

# Opinion / Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

### Hoopes would be better for the local economy

To the Editor:  
How can a county sheriff affect the local economy? It is a no-brainer.

The federal agencies are trespassing against us by claiming authority and jurisdiction that they truly do not have inside our county. These federal agencies have a long and dismal history of applying management mandates out of Washington, DC and destroying the local logging and mining industries and recreation. Who does not know this to be a fact? The forest road closures alone drew thousands of protesters recently.

The real problem we face is that the local Sheriff is already sidestepping his oath and entering into written agreements with federal agencies allowing them new powers inside our county. Travis Ash, following Mr. Southwick’s example, has done so. This activity must be stopped because it is wrong.

There is a large movement in this nation for county governments to manage their own resources and assets and to restrict the encroachments of federal agencies. John Hoopes has been committed to local control of resources and pledges not to sell out to the feds for any price. Local control will bring back logging and mining, and we can all benefit! Elect John Hoopes for Sheriff.

**Arthur Bingham**  
*Richland*

### Vote no on 1-74 to keep County transparent

To the Editor:  
The difference between conservative thinking and the liberal mentality is astonishing. Think about it. Everyday, we common citizens largely view our world through the lens of either one political extreme or the other.

In nearly every decision we make, whether it’s healthcare, jobs, local economy, recreation in the mountains, education, or entertainment, we think and act from either a conservative or progressive mindset.

On one side they believe that centralized big government should determine how we live our lives, that we should be taken care of from cradle to grave, that our public lands should be owned by government itself, that our private property should be taxed and controlled by bureaucrats, that our children should be forced how and what to think, and that we should pay for it with enough excessive taxing to fund it all.

Conversely, there is self-reliance. We can choose self-government within lawful organized structures that meet our needs by being responsible. The federal government is \$20 trillion in debt, and neither Clinton nor Trump will get us out of that mess. It’s too great.

Politics play a huge role in how our county commissioners think and decide. The ordinances they pass and the deals they make with government are absolutely political. Every day. I want to know if our county is headed in a direction that relies totally on a bankrupt big government for all its solutions, or if it’s headed in a direction that will allow us in Baker County to control our own destiny to the greatest extent possible.

I want to know what side our commissioners are on. Whether we want to admit it or not, politics is an integral part of Baker County government. Let’s keep it

transparent.  
Vote no on measure 1-74.

**Phil Brown**  
*Halfway*

### A different view of 1-74

To the Editor:  
I keep hearing party platforms don’t need to be involved in county business, but in fact they are essential. There is a distinct and clear contrast in reasoning between conservative and liberal views when it comes to decisions that are made regarding public and private land use, jobs, and industry here in Baker County.

There is a difference between liberal centralized approaches when receiving grants, allowing optional federal policies through agreements and contracts, and openly welcoming the behemoth that is nationalization. This stands as a stark contrast to the more conservative approach of local governance, self-reliance, and solutions based on the ingenuity and creativity of people and resources in the county.

The Windy Ridge/Cornett and Dry Gulch fires are striking examples of big government letting structures burn while local farmers and ranchers were out late at night fighting to protect their families and neighbors. This is an example of a nationalization of policies, not local control.

People need to know and consider the core beliefs of candidates for county offices, and party platforms must be considered as an indicator. Vote no on Measure 1-74!

**Frank McCleary**  
*Richland*

### Hoopes will refuse unconstitutional federal orders

To the Editor:  
Europe and the USA are suffering in a battle for their very survival as independent nations. And you know why. Unlawful immigration policies pushed by the communist UN and the socialist regime in Washington DC are bent on destroying our culture and economy. The federal government flies plane loads of unscreened criminal elements into areas all over our country, placing tremendous expense upon the local people to feed, clothe, shelter, medicate, and assimilate them.

But the problem is that most do not want to be assimilated—they want to conquer, using our own generosity and compassion as weapons against us. You have seen it happen all over Europe, and it is starting here.

Who can say when the federal government will dump busloads of religious fanatics at the Baker Court House? Will your commissioners and Sheriff agree to take the federal moneys and bow to the unlawful Executive Orders? Will you allow this to happen here? I say it is a real possibility, and a genuine threat to our very existence.

Will Travis Ash, as Sheriff, comply with UN-inspired Executive Orders from the head socialist in Washington DC? Yes! He has already shown his allegiance to the federal causes bringing harm and cost to others.

But John Hoopes will not give in and comply with unconstitutional federal instructions. Big John will do what is RIGHT for the people he swore to serve and protect. Vote John Hoopes for Sheriff!

**Jeannie Anderson**  
*Richland*

# Local police cruiser voted best-looking vehicle in contest

During last year’s Christmas Twilight Parade downtown *The Baker County Press* took a photograph of the parade’s lead vehicle—a Baker City Police Department (BCPD) patrol car.

The vehicle had its blue emergency lights on and the lighting was such that the vehicle’s reflective decals were prominent against the backdrop of an illuminated historic Geiser Grand Hotel.

In mid-October a public-safety related Facebook page called *The Thin Blue Line Supporters*, a closed site with 16,000 law enforcement members, launched a photo contest with the goal of determining which agency had the best looking vehicle.

The local photo, submitted by Reserve Commander Jerry Boyd, was one of nearly 200 entries from across the country. There were even some entries

from foreign countries. The contest was not restricted to police vehicles. There were fire engines, ambulances and many other public safety vehicles (including a helicopter) entered in the contest.

On October 28 the results were announced and the BCPD photo won first place.

The photo can be seen in the 2015 Twilight Parade folder at [www.facebook.com/theBCPress](http://www.facebook.com/theBCPress).

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# City Planning makes no decision in tennis court issue

**BY GINA K. SWARTZ**  
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A recent Baker City Planning Commission meeting a public hearing was held regarding the grass tennis courts located at 3925 Grace St.

The grass courts have been a source of contention since they were first installed, two in 1995 with an addition of two more courts in 2000.

The public hearing was the result of a September 22, 2016 complaint filed by Joanna McCormick that alleged violations of a conditional use permit and to determine whether the conditional use permit should be revoked.

McCormick alleged the violation in question had occurred by the use of the lights on a non-tournament night. The date of the alleged violation was August 13, 2016. Several photographs showing the alleged violation were submitted to the Baker City-County Planning department as part of the formal complaint, all photos had been date/time stamped.

One photo showed light from the tennis court clearly shining over a property line. A direct violation of a 2012 stipulation to the conditional use permit that reads, “Use of the tennis court lights shall be restricted to only tournament nights; shall be turned off by 10:00 p.m. on the ten selected Friday and Saturday nights; and shall be turned off by 9:00 p.m. on all other tournament nights. The modifications to the conditional use permit went on to outline that all ‘flood’ style lights shall be replaced with ‘shoebox’ style lights and cut off shields shall be added so that light shall not extend over the property line.”

Don McClure, current owner of the tennis courts addressed the Commission in his own defense to the violation and impending revocation of the conditional use permit. He began by stating, “On the night in question I did not give permission, nor was I aware that these lights were turned on.”

He firmly stated that he had, or thought he had made it clear the lights were for tournament nights only. The night in question

McClure says he was not in Baker City, the players were personal use players from Portland and alluded to the lack of communication from neighbors whom he claimed he has reached out to numerous times to contact him directly with concerns but instead “run around taking pictures to prove their case” and filing formal complaints instead.

He seemed very frustrated that he had not been contacted by anyone and that if he had, the problem could’ve been taken care of promptly.

He stated that he had told the players that were there that night ‘no lights’ and he believed there had been no lights used. He told the Commission, “I went to OTEC for proof that those lights had not been on” but to his surprise, he was given proof that the lights had indeed been used.

McClure feels he did everything reasonably expected of anyone to ensure lights were not turned on. He told the Commission since this incident he has taken more precautions that the lights are not turned on again “Short of removal.”

However, the specifics of said precautions were not given. McClure said, “I want my neighbors to be happy. I’ve always done everything that the community has asked me to do, every precaution, every modification.”

He eluded to the pictures submitted by McCormick saying, “You can see how well of a job I did at keeping the light from extending beyond the property line, as much as you can contain light and reflection.” He also claimed that at one point he even planted some trees that in his opinion by now would’ve blocked the light for Joanna McCormick’s property.

“She asked that I take the trees out, I agreed. I not only agreed I gave her the trees,” he said.

He also stated that there had been flood light pointed her direction that he had promised her would never be turned on again, and then had those lights permanently removed but feels, “It seems I can’t make anyone happy.”

He told the Commission that he doesn’t benefit

from the tennis courts but that Baker City does when tournaments are held. Tournament participants go to local restaurants and shop in local stores.

He sees the process of bypassing him entirely and filing a formal complaint as a way to get the conditional use permit revoked and shut the courts down.

He went on to say that he did have to give “Joanna McCormick kudos because she did call me a couple of weeks ago to discuss this. She told me she is tired of this, tired of being the ring leader, tired of being the person who everyone contacts. But evidently, she enjoys it because he she is again.”

He continued to express to the Commission that if something is going wrong on his property and he isn’t there or made aware he cannot fix the problem; he wasn’t made aware of this current issue for over a week by letter from the City-County planning department due to a formal complaint. “I don’t think that’s reasonable,” he said.

He asked for leniency in correcting issues rather than just an immediate revoke of the permit.

Joanna McCormick addressed the Commission next. She said, “You know how many times we’ve been in front of the Commission, City Council. All we ask is that these illegal tennis courts that were built without even any permits, stay within the conditional use permit of 22 days of tennis court use. Stop the parties and shield or take away the lights.

We filed a complaint with LUBA (Land Use Board of Appeals) and they ruled in our favor. We entered a land use permit agreement with the then owners (Borden and Sandi Granger). They did not once violate that agreement. 22 days of tennis tournament play, the tennis court lights turned out by 9.”

McCormick said, “Then they sold the property. So then we start all over again with the problems.”

McCormick said that she has done what the planners have asked her to do and filed complaints so as to come in front of the Commission

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