

Local

Sumpter bookkeeper retires



Submitted Photo.

John Young of Sumpter wishes Kathi Vinson a happy retirement. A celebration was held for Vinson on June 29. Vinson worked as bookkeeper for the City off and on "for a lotta years."

Hearing held in Addison v. Baker City, police lawsuit

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On June 21, a hearing was held in Portland in U.S. District Court with Michael H. Simon, District Judge, presiding. The hearing was the most recent step in a lengthy legal process initiated in October of 2015 by reporter Brian Addison against the City of Baker City, Police Chief Wyn Lohner, and up to 10 unnamed "Doe" officers from the Baker City Police Department.

The hearing was an attempt by both the plaintiff and the defendants to eliminate part or all of the other side's case via summary judgement.

Addison's suit primarily centers around these claims: (1) Retaliation for First Amendment Conduct (42 U.S.C. § 1983); (2) Tortious Interference with Economic Relations; and (3) Defamation, and was filed in U.S. District Court, Pendleton Division.

Addison's claims stem back to a situation regarding an opinion piece

critical of local police, which he penned during his employment with *The Record-Courier* in 2008.

He claims that this piece triggered a years-long effort by Lohner and his officers to retaliate against him in the community, eventually culminating in actions that led to his termination from employment at New Directions Northwest, and an inability to continue writing for local media.

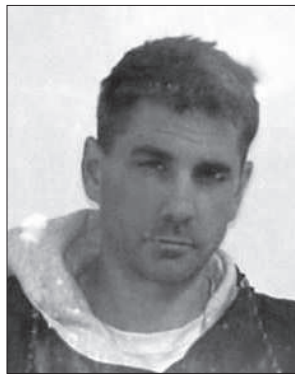
Lohner has consistently denied all allegations.

On June 29, Judge Simon issued his opinion, ruling on the summary judgement hearing.

The defendants' motion for summary judgment was granted in part and denied in part.

Addison's federal claims that allege violations of procedural and substantive due process and his state claims alleging personal liability against Defendant Lohner were tossed.

However, the bulk of Addison's claims, including economic interference, defamation of character, and retaliation remain in



Submitted Photo.

Reporter Brian Addison.

the suit per the judge's order. Lohner remains a defendant only in his professional capacity as an employee of the City, according to the judge.

Addison's motion for partial summary judgment was fully granted in that several of the defendants' defenses will not be allowed in trial. Many additional defenses still remain.

Addison is still seeking an unspecified amount for "economic/compensatory and noneconomic/ special damages, including: loss of



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner.

income and past and future impairment of earning capacity; injury to reputation, economically verifiable and otherwise; expenses related to having to relocate out of Baker City for fear of further retaliation; and emotional distress."

He is also seeking "reasonable attorneys fees" and "punitive damages" to be determined at trial.

Barring any future negotiations ending in a financial settlement for the plaintiff, the suit will continue on toward trial, likely in the first half of 2018.

"Finding Fremont" exhibit at Oregon Trail Center

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is hosting a special exhibit about western explorer and politician John C. Fremont at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center through December 10, 2017. BLM invites families, youth, and visitors to learn how public lands connect them to America's natural and cultural heritage.

Fremont's 1843 to 1844 expedition passed through eastern and central Oregon and northern Nevada with guides Kit Carson and Billy Chinook. That journey and the impacts of the mapping and exploration, along with Fremont's fascinating life, is the subject of the exhibit "Finding Fremont: Pathfinder of the West."

The Nevada State Museum and the Deschutes County Historical Society developed the exhibit, which started its tour in Carson City in 2015. It includes photographs by Loren Irving who in 2009 traced Fremont's passage through Oregon using his published journals and coordinates. The exhibit includes a replica of the party's mountain howitzer cannon, plus carriage relics, coins, cooking pots and similar artifacts found at campsites. Pieces come from the Nevada State Museum, Arizona Historical Society, the Deschutes Historical Museum and the U.S. Forest Service.

On July 12 at 2:00 p.m., Loren Irving will present a program on how modern day volunteer explorers located and documented the historic campsites of Fremont's expedition through central Oregon. Using coordinates and reports by Fremont, this team found several of the campsites and relics of the expedition, including pieces of a howitzer cannon that was abandoned in 1844.

The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Center is currently open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. Admission for adults is \$8 and \$4.50 for seniors; children 15 and under are admitted for free. Federal passes are also accepted. Call (541) 523-1843 for updates on programs and events or visit oregontrail.blm.gov.

BLM requests public input

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced that it is requesting ideas and input on how the agency can make its land use planning procedures and environmental reviews timelier and less costly, as well as ensure its responsiveness to local needs. This effort to improve the planning process comes after the President's March 27 approval of House Joint Resolution 44, which nullified the BLM's Planning 2.0 rule.

"The decisions made in land use plans and environmental reviews are fundamental to how public lands and resources are used for the benefit of all Americans," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. "The Trump Administration and the Department of the Interior are committed to working with state and local governments, communities, Indian tribes, and other stakeholders as true partners to determine the best ways to accomplish this, now and into the future."

Acting BLM Director Michael Nedd said the agency is already working with state and local elected officials and groups, including the Western Governors' Association and the National Association of Counties, to engage and gather input. "We are doing this because Secretary Zinke and President Trump both strongly believe that public engagement, especially at the local level, is a critical component of federal land management," Nedd said. "We need and want input from our state and local partners as well as from the general public in this effort."

All can submit ideas and provide input during a 21-day period beginning July 3, 2017 and ending July 24, 2017 at this online form: goo.gl/CYxqM5 The BLM will incorporate information from this effort in a report to Secretary Zinke due later this year.

The BLM manages more than 10 percent of the nation's land and 30 percent of the nation's subsurface minerals. Resource management plans (RMPs) provide a framework for land use authorization decisions on BLM-managed public lands, including those relating to subsurface Federal minerals. Most such land use authorization decisions are preceded by review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Through the public NEPA process, the BLM analyzes the effects of proposed plans and land use authorization decisions and discloses them to the public.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask the BLM in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation.

Japanese drumming coming to Geiser-Pollman Park

Sunday, August 6th, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) at Geiser Pollman Park in Baker City - Join Janet Komoto and the Kawa Taiko drummers and folklorist Josh Chrysler for a demonstration of traditional Japanese drumming and a closer look at one of the many living cultural traditions of the Four Rivers region.

In 2000, the Kawa

Taiko group was formed to practice the traditional Japanese art of taiko drumming. With no prior knowledge of the tradition, Janet Komoto became part student, teacher, and group leader. Janet continues to carry on the tradition with students of all ages from the community. Join us as Janet and Kawa Taiko share knowledge, stories, and a taiko performance.

There will be an open conversation so bring your questions! This takes place immediately prior to the Powder River Music Review, so stick around afterwards for more music.

This program is made possible by the Four Rivers Cultural Center, the Oregon Folklife Network, Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center, and the National Endowment for the

Arts. This is in a series of programs developed by Josh Chrysler, Staff Folklorist at Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario. Chrysler has been hired on contract by Four Rivers Cultural Center through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to help produce programs and exhibits that celebrate the traditional culture and folklife of eastern Oregon.

Start of fire season declared

Current and forecasted consistently high temperatures have prompted fire officials with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to declare fire season, which began at 12:01 a.m., Monday, June 26 for forest and range lands protected by ODF Northeast

Oregon District.

During Fire Season: Burn Permits for burn barrels and all open burning except camp fires are required on all private forest and range lands within the Northeast Forest Protection District of the Oregon Department of

Forestry (ODF).

Landowners who conducted burning of slash past spring are encouraged to check the piles to ensure that they are completely out and all heat is gone.

Logging and other industrial operations must meet

requirements for fire prevention, such as fire tools, water supply, and watchman service when those operations are occurring on lands protected by ODF. Campfires must be dead out.

To report a fire, dial 911.