



# The Baker County Press

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## Friends of the Fair pie auction raises \$6K

BY TODD ARRIOLA  
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The Baker County Conference and Event Center, 2600 East Street in Baker City, hosted another successful annual Baker County Friends of the Fair Appreciation Dinner and Pie Auction Tuesday evening. The Defrees were named Fair Family of the Year, and the event brought in around 100 people, and \$6,325 (about \$5,500 after costs), which will be

used to make fairground improvements. Social hour began before 6 p.m., as the crowd gathered, including the Sumpter Valley-based Defrees—Dean, Sharon, and daughter Dallas (Dean's father, Lyle, was unable to attend). The Defrees family received nominations for Fair Family from Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service Forestry Agent and County Leader Bob Parker, John and Kate Rohner, and

Michelle Kaseberg. Dean said the Defrees have managed about 1,200 acres land for the last 45 to 50 years (the property's been in the family for 107 years), which they're currently thinning, as part of a fuels reduction effort. The family also raise around 250 head of cattle, marketed through cooperative Country Natural Beef. The largest customer for the family is Whole Foods, Dean said. He said, "I had no

idea," the family would be nominated, and he was surprised to learn of the honor, when a reporter contacted him last Friday for some comments. Sharon, a Biology teacher at Baker High School, and Dallas, an Oregon State University graduate who moved back to the area, were equally surprised with the nomination. SEE PIE AUCTION PAGE 5



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press  
Tyler Brown, winner of a \$450 pie held by Dallas Defrees, with proceeds benefitting the Fair.

## Armstrong nugget gets updated display at bank



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

U.S. Bank's Baker City branch recently gave its famous Armstrong gold nugget (center, back) a new display case in the lobby.

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNER  
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Thursday, July 21, US Bank in Baker City unveiled their new gold display, including everything from the old scales to a new case. The company began the redesign process for the display three years ago—and it now holds the gold nugget and the rest of the collection. The gold nugget, weighing 80.4 oz., has brought attention to Baker from tourists for nearly half a century. "When I first got here, Donna, my assistant manager—we started talking right away about the display," said Koby Myer, the new US Bank manager. "And there is still more that we want to do with it." Myer felt the old display did not focus on the actual gold nugget and the new display has it sitting up and brings attention to it right away. "It is something we definitely are proud of," said Myer. "US Bank is proud to have it here and we just wanted to showcase it better." Their new plan for the display is to have lighting that lights up the nugget, and they are hoping to have it done in the next couple of months. The gold nugget was discovered by George Armstrong. Myer explained there are many stories regarding how and when he found it. Articles written about the nugget say he found it in June 1913. In one story, "Strike it Rich!" by Robert C. Rapp he

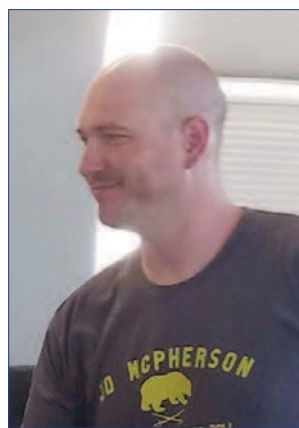
was walking with his brother and hit it with his foot. He kicked it and saw color among the mud and dirt and they immediately brought it to the bank so it was protected. "That was how we acquired it," said Myer. "It was only for \$500. At that time, the value of it was only around \$1,400 according to what they say in the stories and he didn't want to sell it, he just wanted to protect it." US Bank was formerly known as the First National Bank of Baker until 1959 when they merged with US Bank and it has been with the bank since then. Myer found old photos of the previous banks. The building, The Nugget, burned down and the US Bank building today was built in 1960 on that site where it has been ever since. Myer plans to redisplay those photos once they learn more about them. "There was a narrative that actually played on that case at one time," said Myer. "We're going to redo it. We're going to have a woman we met at our dedication last week and she is going to come in and redo our narrative for us." At the event July 21, Ginger Savage, the Executive Director of Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, and Board Members accepted the US BANCORP Foundation Grant awarded to Crossroads. The nugget can be seen on display year-round at the Baker City branch of U.S. Bank located on Main street across from the historic Geiser Grand Hotel.

## Joseph sworn in on City Council

• PUBLIC ARTS MASTER PLAN ADOPTED, GROCERY STORE UPDATES GIVEN

BY GINA K. SWARTZ  
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Tuesday evening's City Council Meeting began with an executive session where council discussed labor negotiations and the City's current and possible future litigations. The regular scheduled meeting commenced immediately following the executive session. All councilors were present.



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press  
New City Council member Loran Joseph.

SEE CITY COUNCIL PAGE 5

## Nonpartisan issue goes on ballot—again

BY KERRY MCQUISTEN  
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The effort to make Baker County Commissioner seats nonpartisan, which was soundly rejected by voters last fall, is once again slated for the ballot in Baker County. In May, Kate Rohner, Michelle Kaseberg and Mike Rudi obtained a ballot title through the local District Attorney's Office. They dubbed their new political group, "Kick Politics out of Baker County's Business" and began gathering signatures. Last year, the nearly identical political group supporting the same idea was called "People over Politics," and though the individuals who signed up as the Chief Petitioners versus signature gatherers have switched, the makeup of the group remains essentially the same with last year's Chief Petitioner Randy Joseph gathering multiple sheets of signatures, aided by Jan Kerns, among others.

SEE NONPARTISAN ISSUE PAGE 5

	<b>Friday</b>	Sunny and warm. Highs in the mid 80s. Clear and cooler at night. Lows in the mid 40s.
	<b>Saturday</b>	Sunny and warmer. Highs in the upper 80s. Mostly clear and cool at night. Lows in the upper 40s.
	<b>Sunday</b>	The hottest day of the weekend. Sunny and hot with highs near 90. Lows near 50.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.

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