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Drug lab site shows off-the-charts contamination

HOUSE AT 301 2ND STREET NEEDS ABATEMENT

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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A site assessment of a former local drug lab at 301 Second Street in Baker City has shown extremely high levels of methamphetamine contamination, according to a report by A Best Environmental LLC.

In fact, all samples were at least five times higher than the State of Oregon Cleanup Standard.

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner said this Tuesday that the case involving the Baggerly house, which was termed a “Drug Lab Site” after an anhydrous leak and subsequent investigation that started early last year, has “finally worked through the courts.”

On February 4, 2015, Baker City Police, Oregon State Police and the Baker City Fire Department descended on the Second Street house just before 1 p.m. on what was a previously peaceful Wednesday afternoon.

Kenneth Roy Street, age

45 at the time, of Baker City, was arrested there for Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance (Meth).

Next-door neighbor Mike Bork had called police earlier at 12:50 p.m. after going out his back door and taking a whiff.

“The smell was just horrendous,” he said. “Then I could hear these guys coughing. I walked over and could see them running around like chickens with their heads cut off, coughing.”

That smell was confirmed as a ruptured anhydrous ammonia tank



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Chief Wyn Lohner.

that had released a cloud of gas, and the odor was detectable all the way down the street.

SEE DRUG LAB PAGE 10



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

The drug lab site at 301 2nd Street shows five times the level of meth contamination as the Oregon cleanup standard.

Baker City's 'Quilting Grannies' sew up to four quilts per week



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

Left to right: Kathy Hopkins, Claire Duncan, Judy Schroeder, Myrna Evans, and Colleen Brooks.

GROUP OF LOCAL GRANDMOTHERS MAKE 160-170 QUILTS PER YEAR

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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Returning from summer vacation, the Grannies in Baker City are hard at work again.

Led by Colleen Brooks, the group of ladies is working together making and donating baby quilts for newborns in Baker County through Building Healthy Families.

Brooks explained that Florastine Landreth started the Grannies around 1984.

Landreth began working with a group of ladies from the Catholic Church, making and sending quilts to Covenant House in New York and they were given to unwed mothers who lived on the streets.

According to Judy Schroeder, Landreth's son was in New York, and he had seen the need at Covenant House and told his mother that the ladies needed help.

Brooks had heard of the Grannies and thought they were through the Catholic Church, but Landreth invited her saying she didn't need to be Catholic to join.

When Landreth passed away, Brooks continued with the Grannies, but sending the quilts to New York became

too expensive and they decided to give quilts locally.

“We work on donations,” said Duncan. “We're awfully lucky to have some people that have given us money and it's helped us immensely.”

The current members are Claire Duncan, Judy Schroeder, Kathy Hopkins, and Myrna Evans.

They meet once a week and continue to give quilts to the nurses at the hospital.

The Grannies are one of the many groups that make similar donations.

Some groups knit hats for newborns and sew lap robes for people in nursing homes.

“Baker has a lot of people that are behind the scenes that do this kind of thing,” Duncan explained. “There's a group of Nazarene women that make quilts, not baby quilts, but quilts.”

On their quilts, the Grannies put: “This quilt was made for you with love by some grannies in Baker City.”

“We get four quilts a week done,” Duncan said. “We don't work in the summer, so some of us take them home and make them at home.”

“When school starts, we usually start,” explained Schroeder.

The Grannies make around 160 to 170 quilts a year, taking Christmas off—but they still get their quilts made and donated.

Hoopes goes back on full duty

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Sheriff's candidate, Deputy John Hoopes, went back to work at the Baker County Sheriff's Office this week after a lengthy healing process associated with an on-the-job injury to his shoulder.

Hoopes is challenging incumbent Sheriff, Travis Ash, who was appointed by Baker County Commissioners when elected Sheriff Mitch Southwick abruptly retired.

Hoopes' absence from the Sheriff's Office has raised speculation, which he says has contributed to misinformation—especially regarding his physical abilities during the election season.

“Last week I was given a full release to return to duty. I'm looking forward to it. I think I caught everyone off guard. I really worked at it in the gym—I initially thought I would be back in December but managed to move that ahead.”

In March of 2014, Hoopes attempted to subdue an intoxicated individual when he injured his left shoulder. He notified SAIF (the worker's compensation insurance provider) thinking it would heal, and took no further action.

Later that same year in November of 2014, Hoopes was making a DUI arrest when that left arm, which had been injured previously, “gave out.” Hoopes said that the suspect “kicked back,” and when he did, all the man's weight landed on Hoopes' right arm, creating a tear in the shoulder.

Again, the injury was reported within a work day to SAIF while Hoopes continued to work. He went through an assessment with his own surgeon, Dr. Eric Sandefur, and followed SAIF protocol, seeing two of that organization's doctors as well for approval. This process took weeks, then eventually months.

Hoopes took time off with his wife in September of 2015 prior to surgery, which he then had in October of that year.

Hoopes entered into physical therapy, but when he showed no improvement, he and surgeons came to realize the original tear had return.

His second surgery was in April of 2016. Ten weeks later with his arm in a sling, Hoopes received his first physician-authorized permission to return to light duty at the Sheriff's Office. He spoke directly to Ash and was denied light duty. Past protocol has typically been to have employees work light duty whenever possible.

He was given a second permission to work light duty, modified this time to allow for “less and less restriction,” said Hoopes. Again, there was no light work available.

SEE HOOPES PAGE 9



Submitted Photo.

John Hoopes at a Halfway gathering last week.

Friday More clouds than sun with a few showers. Chance of precipitation is 60%. Highs in the upper 50s. Friday Night: Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Lows near 40.

Saturday More clouds than sun with a few showers. Chance of precipitation is 60%. Highs in the mid 50s. Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Lows near 40.

Sunday Mostly cloudy with showers. Chance of precipitation is 70%. Highs in the mid 50s. Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy with a few lingering showers. Lows in the mid 30s.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



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