



# The Baker County Press

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## Halfway: Bobcat attack puts damper on goat farm

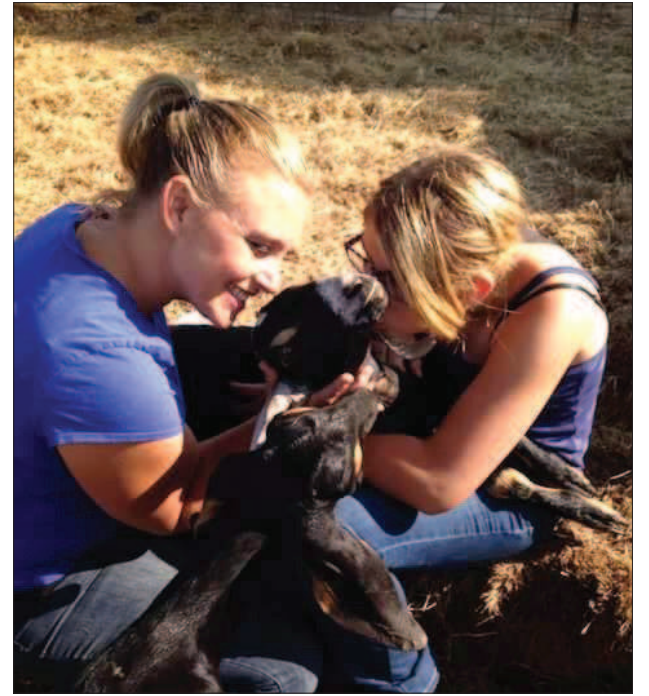
**BY SUNNY WERNER**  
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When Courtney and Doug Holton moved their family to Halfway, it was with the intent to find the best environment in which to raise their special needs children. The Special Kid Goat Farm, Courtney's dream, has been an idea in the works—but their plans were severely damaged on the night of Saturday, November 26, with the dis-

covery of bobcat predation. The Holtons live right across from the only school in the area, Pine Eagle Charter School, which serves all school-aged children from kindergarten to 12th grade. The first loss found was one of their brood goats. The goat was found lying on the ground with one long rip across her belly, but no evidence of mauling and no blood. The Holtons first thought

perhaps the goat had caught herself on a nail, but a thorough search found no nails that could have caused the damage. Although puzzled by the lack of blood, neither Doug nor Courtney considered a predator. (Bobcats often kill by suffocation, as they will bite the throat of their prey and hold on until the animal drops, according to Oregon Fish and Wildlife.) When Courtney and

Doug were settling the rest of their animals, as well as those of their neighbor, for the evening, Courtney saw a broken window in the barn. Going inside they spotted a large bobcat perching on hay bales at the back of the barn. The bobcat showed no signs of fear even with two adults and a large dog entering the enclosed space. **SEE BOBCAT PAGE 3**



Submitted Photo.

Courtney Holton (left) and her daughter Chase snuggle two of their goats, including one later to become a bobcat victim.

## Sumpter: Christmas tree decoration completed



Meghan Andersch/ The Baker County Press

A small group of volunteers gathered to decorate the Christmas tree in Sumpter last weekend after Thanksgiving.

**BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH**  
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A small group of volunteers set up and decorated Sumpter's Christmas tree the weekend of November 26th. LeAnne Woolf stated the 35' Douglas Fir came from the property of Jan Smith and that Kurt Clarke and John Young transported it. A hole for the tree was dug using Clarke's auger.

The Christmas tree is in a new location this year next to The Depot Inn. Woolf explained it's close to the PA system and is an easier location for people riding the train to get to and from.

Around 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, a group assembled to help decorate. Young hung the star at the top of the tree using a lift, then turned the adornment of the lower branches over to the assembled kids, who decked the branches with large decorations and tinsel. Adult volunteers finished the lights and higher decorations.

Sumpter's tree lighting will take place on December 10th, immediately following the Sumpter parade, which starts about 5 p.m.

Other Sumpter events that weekend are the Christmas bazaar and Christmas trains. The bazaar will be held at the Sumpter Municipal Museum from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The Sumpter Valley Railroad offers three round trips on Saturday and two on Sunday. Christmas train reservations can be made by calling 894-2268 or e-mailing reservations@sumptervalleyrailroad.org. Per the Railroad website, the Saturday evening lights train is now sold out.

Santa will be available for visits at the Sumpter Depot, and word is out that several of his North Pole helpers may be spotted handing out candy in the parade.



Meghan Andersch/ The Baker County Press

John Young puts the star in place.

## Unity: Meeting held on solar array

**BY TODD ARRIOLA**  
with contributions from Patty Trost  
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Around 20 people attended a community meeting in Unity, on Tuesday, November 29, 2016, 6 p.m., to discuss a proposed 2.75 megawatt solar farm project in the area, with Enerparc, Inc. Project Development Analyst Peter Desmarais, and Associate Director of Project Development Peter Davis.

Attendees included Baker County Planning Director Holly Kerns, Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett, Bill Moore, Beth Atkins, and Patty Trost.

Desmarais and Davis spoke about the company's plans to lease about 23 acres of private land in order to construct the farm, located north of the Y-shaped intersection of Highways 26 and 245 near Unity, from owners Kenneth and Claudia Brush with whom they have remained in contact.

The project, the Brush Solar Farm, which would be interconnected with Idaho Power's transmission line along Highway 245, and possibly started in 2018 or 2019, is estimated to cost between three and four million dollars, could be partially funded with grants, and would be paid for in six to seven years, Desmarais and Davis said.

Through a 20-year contract, Enerparc, Inc. would sell the power to Idaho Power, and the farm would be monitored remotely, via a computer terminal located at Enerparc's Oakland office. The perimeter of the farm would be surrounded by an eight-foot tall fence and a gravel road, and grasses and brush in the area would be mowed, rather than removed, to minimize dust formation.

Desmarais and Davis provided copies of a site map and details of the project, to attendees. Among the biological and environmental details noted, biological surveys indicate no significant impacts, and there are no significant air quality emissions, or impacts to waterways.

Among other details presented were the following: the silver-framed, photovoltaic (PV) solar panels would be non-reflective, reducing a "lake effect," and glare; the chain-linked perimeter fence would have no barbed wire; the construction would take only about three months, with a maximum workforce of 25-30, and at most, 20-25 trucks and employee vehicles, with the use of lighter and smaller trucks; idling trucks/construction vehicles won't be permitted on-site; the farm will be unmanned; reclaimed water will be used at all times during construction, and on the access roads, to control dust; interconnection will be to Idaho Power's existing 12 kV (kilovolt) line, located on-site; the array will be low voltage (1,000 volt solar panels, with a step-up transformer to match Idaho Power's line voltage of 12 kV); there will be minimal grading, to reduce dust; and there will be minimal operational traffic.

**SEE SOLAR ARRAY PAGE 5**

**Friday** Mostly sunny with cool temperatures. Highs in the mid 30s. Friday Night: Mostly cloudy with snow showers possible. Lows in the upper 20s.

**Saturday** Mostly cloudy with rain/snow showers. Highs near 40. Chance of precipitation is 30%. Little to no accumulation expected. Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy. Lows near freezing.

**Sunday** Mostly cloudy with scattered snow showers. Highs in the upper 30s. Little to no accumulations expected. Sunday Night: Scattered snow showers otherwise mostly cloudy. Lows near 20.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.

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