

# Local

## County

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He also said that a conflict exists between the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and the zoning in the Zoning Map, and while the entire issue needs to be addressed, the application needs to be reviewed using the established process. He recommended remanding the request to the Baker County Planning Commission, for further findings and consideration, based on the information provided, and the permissible criteria.

After further discussion, Harvey asked for any testimony, as to remanding the request to the Planning Commission, and none was offered, however, Jan commented that the Commission needs to address the criteria. The request was remanded to the Planning Commission, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Nichols.

Timm and Yencopal provided an Emergency Management department update, beginning with a review of last year's activities, from Timm.

Among the details, he said that a major focus of his was, and is public education and training, in the area of fire and emergency planning and response. This included (and could include again this year) water supply emergency response training, local RFPD (Rural Fire Protection District) wildland fire training, an annual inter-agency fire service event, and an Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)/Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) fire training school.

Updates to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) were also completed, in conjunction with the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS), a regional approach to fire emergency response planning. This year's goals includes structural training for RFPDs, and improving the County's current Fire/EMS model (which Timm said is fragile).

Yencopal said that 2016 was a busy year, especially with the wildfires (he mentioned the Rail Fire, which

threatened the Elkhorn communications repeater site). Among other details, he said that this winter season, he activated an Oregon emergency response number, in anticipation of emergencies, and County structural damage was luckily limited mostly to non-residential type buildings, like carports and sheds.

He said that the current snow melt rate is better than expected, and Baker Valley Irrigation District Manager Jeff Colton has been keeping a close eye on river flow, releasing up to 14 cfm (cubic feet per minute), to help the ice melt. Yencopal also mentioned the major planning effort in place, to deal with the expected influx of people to the County, for the solar eclipse event, on Monday, August 21, 2017.

A Professional Services Agreement, between the County, and St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, Ltd., for the services of Baker County Health Officer, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Dr. Eric Lamb, as contractor, was approved as County Health Officer, and he will receive \$825 per month, not to exceed \$9,900 per year, and his term will be July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017, according to the agreement.

Two Professional Services Agreements, between the County, and St. Luke's, and the County, and St. Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City, Inc., for the services of Mid-Level Provider, for the Baker County School Based Health Center (SBHC), were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. The term is August 29, 2016, through June 2, 2017, and includes the rate of \$60 per hour, from the County, to each entity, for its services, according to the agreements.

Grammon discussed with the Board, a proposed draft of the Board's position, with the Tri-County Weed Program Area (TCWMA) management, since Grammon and the Board have pointed out major issues with the management and structure of the program, for numerous years. In order for Baker County to

continue its participation in the program, in part, the draft states that:

"The Executive Board of the Tri-County Weed Organization shall be configured with a maximum of persons. A representative shall be appointed by Baker, Union and Wallowa counties, with a minimum of two Commissioners on the Executive Board. The remaining positions are to be recommended by the Tri-County Weed Board and appointed by the Executive Board."

Additionally, other actions deemed necessary includes the following:

"All counties will be advised of pending personnel actions, (hiring, employee discipline, termination) prior to any action being undertaken; A budget shall be prepared utilizing a format that is common to the respective counties. All expenditures will be reviewed by the Executive Board on a monthly basis and revenues will be likewise monitored; All credit card expenditures will be submitted with a written explanation as to the specific project that the charge is to be attached to; No Tri-County board members or staff will utilize Tri-County equipment for personal use; (and) All surplus equipment will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder." After further discussion, this draft was approved to be sent to other County Commissioners in the TCWMA district, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Bruce.

Warner, Jr. discussed the changes for the Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement For Dispatch And Records Keeping Services, between the City and the County, and the Economic Development Council (EDC) agreement, between the same entities (the City/County meeting addressing these topics was covered in more detail, in the Friday, February 10, 2017 issue of The Baker County Press).

Members of the Board and City Council have previously discussed changes to the agreements, and Warner, Jr. said during this session that he didn't see issues with what was presented. The proposed recommenda-

tions from the County, for the Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement, were approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. The proposed recommendations from the County, for the EDC agreement, were approved, effective March 1, 2017, and other budget issues would be addressed July 1, 2017, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols.

A 2015-2016 audit review was provided, by Adams, Lindley, and Cook, to the Board. Financial highlights includes:

"The County's net position for year ending June 30, 2016 was \$43,850,450. During the fiscal year, net position decreased by \$2,647,486...due largely to the determination of the Courts related to PERS Liability. Baker County's net pension liability...at June 30, 2016 was \$3,780,230... Total Governmental Funds revenues showed a decrease in 2015-2016 fiscal year of \$977,042...a direct reflection of the lack of Capital Grant projects in the Baker County Road department...Overall County Governmental Fund expenses decreases \$1,243,849 in FY 2015-2016. The largest reduction at \$2,293,068 can be found in the Capital overlay category..." according to the Report On Audit Of Basic Financial Statements And Supplemental Data.

Order No. 2017-114, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Transportation Safety Commission, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Amanda Stewart was appointed, her term set to expire on July 1, 2018.

An Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) Liquor License Application, previously submitted by Durkee-based Darla Sangston, to OLCC, on January 27, 2017, for The Ranch Hand Cafe (formerly The Redneck Cafe), located at 35192 Vandecar Road, in Durkee, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Prior to approval, Bennett said that Sheriff Ash had seen no issues with the application, nor did he discover any negative information associated with the applicant.

## Tracks



Submitted Photo.

Pictures of the tracks found in the Neffs' yard, the lower showing a boot for size comparison.

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Also on February 7, the Neffs contacted both the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Baker City Police Department (BCPD). To Kristin Neff's knowledge, ODFW did not return her call; however Sgt. Mike Regan of the BCPD did. Unfortunately, heavy snowfall had quickly filled in the tracks, the photos (above) were not clear, and whether or not the tracks were made by cougars was not definitive.

Since then, the Neffs have seen neighborhood deer suddenly bolt and run while their dog, inside the house "went ballistic," diving at windows.

Then, on Tuesday morning around 6 a.m. the Neffs' 10-year-old son yelled, "Mom, there's a mountain lion!"

The boy believed he had seen a cougar run across the horse pen nearby, pause, then cross Highway 7. By the time his mom made it to the window, what she personally witnessed were the highly agitated horses.

While the presence of a cougar or two has not been confirmed, the hard winter has driven more deer into the City Limits looking for feed, so the possibility exists that predators may be simply following the deer. Whether the presence of such predators can be confirmed or not, it is always a wise idea to remain vigilant and aware of one's surroundings when outside walking.

## SWAT robot donations still needed

The fundraising effort designed to provide the North-east Oregon Regional Special Weapons and Tactics Team with a much needed robot continues. The Team serves both Baker and Union Counties and the robot increases the safety of both officers and the public in high risk police responses to armed suspects.

Thus far the fund raising effort has resulted in donations of over \$5,000. The most recent donation (\$1,000) was from Valley Wide Cooperative based in Jerome, Idaho. Valley Wide provides goods, services and equipment to the agricultural community and is expanding its operations into Eastern Oregon.

We still need to raise \$20,000 for the purchase of this important equipment item to become reality. All donations are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged in writing for tax purposes. We will, for those donors who desire, issue press releases identifying donations made.

We strongly encourage individuals, businesses and corporations in Eastern Oregon to consider donating to this very worthwhile effort to enhance public safety. Donations may be made by check payable to Baker City SWAT Fund and mailed to the Baker City Police Department, 1768 Auburn Ave. Baker City, OR 97814.

If there are questions regarding this project please call Jerry Boyd at the Baker City Police Department (541) 524 2014.

## Moose poaching reward increases again

The OSP Fish & Wildlife Division is still asking for the public's help to identify the person(s) responsible for the unlawful killing of a cow moose in Wallowa County. This case prompted 11 OHA chapters across the state (Baker County, Clatsop County, Hoodview, Josephine County, Ochoco, Pioneer, Rogue Valley, Tualatin Valley, Umpqua, Wallowa County, Yamhill County) and the Traditional Archers of Oregon to pool their resources to add additional money to the TIP reward of \$1,000 to bring the total TIP reward to \$6,850. Call 1-800-452-7888 or email at Brian.Miller@state.or.us with information.

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## Global warming call to be held

A task force of the Oregon Global Warming Commission will meet Monday, February 27, 2017 in Salem. The public meeting will be held from 1 - 4 p.m. in the Tillamook Room at the Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St.

A listen-only call-in line will be available for those who cannot attend the meeting. Please call 1-877-336-1831, then use the access code 872206. Please be sure to mute your handset during the meeting.

At the meeting, the Forest Carbon Task Force will discuss recently-released data from the Pacific Northwest Forest Inventory and Analysis program, including carbon data tables, estimates of emissions from fires, and how to estimate changes in forest carbon among pools.