

Local

Speaker of the House

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Introductions were made, and Kotek said, “Good morning, everyone. It’s a real pleasure to be here...” She expressed praise for Inman, stating that he’s on several committees, and she explained the coverage of the District she represents, north Portland (the northernmost District, below Washington State), including residential and commercial areas.

“What I’ve noticed is that every part of the State has its own challenges...I’m sure we (the State Legislature, in Salem) do things that are annoying, and I’m sure we do things that are helpful, and that’s part of the reason I’m out here... My goal is to hear from you, things that we can be doing better...” she said. She outlined some of the challenges this year, and the next: housing, education, economic development, and transportation. Kotek asked attendees for questions and comments, stating that she wouldn’t take offense regarding any topic they wished to discuss. The following is a summary of some of those conversations.

Martin thanked Kotek for her meeting with community members, and he agreed with her, that in order to understand issues statewide, representatives need to meet with local

people in different areas. He voiced concerns about droughts, and about declining budgets, to address local watershed issues, and he said that better water management is needed. He emphasized the importance of water quality. Kotek agreed with Martin, explaining that a \$30 million package to address state water issues was formed, and she said that hopefully, next year, there will be an additional package.

Bennett stressed the importance of ground water, and what agriculture means to the area--\$94 million in revenue, plus the critical, associated jobs. He echoed Martin’s concerns, and he said that, among other entities, it’s important that DOGAMI (Department of Geology and Mineral Industries) receive adequate funding. Kotek responded about the challenges to fund and address issues across the State, and that funding’s usually earmarked first for human services, and education, but that there needs to be a strong partnership, in order to address issues, such as with water.

Shumway spoke about the need for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to form agreements with the irrigation districts, regarding in-stream water rights and flows, he emphasized the need for storage projects (he said water is vital, and more storage is needed), and he asked Kotek for any assistance she could

provide. Kotek said that expert advice would be sought, because responses to issues such as these are only as good as the expertise available. She cited Bentz as one of the individuals who is very knowledgeable, in the area of water issues.

Guyer thanked Kotek for her visit to the Ash Grove Cement plant (near Durkee) that morning, because the company is a very important partner to the community. He said that the company has not yet determined how to resolve issues, such as naturally occurring mercury in rock there, and limiting carbon production. Kotek said that she wishes to see the company remain here, and to keep manufacturing its products.

Melle stressed the importance of technical and career training, and keeping people in the community, after graduation. He asked Kotek about the connection between CTE, program expansions, and community colleges, and he said that more funding for equipment is needed. Kotek said she sees a connection, there are ongoing revitalization grants, and community colleges are essential. She said she saw an increase in federal financial aid requested by college students.

Koopman spoke about the need for good funding for equipment and programs, and to strengthen the partnership between K-12, and community col-

leges, for smoother transitions, in sparsely populated areas, like Baker City, La Grande, etc. Kotek responded by speaking about the challenges, and differences, between the more metropolitan areas, and rural areas.

Harvey said a major issue is that Baker City needs a proper community college facility, and that opportunities for employment need to be provided here. He emphasized the local economic struggle, the contrasting west-versus-east view, issues with State regulations, and the lack of a mining and timber industry. Kotek said she understands, job creation is very important, and she suggested conversations first with the regional economic development entity (Northeast Oregon Economic Development District). Harvey said the local Economic Development department had to change its focus, from bringing in industry (a difficult task, he said), to assisting established businesses, with expansion, for example.

Witty said there are too many regulations, too much bureaucracy, and not enough flexibility, and the School District, for one, can’t meet all of the regulatory requirements. Kotek agreed, that rarely are the regulations reassessed, let alone removing any, and that the regulations are not solving problems.

National Convention



Submitted Photo.

Cove’s Chris Barreto, ORP Secretary, addresses attendees.

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Said Jones, “Our ORP Chair and national committee man and woman are automatic delegates and do not have to be elected. Many states call these three super delegates. Ours are bound just like the rest of the delegates.”

“After the convention all the Congressional Districts (CDs) split up to elect their delegates—each has three delegates,” said Jones. “Alternates are also elected for each delegate. The three delegates elected to the convention from CD2 is Patti Adair, Greg Barreto and me. A list of the alternates elected was released on the ORP web site. We also had the election of officers for all Congressional districts. For CD2, in which Baker County falls, we have: Chair, Joseph Rice (Josephine County), Alternate Chair - Suzan Ellis Jones (Baker County), Vice Chair - Rep. Greg Barreto (Union County), Alternate Vice Chair - Donna Cain (Jackson County), Secretary - Gretchen Bates (Harney County, Treasurer - Scott Waters (Deschutes County. This is a four-year term and provides a seat on the State Executive Committee.”

At last count 654 individuals attended the Salem convention.

Each delegate will be responsible for arranging and paying for their own transportation to the national convention in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 18-21.

All 25 delegates and their alternates will attend.

Jones explained, “Most have to be there on July 17 for credentialing. Those who are serving on a committee like Platform or Rules have to be there July 11th. I was asked to be on Platform committee, but could not be gone that long.”

Jones said the convention will be held at Quicken Arena, and security will be so tight that delegates will be hauled in on secure busses, with other traffic blocked off for up to a mile around.

“We’re Republicans,” she said. “The hardest part of this for many of us is that we can’t bring our firearms since we’re flying.”

County: Sumpter dredge tailings project on agenda

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, in order to discuss several topics, including potential Sumpter dredge tailings mining, drought concerns, train derailment emergency response, and an offer to purchase the County’s 1/2 mineral interest property.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin. Attendance also included Baker County Emergency Management Program Manager Jason Yencopal, and Baker City DOGAMI Field Geologist Jason McCloughry.

Harvey explained the reason for the discussion regarding the potential for Sumpter Dredge tailings mining: individuals had asked last week again about the possibility, and what the process is. Yencopal discussed this subject with the Board, first giving an overview of the project (copies of a staff report from September 3, 2013 show interest in the project in March 2012, from Yellow Eagle Mining, and many other firms, who approached the County about the possibility).

Yencopal said that meetings were held, and then a Solicitation of Interest (SOI) was developed. This SOI had been placed



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Jason Yencopal, Emergency Management Program Manager, addresses the Commissioners.

in local newspapers, and emailed to those seeking information about the project, with the response to the SOI due on August 30, 2013. Only one SOI was received, and two letters stating the associated parties were not interested in the project at that time.

He said that, since there was not enough interest shown at that time, the project was postponed. Harvey said it appeared to be viable—the Sumpter Valley Dredge Tailings Reclamation Project—at the time, because of the potential for reclamation, jobs, and revenue. Bennett said this is County Parks land (the following is a description, according to documentation): the por-

tions of the Sumpter Valley Dredge tailings which are owned by Baker County; this area is generally south of Highway 7, west of Huckleberry Loop Road, east of Highway 7, and north of Huckleberry Loop Road; the exact areas will be determined, depending on interest.

At this point, Harvey said, it would need to be determined whether to continue with the project, by developing the RFP (Request for Proposals). This development would include hiring a consultant, at \$75 per hour, according to Yencopal, and some associated costs in staff time. Harvey said that parties are still very interested in the project, despite any associ-

ated issues or processes, and that the County should have an RFP ready. Bennett said that a good, solid RFP would be needed.

Bennett said, as the process moves forward, the County would ask the City of Sumpter to hold some public meetings, to inform residents there about the project, and to address any concerns, and to take input. McCloughry asked the Board if the County had wished to explore the project itself, and Harvey responded that the funding wouldn’t be available for exploration, and it would take extra staff the County doesn’t have.

SEE TAILINGS PAGE 8

Standoff



Photo courtesy of the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

John Guthrie, Jr.

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BCPD officers, along with Oregon State Troopers and Baker County Sheriff’s Deputies set a perimeter around the residence. Once it was determined that Guthrie was in the residence alone, BCPD made a request for the Northeast Oregon Regional (NEO) SWAT Team to respond, while investigators prepared a search warrant.

Once on scene, NEO SWAT attempted numerous methods to encourage Guthrie to come out and surrender. Amongst those efforts was a request made to the Oregon State Police Bomb Squad to arrive with mechanical robots. Once they arrived, the robots were deployed and used to deliver a phone into the residence. Throughout these efforts SWAT members could clearly see on numerous occasions that Guthrie was armed with a rifle.

NEO SWAT Crisis Negotiators spent over two hours talking with Guthrie, who refused to come out and surrender. Once Guthrie started escalating his behavior, tear gas was deployed in the residence to force Guthrie outside.

At about 3:08 a.m. Guthrie left the residence unarmed and was taken into custody by NEO SWAT members. Guthrie who had no apparent injuries was then taken to the hospital for decontamination and a routine medical clearance. After being cleared he was then transported to the Baker County jail for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm. Additional charges will be likely.

No injuries were sustained to any law enforcement members.