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Commissioner race turns into nail-biter

• NICHOLS EEKS OUT NARROW VICTORY WITH 38 VOTES SEPARATING TOP CANDIDATES

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

With only 38 votes separating Republican candidates Bruce Nichols and

Kody Justus in Tuesday's County Commissioners primary election, the results of that race most likely will not be official for 14 days, according to County Clerk Cindy Carpenter. Unofficially, it appears Nichols has taken the race.

With all precincts reporting, Justus has 1,646 votes, Bruce Nichols 1,684, and Jeff Nelson 249. Carpenter said Tuesday

night that 41 ballots have not been included in that total due to lack of or challenged signatures. The County Clerk's office sent cards out notifying these voters the day after the election. These voters have 14 days to contact that office in order for their votes to count.

Only 16 of these challenged ballots are Republican. One additional Republican ballot is com-

ing in from outside Baker County.

Though the 41 ballots exceed the slim 38-vote margin currently held by Nichols, with only 17 being identified as Republican, it's technically impossible that the margin could be overturned or narrowed enough by those ballots to trigger a mandatory recount under Oregon State law. As the election now



Submitted Photo
Kody Justus.



Submitted Photo
Bruce Nichols.

stands, a mandatory recount is not required as the space separating the top two candidates is not one-fifth of a percent or less of their combined vote total.

According to Carpenter, a mere 6.6 vote difference would be the magic number to trigger that recount.

SEE ELECTION PAGE 8

Two from U.K. study local marijuana legalization



Kerry McQuisten/ The Baker County Press

Hannah Fishwick and Hannah Gumble are two of about 30 students from the U.K. visiting Baker County.

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

They met the Baker City Police Chief and the Mayor—and they've traveled from Seattle down through Washington State all the way down to Baker City this week.

Two third-year university students from England—both named Hannah—are on an adventure. In town with a group of around 30 students from Plymouth University in southwest Devon, the students are on a quest that is part tourism and part research.

The larger group divided to tackle separate research projects in the United States—everything from the impact of a proposed wind farm on Oregon Trail territory to forest conservation to vegetation management.

Hannah Fishwick and Hannah Gumble, both Geography majors, chose the impact of legalized marijuana as their study topic.

"It's very different from England," said Gumble. "It's completely illegal there."

Fishwick hails from rural Herefordshire, Gumble from north London.

Here since Monday, the two passed out surveys to citizens they encountered, and said the key point they learned during their research was validation of what they call NIMBY. "Not in my backyard," explained Gumble.

"That's when people want the benefits of something, but they just don't want it here," said Fishwick.

Gumble added, "One of the biggest things we've found is that Baker City is against dispensaries." However, she

noted that in response to their questionnaires, only two people didn't support the actual legalization of marijuana.

After three days of data collection, largely in the form of interviews, said Fishwick, the pair will finish compiling their findings, and then present the results to their cohort for a grade.

The students were also able to visit Baker Middle School and Baker High School, and travel to Huntington to look at 420ville, that town's new dispensary. Back in Baker City, Sgt. Mike Regan and Officer Coletton Smith gave the young ladies ride-a-longs complete with the opportunity to witness citation-writing for seatbelt infractions and the running of a red light.

The two took note that dispensaries in Seattle were nothing like the one they saw in Huntington—Seattle's being larger, shinier and filled to the brim with pot merch.

After Friday, Fishwick and Gumble will come to the end of their two-week university field trip, and begin another two and a half weeks of U.S. exploration on their own.

"The people (in Baker City) are so nice," Fishwick said. Gumble added, "If you look lost, people here will stop to ask if you're okay. That would never happen in London."

Fishwick noted the consistent changes in scenery from the Columbia Gorge and the heat, to finding snow at Anthony Lakes the next day.

Noting those snowcapped mountains, Gumble said, "It's like someone just put a backdrop there!" Something else also stood out to her: Huckleberries and huckleberry lemonade. "We don't have them in England," she said.

Unity man burned in explosion

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

On Monday afternoon, Fred Amans, 67, of Unity, was Life Flighted to Boise after sustaining third degree burns in a work-related accident.

Amans performs maintenance for the Burnt River Motel and Market, including a small rental cabin on the property in which the explosion that burned him occurred.

According to those on site, a propane tank exploded as Amans attempted to light a pilot light in the cabin. Plastic items inside the cabin melted, and all but one window shattered during the explosion. The fire itself was quickly contained.

SEE EXPLOSION PAGE 5



Submitted Photo

Fred Amans.

New 911 system installed

• AMERICAN STEWARDS DEBATE CREATES ANOTHER HEATED COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SESSION

BY TODD ARRIOLA
Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a regular session on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, highlighted by an important 911 Consolidated Dispatch Center recorder installation update from Center Director Hope Lindsey, and an extensive discussion from Brenda Holly and other community members, regarding the American Stewards of Liberty.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

SEE COMMISSIONERS PAGE 4

Friday More clouds than sun then showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon. Highs in the mid 80. Chance of precipitation is 70%.

Saturday Mostly cloudy with a chance for showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 80s. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

Sunday Mostly sunny skies with a chance for afternoon showers. Highs in the lower 80s. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



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