

Opinion / Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Nichols helped with hospital

To the Editor:
For almost thirty years it has been my privilege and pleasure to work with Bruce Nichols on behalf of mutual clients. For many of those years Bruce and I also served on the Hospital Board during the period of time when our community was in the greatest danger of losing that all-important facility. He served on the Finance Committee and was critical to the decision making processes that allowed Baker County to keep its Hospital.

Having also audited numerous municipalities, Bruce completely understands institutional and municipal finance – where the dead wood and fat are hidden and how to get the most out of each dollar of scarce resources. At a time like the present, when a good hospital and school system, together with a responsive and responsible local government are of the utmost importance to the county's economic viability, no better person than Bruce could offer his services to the voters.

Bruce is not a showman. We don't need slogans and ill considered, emotionally based calls to action that, while making for good press, almost inevitably lead to disaster. At times like this we need a thoughtful person like Bruce to offer considerate, calm and measured responses to very challenging problems. He has a habit of listening before he speaks and is respectful to all involved. His knowledge of public finance and appreciation for his fiduciary responsibility to the voters are something that is sorely needed at the Courthouse.

Let's help Bruce help us to return to economic and political sanity.

Martin Leuenberger
Sumpter

Again, Nichols served on hospital board

To the Editor:
I have known Bruce Nichols for over twenty years, and served with him for many of those years on the hospital Board of Directors and the hospital Finance Committee.

In addition, he has done tax preparation work for several members of my family. Bruce and I have worked together on the Clark H. and Joe Ann Carnes Memorial Scholarship Selection Committee. Bruce is the administrator of this scholarship fund which annually awards over \$20,000 to Baker County students.

Many generations of Bruce's family have called Baker County home. He is hard working and absolutely honest. I am voting for Bruce for Baker County Commissioner, and I strongly urge you to do the same.

Laurence Levinger
Baker City

Justus will help assure Baker County's future

To the Editor:
In a country that is rapidly approaching \$20 trillion in current debt and nearly a \$130 trillion in unfunded liabilities over the next decade, it's obvious we won't be taxing ourselves out of this mess. As such, does it seem reasonable to gamble Baker County's future on financial handouts, PILT, SRS, and other revenues derived from this same federal coffer?

Why would anyone vote for a commissioner like Bruce Nichols, who wants to gamble our local future on handouts from a government that is technically already bust? Where do we go when those handouts inevitably disappear?

Kody Justus realizes that this county can stand on its own two feet by becoming financially viable in utilizing the resources we have right here under our noses. He has a vision of a thriving economy with jobs and industry that can bring abundance back to Baker County. He believes that these mountains, rivers, streams, rangelands, and vistas belong to We the People. As a member of the Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee, he knows that we can protect and preserve our environment while utilizing industries that will bring us prosperity. He has already taken a stand against the Forest Service's travel management plan that seeks to lock us out of the mountains. But to continue this, we have to have leadership that will challenge the status quo, that will fight for the people, that will stand up against land grabs like the millions of acres being stolen from ranchers and farmers next door in Malheur County for the private interest of the political elite.

Support our commissioners in doing what is right. It won't be easy, but what in life worth fighting for is? If we desire a future for our retirements and our children, we need to take proactive measures now. Join us in voting for Kody Justus.

Kadie Cosby
Baker City

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

Advertising and Opinion Page Disclaimer: Opinions submitted as Guest Opinions or Letters to the Editor express the opinions of their authors, and have not been authored by and are not necessarily the opinions of The Baker County Press, any of our staff, management, independent contractors or affiliates. Advertisements placed by political groups, candidates, businesses, etc., are printed as a paid service, which does not constitute an endorsement of or fulfillment obligation by this newspaper for the products or services advertised.

Greater Bowen Valley

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Volunteers must be at least eighteen years old and no experience is necessary. All training is provided through the District 13 Academy. The Greater Bowen Valley department drills the last Wednesday of each month. There is also plenty of practical experience. Jensen said between January and August last year, there was a fire every month.

Greater Bowen Valley is working on increasing its ISO (Insurance Service Organization) rating. Jensen explained this will have a positive impact on home insurance rates for those within the service area. Chris Galiszewski said the ISO rating is a combination of many factors, including levels of testing, being able to move a certain amount of water in a certain amount of time, makeup of the district or town, paved or unpaved roads, water system, and property access. The department is working on increasing its rating from 10 to 8B. Jensen said this is in contrast to the Baker City Fire Department, a 4 or 5 rating, with "fire hydrants on every corner" and a fully staffed fire station.

Galiszewski also mentioned the need for volunteers in other areas, including administrative or maintenance tasks. He said there's plenty to do; it's "not just running into a burning building." Anyone interested in volunteering can download a membership application at greater-bowenvalleyfire.com or call the firehouse at 541-523-3688.

Water rates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Two citizens also attended the meeting in person to express their opposition to a rate increase.

Karen Woolard called the proposed hike a "huge substantial" increase—and one that was uncalled for considering the City was not in a crisis. Woolard suggested that the City be made to save its money before spending it, and that the projects outlined didn't "have to be done all at the same time."

Woolard pointed out that many cities do not employ both a City Engineer and a City Director of Public Works. She stated that the engineer position alone has the credentials and education to make the decisions currently made by both positions. She guessed that Public Works Director Michelle Owen's position probably cost taxpayers in the ballpark of \$100,000 per year with salary and fringe, and if that position could be eliminated, half a million dollars would be saved over the course of five years.

Council did not engage in discussion over that idea. Baker County Commissioner Bill Harvey testified as a business owner, not as commissioner, also stating that the 25% proposed increase, or one in that neighborhood, was too much all at once and that local small businesses would suffer as a result.

In the end, Councilors settled on the 11.2% increase. Though the increase is for one year only, the resolution of which the hike is part, will include the recommendation from current Council that future Councils adopt an identical hike for each of the two following years. This means by the end of the third year, if future Councils agree and follow suit, water rates will increase more than 30% from the present rate.

Projects outlined to be funded by the increase include a backup groundwater well system.

At the request of Fire Chief Mark John, ambulance charges for out-of-city residents versus residents within the City Limits were also increased \$500, for a total \$1,000 differential offsetting fuel costs, vehicle wear and tear, etc.

Regarding other agenda items, Council voted to formally approve their 2016-2017 goals, which remained as previously reported.

Council also heard a presentation from Paula Moe and Heidi Dalton outlining Sam O Swim's operations and financial situation. The facility serves 5,000 individuals per year from North Powder and across Baker County, and boasts right at 100,000 visits per year.


Day-pass revenue remained consistent over the past year, but overall revenue was down slightly, primarily in response to the November pool closure for repairs, said Dalton.

Dalton also pointed out that operations expenses had increased slightly, whereas personnel costs had decreased—a change in both areas due to outsourcing janitorial services rather than hiring staff to complete these tasks.


Sam O continues to operate at a loss each year, and remains operational due to a \$90,000 infusion of taxpayer dollars each year.

Moe highlighted an increased number of school swim lessons given in the past year to students in schools from most corners of the county.


Love YOUR Library... WE DO!



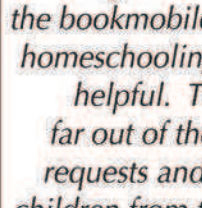
Local librarians provide access to resources across the nation, programs to enrich the lives of Baker County residents from children to senior citizens, and help to learn, explain, and grow for all. A yes vote will continue to keep our library one of the finest in the state.
Dottie Miles




"We support the library for our Grandchildren and for all the children in our community."
George and Janet Chandler




"I believe that our present first class library should be maintained and all students be encouraged to make it a daily part of their life. This enhances their future to be a more resourceful and rewarding one."
Alvin Ward



"Living more than 70 miles from Baker City, the bookmobile has been a life changer. As a homeschooling family, it has been especially helpful. The librarians have always gone far out of their way to fill topic and special requests and bring us loads of options. My children from the time they were babies have been able to experience having a library that has come to them. We get to walk there!"
Jodie Davis, Oxbow



"kEEp bAKER grATE!
REED
SUpPOrT R libRaRy (i DU)"....
Whit Deschner



The countywide library system is a great asset in our rural communities.. It really enriches our kids learning experience. It helps them know about a world outside their own. But adults love it too. My sister practically lives at the Richland Library."
Walt Forsea

VOTE YES TO RENEW LIBRARY LEVY
New Levy will NOT raise the tax you now pay for your library.
Paid for by Friends of the Library

SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR AS LITTLE AS \$29.95 PER YEAR.

SEE PAGE 11 FOR HOW

ALL LOCAL.

ALL RELEVANT.

EVERY FRIDAY.

1st Annual



HOSTED BY THE BAKER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SATURDAY AUGUST 20th 2016

.....
YOUTH RACES RUN IN THE MORNING | AGES 8-ADULT
ADULT RACES RUN IN THE AFTERNOON

For more information and race details, CALL 541-523-5855 OR VISIT WWW.VISITBAKER.COM.