

Business / Agriculture

Economic Development: Smith, Nudd give updates



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

At right, Greg Smith of Gregory Smith and Company, LLC, says Hydro-Dip is one of his leads. Julie Hicks at left.

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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The Baker County Economic Development Council (EDC) held a regular meeting on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, 1 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, which included a discussion of the Elkhorn Industrial Park, and an update on challenges and progress, from Baker County Economic Development Director Greg Smith.

Present from the EDC were Randy Daugherty, Bill Harvey, Fred Warner, Jr., Jerry Peacock, Martin Arritola, Tyler Brown, and Scott Thatcher. Attendance also included Smith's assistant, Julee Hicks, Baker City Development Coordinator Robin Nudd, Baker County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Shelly Cutler, Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center (BMCC SBDC) Business Advisor Jeff Nelson, BMCC SBDC Baker County Director Dan Koopman, Bob Savage, Art Sappington, and Tom Muller.

Daugherty called the meeting to order (Chair Craig Ward was absent), and he asked for discussion of any old business, of which there was none offered. The minutes from the previous two meetings were approved, with a motion from Peacock, and a second from Harvey.

Following a Commission Chair update from Harvey, and a portion of a City Manager update from Warner, Jr., which included discussion of freeway signage issues, Muller said

he was confused about criteria for denial of one sign previously, by the Planning Commission, versus possible approval of a different sign, through changing the sign code, which he said is a double standard. Daugherty explained that Muller should speak with the Planning Department regarding the subject, since it would be an issue addressed more appropriately there.

Warner, Jr. discussed details of the Elkhorn Industrial Park, which he said is "relatively shovel ready," for development, and Harvey said that infrastructure should be put into place now, with maximum electricity power loads available at the farthest points out. Smith said that the park needs signage, and Daugherty said that, along with the need for consistent utilities guidelines, there is no high-speed Internet service yet. Harvey also said that there needs to be a consistent asking price for property there.

Daugherty said that the EDC should get some details worked out, and to City Council by Council's first meeting in September.

Nudd said that the newly formed Baker City Downtown group is doing well, and that there are various activities planned in the community, including a Total Solar Eclipse concert event, with four venues, and nine bands. She said that the use of Central Park has grown significantly, and there will be movies shown there every Thursday night through mid-September.

Smith provided a Director update, which included, among other details, comment that there were (at

the time of the meeting) 89 positions available in the City, from teacher, to dishwasher, to bar tender, etc., but he said that the number one challenge for employers has been to find good labor.

On the subject of leads, statewide, and elsewhere, for potential business to attract to the County, Smith said that his office responds to all which come in. On a local level, he said that there have been ten significant business possibilities just in July (however, due to certain restraints, he often can't share details regarding potential businesses before they're fully established here, he said).

Smith mentioned the former convenience store, hotel, and gas station property in Farewell Bend, which he said may be developed by an Atlanta, Georgia-based company, but he remains skeptical, and he said it's probably better to bulldoze it, and start fresh with new construction.

He said that, while the attempt to convince Grocery Outlet to add a store in Baker City has failed (there's one in La Grande), he still praised Harvey for playing a key role in that effort (Grocery Outlet is focusing on expanding in other markets for now).

Smith, displaying some Meridian-based Hydro-Dip items in front of Hicks and himself, said that the company is looking at the possibility of a Baker City location. Hydro-Dip, which provides a custom decorating service using some of the most advanced technology in the decorating industry, specializes in Hydro Dipping, Hydrographics, and Water Trans-

fer Printing, according to the company's website.

He said that the manufacturing facility may be in the 5,000 square foot to 8,000 square foot range, and he's encouraging the company to check out the Elkhorn Industrial Park.

Among other topics, Smith said that, with marketing efforts aimed at bringing business to the County, he wanted to emphasize what the costs are for travel, etc., and that the budget is about the minimum needed to get the job done at a reasonable cost.

In addressing some comments and complaints which Smith and the County have received regarding Greg Smith & Company's contract for economic development services, for which the company now receives \$108,000 annually, after receiving an increase per request for \$12,000, which was approved by the EDC and then the County Commission, Smith said, "It almost seems like, rather than a strategic plan, we need a strategic direction...Set up some parameters (of what the EDC would like to see Smith accomplish specifically, with timelines)..."

In speaking of business potentials and the restraints in sharing details prematurely, Smith said, "I can't brag about some of the stuff I'm doing, and it's challenging (he gave some general examples)...Somehow, we've got to figure out a better methodology, for us sharing, as we go along, with the public, and I acknowledge that."

The EDC went into Executive Session in order to further discuss these details with Smith.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, July 28, 2017 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady. All prices reported today are new crop, unless otherwise noted. Most producers are done with first cutting and working on second cutting. Some recent and upcoming thunderstorms in some of the growing areas has resulted in lower quality and lower priced hay, as producers were caught off guard and were unable to get the hay out of the field before the rains came. Retail/Stable type hay remains the largest demanded hay.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Timothy Grass Large Square Premium/Supreme	280 280.00-305.00	290.58

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 282

Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 161.00-174.00	Top 181.00
400-500#	Bulk 149.00-167.00	Top 168.00
500-600#	Bulk 144.00-158.00	Top 162.00

Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
400-500#	Bulk 141.00-157.00	Top 159.00
500-600#	Bulk 136.00-147.00	Top 149.00

Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 141.00-156.00	Top 157.00
700-800#	Bulk 127.00-135.00	Top 138.00
800-900#	Bulk 119.00-125.00	Top 128.00
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 127.00-134.00	Top 148.00
700-800#	Bulk 119.00-127.00	Top 129.00
800-900#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	61.00-73.00
Butcher Cows	75.00-84.00
Butcher Bulls	74.00-92.00
Stock Cows Young	86.00
Hfretts	77.00-85.00
Pairs Young	- N/A

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Prices are based on the majority of saw mills in Northeastern Oregon and Central Idaho. The prices listed below are a composite prices of various sawmills willing to visit with me about this topic.

Ponderosa Pine—small diameter class 8-11 inches diameter class \$250 per mbf. Only one sawmill was willing to buy small diameter pine at this time.

Ponderosa Pine—medium diameter class 12-17 inches diameter class \$300 to \$350 per mbf

Ponderosa Pine-large diameter class 18 plus inches diameter class \$380 to \$410 per mbf

The Pine prices are still approximately \$40 per mbf below average lumber/log market due to 2017 fire salvage

Doug Fir & Western Larch—\$380 to \$420 per mbf. Normal prices typically ranged between \$425 to \$475 per mbf.

White Fir—\$300 per mbf. Normal prices typically ranged between \$340 to \$360 per mbf.

Engelmann Spruce—\$350 at one Idaho sawmill, other sawmills including with White fir prices.

In general, the log prices still impacted from 2015 fire season and fire salvage that resulted. Sawmills are starting to get log yard inventory in line with sawmill production needs. With a new Administration as of 1/20/2017, a more normal economic environment should result and hopefully a more healthy housing situation will result in a better climate for Northeast Oregon Sawmill and private forest landowners.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,272.20

Silver: \$16.56

Platinum: \$946.88

Palladium: \$896.72

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$379.00/bu/USD

Wheat: \$460.75/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$977.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$289.50 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$12.49/cwt/USD

Canola: \$501.00 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$114.68/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$150.25/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$66.23/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

I-84 roadwork to continue through eclipse

Motorists who travel across the Encina-Pleasant Valley bridge on I-84 near milepost 313 (west of Durkee toward Baker City) are advised that work will continue on the project throughout the month of August.

This means that the traffic-controlled work zone will remain in place

through the total solar eclipse that covers much of Oregon on August 21.

Speed limits in the area are reduced first to 60 miles per hour then down to 50 miles per hour.

Crews from Oregon Mainline Paving are continuing to apply a new deck surface on the bridge.

They will not be able to

interrupt that work for the duration of travel expected for the eclipse due to the nature of the work.

The bridge is not serviceable at this time, nor will it be by that date.

The objective of the \$3 million project is to improve the travel surface and structure of the bridge to maintain it in a safe

condition.

As the work has been progressing, traffic is moved into the westbound lane of travel, controlled by crews as necessary using barrels and other devices. It is expected to be completed by early September.