

Local

5J honors local police partners

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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August 18, the Baker School District Board met and presented a Certificate of Outstanding Recognition to the Baker City Police Department (BCPD) as the Business Partner of the Quarter.

The BCPD was represented by Chief Wyn Lohner and School Resource Officer Lance Woodward.

"This is a Certificate of Outstanding Recognition for your contributions to our school district," said Betty Palmer, the Assistant Superintendent.

"Both for Lance, our partner for being there, but also in recognition of Chief Lohner of the dedication you have to serve our students and to keep our buildings safe," she added.

High School senior Koby Hansen represented himself and Blake Stone, who was out of town, for winning a trophy at the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) National Championships and both received certificates of recognition. Hansen and Stone placed first at the national competition in Atlanta, Georgia, in the Global Business category.

South Baker students Campbell Vanderwiele and Anthony Christopher, who was in Chicago at the time of the meeting, received certificates of recognition for their show of leadership in working to get a basketball court for South Baker Elementary.

Palmer reported the Newport High School Principal, Jon Zegal, would be in Baker August 23 as a keynote speaker for their in-service week at school.

Palmer said Zegal would talk about his experiences



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L-R: School Resource Officer Lance Woodward, Assistant Superintendent of 5J Betty Palmer, and Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner.

as a student, a principal, and what he is doing to give back to students.

Palmer explained that the meeting was to be a discussion of what everyone in education can do to give their best to their schools.

Palmer is giving substitute training for the year and she will continue until the school year, training substitute teachers. They are still recruiting more people for the training program.

5J's Chief Financial Officer and Business Manager Doug Dalton reported summer courses are ending and they are offering course development classes, including a welding class September 6, which has been expanded to twelve potential candidates. They will be offering another course for twelve other students

in November. They have courses in Bend in October and in La Grande in November. They will be discussing the courses, who will be in them, and what it means for Baker Technical Institute (BTI) and the school district.

Dalton explained at South Baker they installed a new gym floor, fixed a water leak, and widened the sidewalk to increase safety at the bus lanes.

At the Middle School they have the dog court ready and Brooklyn now has the underground water system they had been working on.

Board Chair Kevin Cassidy discussed the Oregon School Board Association—OSBA. He and Andrew Bryan have a legislative policy call in to finalize their priorities for OSBA. He also has a board meeting with OSBA in

September.

Cassidy gave a report on the Facility Master Planning (FMP) Committee, which will be meeting in September to finalize options of expanding a group of community, staff, and stakeholders.

"The FMP is a foundation, a piece of work that we're doing to understand what we are. All of us have a desire of what we want to be but we're trying to not go there in this particular piece. We're really trying to understand what we are so it's not anecdotal for me to say, 'Location, South Baker.' I say that, but what does that mean?" said Cassidy. "Having a third party lens that understands those things, to be able to actually give us that data and understand what that is and what we could be and then develop a few options from that."

Valley Street dog deemed dangerous

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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On Monday, the results of three dangerous dog hearings held last Thursday were announced with two dogs named not dangerous per the City's Dangerous Dog Ordinance 90.39.

A third dog, Oreo, was declared dangerous, however. The border collie mix resides with owners Toby and Hillary Jones at 1627 Valley Street in Baker City.

Oreo reportedly had a history of aggressive behavior with neighbors, which culminated in a recent attack. A teenage girl on her newspaper route had experienced prior behavior with the dog, which lives on the south side of the street. She attempted to avoid the home by crossing to the north side of the street during her route when the dog bolted off the property, crossed the street, circled the girl repeatedly, and bit her on the thigh.

According to code enforcement officer Mark Powell Tuesday morning, the owners have two weeks to neuter the animal and construct either a six-foot fence or place the dog in a confined area such as a kennel—if they want to keep the dog within the City limits. The area must be clearly marked with signage indicating a dangerous dog resides there. The dog must also be microchipped and covered by liability insurance of no less than \$150,000. The owners, per ordinance, have 180 days to have the dog evaluated by a certified applied behaviorist, a board-certified veterinary behaviorist, or another recognized expert in the field. Obedience training is also a requirement.

The owners could also, of course, choose to relocate Oreo outside City Limits—and outside the reach of the ordinance.

Noncompliance can result in a hefty fine of \$1,000 depending on the subsection of the ordinance violated, said Powell.

HB 5815

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The bill, if enacted, would prevent prosecution under the following conditions:

"(i) the damage or destruction, or attempt to damage or destroy, is by means of a fire that—

"(I) is set by a person to property owned by the person— (aa) to prevent an imminent threat of damage to that property; or (bb) as part of any other generally accepted practice for managing vegetation on timber, grazing, or farm land;

"(II) does not pose a serious threat of injury to any individual or damage to any building, dwelling, or vehicle of the United States; and

"(III) does not result in death or serious bodily injury to any individual; and

"(ii) an individual who has not attained 16 years of age is not used in setting the fire."

The Hammonds, father and son aged 73 and 46 at the time, turned themselves in to Federal authorities back in January to begin their sentence, after the U.S. Department of Justice appealed the original sentence they had already served. That first conviction came in 2012 for arson charges, which fell under the Federal Antiterrorism Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, after the Hammonds burned approximately 130 acres of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-managed grazing land adjoining their own property, in what the defense said was an effort to protect the family ranch from a wildfire that had ignited on public lands and was headed toward the Hammond ranch. The prosecution argued that the Hammonds had started the blaze to cover up the carcasses of deer killed during poaching; however, no physical evidence of poaching or of deer incinerated in the fire existed.

The 9th Circuit Court granted the appeal in October 2015, and ordered the Hammonds to fulfill a five-year minimum sentence, which had been waived by the previous judge.

The penalties didn't just come with what most believed was an excessive sentence. The Hammonds, during the course of their legal battles, were also given a \$400,000 fine—and were ordered to give the BLM the right of first refusal should their financial situation force them to sell their family ranch. To date, the family has incurred over a million dollars in legal bills, and now, after the incarceration of their husbands, the Hammond wives carry the day-to-day operations of the family ranch in spite of newly diagnosed health issues.

To date, President Obama has declined to issue a pardon.

HB 5815 is co-sponsored by Congressmen Labrador, Newhouse and Gosar. Contacting the Judiciary Committee members individually would prove time-consuming.

Walden's Communications Director Andrew Malcolm in D.C. said, "As far as support, it is probably easiest for people to send their support to our office and we can share that with the House Judiciary Committee members."

To contact Rep. Greg Walden:

Email (through website): <http://walden.house.gov/contact-greg/email-me>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/repregwalden>

Phone: 202-225-6730 or 800-533-3303 (toll free from the 541 area code)

Postal mail: Office of U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, 1211 Washington Avenue, La Grande, OR 97850.

Without an influx of constituent support, the bill is currently rated at having a slim 1% chance of making it into law.

Chamber has soapbox derby

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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The Baker City Chamber of Commerce held the first annual Baker County Downhill Derby August 20.

The Derby had two races, the first for youth and the second for adults.

The Chamber Executive Director, Shelly Cutler, organized the event. She first thought of the derby in March, wanting to organize an event to wrap up summer vacation and have something families could participate in.

Cutler had researched other derbies, consulting with Ron Osterloh, who organizes the Union County and Wallowa County derbies, to find what to do and what would or would not work.

The derby was held on Windmill Road and three youths participated with their families.

Robbe Abell and his son Rowan, Larry Parker and his son Gabriel Simmons, and Conner Niday raced in the youths with his grandfather Gary Nelson racing in the adults.

Robbe Abell's family is from Baker, while he, his fiancée and son live in Portland.



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Receiving trophies. L-R: Greg Nelson with his grandson Conner Niday, Larry Parker with his son Gabriel Simmons, and Robbe Abell with his son Rowan Abell.

Niday and his family are from Union and Simmons' family is local.

"For the first year, I'm glad we got the participants we had," said Cutler.

The event began with Abell, Simmons, and Niday timing how fast their soapbox cars would go downhill.

Due to there being only three participants, Cutler had the boys go downhill

three times and the winner would be the one with the best average time.

After averaging out the times, the boys raced two at a time for a fun competition before trophies were handed out.

Abell won first place with an average time of 32.76 seconds.

Niday won second place with an average of 35.45/ Simmons won third place

with an average time of 38.96.

In the adult race, the three cars went together downhill.

Robbe Abell won first place, Greg Nelson second and Larry Parker third.

Cutler plans to make this an annual event in Baker the Chamber will put on for families to participate in.

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