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Shriners weekend filled with local events

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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Last Saturday, several events in Baker City were among the highlights of the day, in honor of the 64th annual East-West All-Star Shrine Football Game. These included the Hoofin' It to Beef Fit 5K Run, the Shrine Parade, and the Gridiron Tailgate & Grill.

The 5K run fundraiser, made possible by the Baker County Cattlewomen (BCC), U.S. Bank, and Subway, began at the

Thomas Angus Ranch, 42598 North Cedar Street, at 8 a.m., and ended at Geiser Pollman Park, via the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway. There were 50 to 60 participants, and the fastest time recorded was 22 minutes, BCC member Wendy Bingham said. Prizes included cook books, pedometers, and meat thermometers. The fundraiser helped collect funds, over \$1,300 just from the run registrations, for the purchase of the 2016 Shrine Steer, raised

by Matt Siddoway of Durkee. Sponsorships totaled over \$2,000, in addition.

The Shrine Parade began around 11 a.m., with Blue Mountain Lodge #34 AF & AM (Ancient Free & Accepted Masons) member Donald M. Burrows at the microphone in front of Marilyn's Music Plus, 1821 Main Street, as announcer. The parade, once again, featured many participants, including the following:

Cub Scout Pack #432, chartered by the United

Methodist Church, in Baker City; Baker Elks Lodge #338, with its American flag; the East Queen, Josie Rankin, and the West Queen, Grace Andraesen; the East and West All Star Cheerleaders; East Co-Captain John "JW" Dippold, and West Co-Captain Payton Gergory; Baker County Livestock Association (BCLA), Baker County Cattlewomen (BCC) ...

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Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

This year's Shriners Steer mugs it up for the camera.

BLM project criticized for adding fuel to the fire



Submitted Photo.

Nearly 4,000 acres spanning Rooster Comb, Pedro and the Mormon Basin areas now hold the ground fuel shown above, with another 3,000 or so acres planned for the same treatment, BLM budget pending.

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) juniper eradication project in southern Baker County is drawing criticism from forestry experts and neighboring property owners who say the project has created a firetrap for landowners.

The problems? Piles of dried juniper have been left as new fuel near private property boundaries—and the fact that the trees were cut and left to lay in the months immediately preceding fire season.

Forestry expert Arvid Andersen of Andersen Forestry Consulting said, "It is a matter of using common sense and managing risk. As a private forester I would consider the matter adding additional fuel loads going into a fire

season."

As reported in the July 22, 2016 issue of *The Baker County Press* in an article by Todd Arriola, roughly 4,000 acres of public lands in the Mormon Basin, Rooster Comb, and Pedro Mountain, areas west of Bridgeport have been included in lop and lay project orchestrated by the BLM and executed by Medford-based contractor Summitt Forests, Inc., aimed at reducing juniper expansion.

This BLM land borders private lands owned by both Devils Canyon Ranch and Three Valleys Ranch.

Last weekend, one wildfire ignited on Rooster Comb and a second on Pedro Mountain not far from the supply of crispy, downed trees.

SEE BLM PAGE 3



Submitted Photo.

Piles of dry trees line the roadway just down the hill from Pedro leading from BLM onto private land.

Baker Fire Department gets new hire



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Former volunteer Jeremy Yerrick is the newest hire at the Baker City Fire Department.

BY GINA K. SWARTZ
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In June the Baker City Fire Department (BCFD), through the creation of a new full-time position approved by the City Budget Board, hired volunteer firefighter Jeremy Yerrick.

Yerrick, along with his wife, Ashlee, have both been volunteer firefighters with the Baker City Fire Department since December 2014.

Jeremy said aside from the volunteer work he's done has no background in firefighting. "I'm grateful for having this opportunity. I was humbled to even go through the hiring process and feel real honored to have been hired. This is a great community," he said. The job posting was an internal posting, therefore as a volunteer Yerrick was eligible to apply.

"Both Ashlee and I would have liked to be able to offer more of a commitment to BCFD but Blue Mountain Oil was a very large commitment and until recently the availability of a position within the department was not something that had been available," he said.

The Yerricks moved to Baker City about two years ago to manage Blue Mountain Oil, located at 13th and D Streets. Recently, the business changed ownership so for Jeremy the timing couldn't have been more perfect.

Blue Mountain Oil was sold in June. The application closing date for BCFD was in the beginning of June with testing in the middle of June. The timing allowed for Yerrick to step right into his new role that began on June 26, 2016.

"Had I not been involved in the volunteer side of the house, I would not have been eligible to apply," Yerrick said.

SEE FIRE DEPARTMENT PAGE 8

Friday Sunny and mild, highs near 90. Clear and cool, lows near 50 at night.

Saturday Sunny and hot, highs in the mid 90s. Mostly clear and not as cool, lows in the mid 50s.

Sunday Sunny and not as hot, highs in the low 90s. Mostly clear at night. Lows in the mid 50s.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.

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OREGON TRAIL ELECTRIC COOP

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