marketed, with lots ranging in size from over an acre, to around 16 acres.

## Women's veterans coordinator pays visit

BY SUNNY WERNER  
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In the state of Oregon, there are 28,324 women veterans.

While as eligible to receive services from the Veteran's Administration as their male counterparts, the majority of women who have served in the military do not identify themselves as veterans, and do not apply for the benefits for which they are eligible.

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has begun addressing this issue with the establishment of the Statewide Veteran Services Women Veterans Coordinator.

This Coordinator, Elizabeth Estabrooks, former Baker County resident, is tasked with reaching out to Oregon's women veterans, and developing programs, which will encourage those women to avail themselves of the services and benefits they are due.

In order to gather information to aid in program development and needs assessment, Estabrooks is traveling the State, holding meetings which she terms "Listening Meetings." Rather than presenting information on currently

available programmes, Estabrooks believes her position as Coordinator means she should find out, from the women her office is slated to serve, what their needs actually are. Having the women veterans explain their own barriers to receiving needed services, talking about what can happen when they try to access benefits, discussing whether current services meet the needs of female veterans, all this information will inform Estabrooks' future program development.

An assessment of this depth takes time, and as Estabrooks explains, "Not all women who have served in the military consider themselves veterans." This has led to her advertising the regional Listening Meetings without using the term "veterans," but instead using "women who have served in the military."

Estabrooks goes on to say, "When I am speaking to a group of women, if I ask, 'How many of you are veterans?' few hands go up. But when I say 'how many of you served in the military?' many more hands are raised."

For some reason, probably because "combat

veteran" used to be a term only used to describe men, the word "veteran" seems, to many to refer to males. (With recent changes in policy, women in the military are now considered eligible for combat.)

The position held by both the Veteran's Administration and Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs is that the word "veteran" refers to all individuals who have served in any branch of the military at any time.

The services and benefits available to veterans have traditionally been developed to reflect the needs of men. With men being the majority of service people in the past, that seemed reasonable. However, with the rapidly increasing number of women enlisting over the past few decades, those "traditional" access points no longer reflect the needs of many of the veterans they serve.

Oregon is alone in its commitment to serving its veterans. Every county in Oregon has a Veterans Services Officer, staffed by a veteran who is fully committed to serving the veterans in their county. VSOs have access to resources and information to assist in application for

benefits, service requests, and how to receive the full benefits some veterans are due. In Baker County, the VSO is Rick Gloria, Baker County Veterans Service Office, 541-523-8223, Email - rgloria@bakercounty.org. Gloria is available by appointment.

On Monday, April 25, Estabrooks held a "Listening Session" in Baker City's library. Due to a scheduling snafu with the library, the date had to be changed at the last moment.

Estabrooks reassures us that she will return and offer another session in the near future, with, she hopes, more women who have served being able to attend.

With over 170 women veterans in Baker County, Estabrooks intends to gather as much information as she can. Some of the specifically women-veteran related issues she has come across in her information gathering include the facts that, frequently, women veterans are in low-paying jobs and usually have children.

As Estabrooks explains "when you are afraid of losing your job, you don't ask for time off so you can go to a VA facility at least

126 miles away. And even if you could get the time, it's likely to be unpaid, and you still need to pay for day care while you are at the VA." Also are the issues of sexual assault/sexual harassment and bullying, unfortunately not uncommon in the military. The recognized term by the Veteran's Administration is "Military Sexual Trauma," and is accepted to encompass both female and male victims. Men suffer from MST at a rate of 7%, women 22% (Department of Defence news transcript, May 1, 2015).

Given that number, nearly one in four women in the military have suffered MST. For some of the victims, other effects follow; PTSD, other mental health issues, and physical outcomes. For women veterans who have MST, living in rural areas, being offered a ride in a VA bus with male drivers and mostly male passengers is not an acceptable or safe option.

The issue of suicide among veterans has become a national point of shame. The figures available tell us that 22 veterans per day choose to end their lives. What we now know is that, of those 22, 14 are



Submitted Photo.

Elizabeth Estabrooks.

women vets.

Two-thirds of the veteran suicides are women. Without available and appropriate help, these women have taken the only way out they could find.

The numbers of veterans who suffer from drug-related issues is another issue. As in details about veteran homelessness, the numbers don't include the majority of female homeless and / or drug using veterans, because women tend to not self identify, or bunk at homeless shelters; especially if they have children.

Estabrooks stated, "I want women vets, women who were in the military, to call me if they experience any problems with denial of benefits, barriers, or if think they will be denied if they try to make a claim. Call me at 1-800-828-8801, direct: 503-373-2188."