

Opinion / Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Justus for Baker County!

To the Editor:

How can our commissioners bring back logging, mining, and other productive, sustainable, living wage jobs that were robbed from us by the very people who claim to have a voice for the trees and critters that were burnt to a crisp not long ago?

If we took back our county, which our framers are rolling in their graves watching fruit of their labor die in vein, then our counties public lands would not be in the disrepair as they are today. The only climate change to blame is the political climate change.

Why go to an accountant if you need heart surgery?

Our county needs a multiple bypass surgery because some federal agency's agendas have become the plaque that has blocked nearly every artery left in the heart of our county.

Kody Justus, Bill Harvey and Mark Bennett are the qualified surgeons we need to bring the county back to life.

I urge you to vote for Kody Justus. Without his vote, all of the selfless efforts made behind the scenes that was for the betterment of this county and citizens for the last year will be undermined.

I listened to Kody speak at many of the long nightly meetings I went to before he even thought about becoming a commissioner. Where were the other candidates? He is spot on with the issues we are facing and the solutions necessary to shift the pendulum in the right direction.

I want to know my inalienable rights are being represented which is what the fundamental purpose for government is and that's what he will do for us.

Carrie Matthews
Baker City

Political race is no place for politics

To the Editor:

The County Commissioners job is to manage Baker County. This consists of many areas, roads, property, land use, parks, law enforcement funding (which includes search and rescue), and social services. These are just the ones that come to mind.

In my opinion politics and party affiliation should not play a part in these decisions. The main consideration in selecting our Commissioners should be their ability to manage our money and select the people that keep our county running smoothly.

Bruce Nichols is the candidate with the best skills and experience to make all of this happen.

Brent Kerns
Haines

Nichols has the right financial experience

To the Editor:

Every administrative, governing body supported by our tax dollars needs members with experience. Bruce Nichols has experience and it is my privilege to support him as Baker County Commissioner.

As a long time Baker County resident, I have served on local committees and boards for over forty years. One such position was on the Burnt River School District 30J board. Bruce Nichols was the district accountant and auditor. We respected and trusted his work and the sound advice offered. I can assure you that on more than one occasion his advice was instrumental in assisting the board in making critical decisions that kept our financial house in order. On the occasions when personnel were involved he was direct, honest, and neither glossed over nor shied away from the consequences resulting from his assessment.

We need financial experience in the commissioner's office. We need Bruce Nichols.

Kent Nelson
Baker City

Nichols knows numbers

To the Editor:

I support Bruce Nichols for Baker County commissioner. He is smart. He has been an accountant for decades. He knows the math, and the numbers in a budget spread sheet, to run a county efficiently. Because he has worked with these numbers for years, his business has been auditing city governments for years. He knows what it takes to have efficient government, a government that has a balanced budget.

This is so important. He has worked with local employees on these issues, for years.

I trust Bruce. He is an easygoing, and happy person. He needs to be our next Baker County Commissioner.

Lisa Rimer
Richland

Justus understands forefathers

To the Editor:

I have read some of the letters to the editor in support of Bruce Nichols. Although he may be an upstanding person in the community this letter is not to attack him, but bring out some points about his supporters and ask you, the citizens of Baker County to consider some things.

I am part of the so called radical vocal minority here that Dave and Joyce Hunsaker describe in their April 18 letter. So what? If exercising my right to keep and bear arms, my right to freedom of speech, or to voice my disgust about our tyrannical federal and state government and out of control bureaucracies makes you uncomfortable just remember: To exercise rights is only uncomfortable to two classes of people. Tyrants and slaves.

What outrageous acts have we committed? We are lawful and productive members of the community. What type of men were our forefathers? Were they not perceived radical by some?

This years elections are by far the most important in our lifetime. If we are to return to our children the Liberty that our founders envisioned, then we must return to the principles that our forefathers laid out. Our freedoms cannot long endure unless we, the People, reaffirm what was well understood by our Founders: Liberty is "endowed by our Creator"

Kody Justus understands and believes this and that is why I believe he is the best man for the job. Join me in voting for voting for Justus for County Commissioner.

David McQuisten
Baker City

Nichols will keep Baker County friendly

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in support of Bruce Nichols for Baker County Commissioner. In the years I have known Bruce I have found him to be honest, fair and of high integrity. I think he is the strongest choice for County Commissioner and one who will question and work within the budget to ensure that the citizens are receiving the best value for their local tax dollars. He is aware of all the issues in the County and will work within the law to address them. He will also be committed to keeping Baker County a friendly and supportive environment where small businesses can continue to grow or be welcomed to start or relocate here.

Please join me in voting for Bruce Nichols Baker County Commissioner.

Mitch Southwick
Baker City

Nichols speaks out about Clark's Creek

To the Editor:

Recent events noted in various letters to the editor as well as the Republican Candidates Forum last Tuesday, have prompted me to set the record straight.

The news articles have indicated the commissioner race has become contentious. I could not agree more.

I have always believed, if there are statements made or issues discussed that do not contain the whole truth, then the discussions and statements should not be believed. Truth that consists of half-truths, ones partially twisted or knowingly distorted and in any way, stated with the intent to deceive, no matter how you add them up, the results still equals a lie.

I have not attacked, nor will I ever attack Kody Justus's character, without just cause. I am not responsible for Kody's character or his actions. Only Kody is responsible for his character and actions. Likewise, I alone am responsible for my character and actions; no one else.

Regarding the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Clarks Creek Holdings, LLC, I was "blindsided" with a question at the forum by Jake Brown. I had no idea what he was talking about or why he would ask such a question. Later discussions with Ed Hardt about a damaged alfalfa field gave me insight that there was more to the question than I first realized.

Twin Lakes Ranch, LLC was the operating company for the active mining operations. The operations for both Clark's Creek Holdings, LLC, in conjunction with Twin Lakes Ranch, LLC were shut down almost immediately when the owners realized the mine was failing badly. The mine owners instructed me to liquidate all assets and pay all known obligations as quickly as possible, subject to the approval of the owners for each and every significant transaction. This essentially meant "fire sale" prices.

I was not, nor ever was, the managing CEO during any of the active the mining operations. I became the fiduciary CEO for the liquidation of both companies once the mining operation ceased.

My character and my actions speak for themselves.

Bruce Nichols
Baker City

24 distracted driving warnings issued Friday

On April 22, 2016, between 10:00 a.m. and noon, the Baker City Police Department and the Oregon State Police conducted a "Distracted Driving Awareness Campaign" in Baker City. Officers and Troopers were primarily looking for motor vehicle operators who were using their cell phones while driving their vehicles.

Law Enforcement officers were on foot in the downtown area, primarily near the Main and Broadway intersection and the Main and Campbell intersection, looking for violators. During the two-hour campaign officers and troopers conducted numerous traffic stops. A total of 24 violations were observed, which all resulted in written warnings. The main focus of the campaign was to educate drivers on the dangers of distracted driving.

The State of Oregon has seen a rise in traffic fatalities recently and it is our goal to remind motorists of the need to remove distractions when operating motor vehicles.

ODOT signage to be updated here

Over a dozen areas in Eastern Oregon will see various transportation signs upgraded this summer thanks to the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Nearly two-dozen locations in Baker, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, and Union counties will have stop, curve warnings, traffic direction arrows, street name, and other signs changed or improved at select locations.

The work is needed to ensure signage meets current federal standards. This may include replacing damaged signs, adding new signage such as additional curve warnings, relocating signs to improve site distance/safety, or upgrading existing signs to comply with changed sign requirements (i.e.: new size standards, updated calculations for curve speeds, etc.).

In addition to the sign upgrades a new pedestrian activated Rapid Flash Beacon will be installed in La Grande on Cove Avenue near the Albany Street intersection, adjacent to the community/senior center. Rapid Flash Beacons incorporate bright strobe lights with pedestrian crossing signs to help warn motorists that someone is crossing the street. This multi-location sign project will improve safety for all users along the upgraded roadway sections.

Blair promoted



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

David Blair prepares Sara's collar, supported with plastic inside to support the pins that go with the uniforms.

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When scores went to the assessment center for review, Blair prevailed, said John.

In addition to added responsibility, Blair said she'll still be "doing projects and running calls."

Blair, who was raised in the area, said, "That was my goal to come home. It's great to have the (career) opportunity here."

The new lieutenant's twelfth anniversary of service will be May 10. Over the span of her career she recalls a wide range of education and training that have built her current skill set, including an opportunity to go to the metro fire academy in Portland and to work here in the capacity of a juvenile fire service specialist, helping to assess and redirect children and adolescents with fire-setting issues.

The Baker City Fire Department has evolved greatly since the time several local fire battalions combined back in 1909 to form the municipal department. These days, the department handles over 1,900 calls per year. Fire Chief John's crew includes three assistant chiefs—Cliff Hall who handles operations, Tom Everson with support services and inventory, and Dan Curtis who takes on fire prevention and community services. Then, each shift has one of three lieutenants—either Blair, David Blair or Don Taggart. There are six firefighters, two per shift and a number of part-time staff. Rural fire departments are also vital in providing mutual aid.

John said the structure, with the addition of Blair in her new role, should help reduce overtime for the department, a constant struggle.

Blair encourages anyone interested in building a career such as hers to call the Fire Department at 523-3711. Ride-alongs and volunteer programs are available.

BCCC grant deadline approaching

The Baker County Cultural Coalition is welcoming grant applications for the current round of Cultural Participation Grants with funding made possible by the Oregon Cultural Trust. The deadline to submit grant applications is May 16, 2016.

The Baker County Cultural Coalition is a nine-member planning committee appointed by the Baker County Commission to serve the goals of the Oregon Cultural Trust. A primary purpose of the

coalition is to re-grant funds it receives from the Cultural Trust to local arts, humanities and heritage projects, which is done twice annually in mid-December and May.

Applicants may only receive grant awards once during the year. New grant applications will not be considered if grant reports from prior awards have not been received.

All recipients must submit a grant report indicating how funds were used by October 31st.

The Oregon Cultural Trust designates approximately one third of the funds it distributes annually as Cultural Participation Grants to cultural coalitions in Oregon's 36 counties and nine federally recognized tribes. These funds are to be used for cultural activities and priorities, and local programs that increase access to cultural resources and opportunities.

To obtain a grant application, visit the Baker County Cultural Coalition

website at: http://www.bakercounty.org/cultural_plan/grants.html. Forms must be completed, hand delivered to a Coalition Board Member or e-mailed (preferred) to bccc@bakercounty.org by May 16th. More information is available at the website.

To learn more about how you can benefit by helping to support cultural programs like this, visit the Oregon Cultural Trust website: www.cultural-trust.org.