

Business / Agriculture

EDC topics: Farewell Bend development, Industrial Park

• KEEPING RECORDS SUGGESTED FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

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The Baker County Economic Development Council (EDC) held a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 22, 2017, 8:30 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, which included discussions of Elkhorn View Industrial Park’s electric service, freeway sign dimensions, and development of private property at Farewell Bend.

Present from the EDC were Chair Craig Ward, Vice Chair Randy Daugherty, Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Baker City Manager Fred Warner, Jr., Educational Representative Jerry Peacock, and Members at Large Karen Owen, Tyler Brown, and Scott Thatcher.

Attendance also included Baker County Economic Development Director Greg Smith, Smith’s assistants Julee Hicks and Phil Scheuers, Baker City Community Development Director Robin Nudd, Baker County Commissioner Bruce Nichols, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) General Manager Les Penning, OTEC Vice President Charlene Chase, OTEC Secretary/Treasurer Wayne Overton, Deepak Prashar, and Bob Savage.

Ward called the meeting to order, followed by approval of the minutes from the Wednesday, August 2, 2017 meeting, with a motion from Daugherty, and a second from Peacock. Prior to approval, Harvey noted an additional correction.

Daugherty, noting that an executive session had been held during the last EDC meeting in order to discuss Smith’s performance, and that records of the sessions aren’t normally provided, said, “Shouldn’t we have a record of executive sessions? There’s no mention of what happened in executive session ...Going forward, I think we should do that.”

He said other governing bodies on which he’s served have provided records of executive sessions, but he’s unclear on state law covering the subject.

He asked Harvey and Warner, Jr. whether the County Commission and City Council keep records of executive sessions, and they said they do, though they’re not public records.

Smith said that state law doesn’t require records of executive sessions, but that the records could be provided. Smith’s office itself is the body that writes and keeps minutes/records for the EDC meetings.

For EDC Chair Update, Ward said that the hay harvest is winding down, grain harvest is in full swing, the Wards are harvesting their mint crop, and potato harvest will be probably around the end of September. He mentioned that Phillips Reservoir is at about 60% of capacity (as of the time of the meeting), up from last year at this

time.

Smith added that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has done a better job this year of publicizing its trophy trout program.

For Commission Chair Update, Harvey said that there is an issue with green algae in Richland parks, and there’s been a decline in camping and fishing because of that. “The fishing’s not good,” he said. Harvey has spoken with the U.S. Forest Service about the Sparta and Anthony Lakes timber sales, and he said they’re moving forward with the projects. On a personal note, he said the he’s invested \$30,000 in the office complex which houses the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) on 10th Street, property he manages through his and his wife, Lorrie’s company, Rock Creek Developments, LLC, which will allow the DMV to remain open here for at least another seven years.

For Baker City Update, Warner, Jr. said that the Planning Commission met recently to discuss changes to the City’s sign ordinance, and the Freeway Exclusion Zone. He believes that the Commission will probably recommend to City Council that sign height be set at 65 feet to 80 feet within the Zone, which he said is good news.

He said that the Total Solar Eclipse weekend went well, with plenty of people and business, and he mentioned discussions with OTEC, regarding power capacity at the Industrial Park. He thanked the present OTEC representatives, and said, “You’re an integral part of our efforts to move forward.”

Penning, in his position since December 2016, said that the OTEC Board is expecting to discuss some final details and make decisions at its next meeting, on August 29, and that, “We’ve had our ear to the ground over the last several months...” with communities throughout the region, determining areas of focus and the best ways to complete objectives.

Harvey asked about the status of the Industrial Park, and Penning said that there’s three-phase power available to each site, but that more design and connectivity discussions need to take place.

Overton said that he believes he’s seeing a change in culture and mindset at OTEC, “being a little more user-friendly,” and that Penning is a welcomed addition to the team, with that same mindset.

Ward asked Penning what the current power capacity is at the Park, and Penning said that the electrical load depends on, for example, whether single-phase or three-phase power is required, but that generally, it’s around two megawatts. As a reference, he said that a typical Home Depot’s electrical load is around one megawatt. “You’ve got quite a bit of capacity...” he said, but that OTEC is looking at the possibility of adding a station “upstream” of the Park, which could have another ten megawatts



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press.

“Dee” Prasher of the local Super 8 and Motel 6 would like larger signage to draw guests in.

available.

Smith introduced Prashar as “Dee,” who owns and manages the Super 8 Motel through his company, DK Hotel Management, LLC, and manages the Motel 6 property through his company, Gurmaa, LLC, via contract with owners Richard and Lynne Langrell. Prashar said, “Most of the business comes from the freeway; especially in the evening time... They make up their minds, when they see the signs... We are losing business. Please allow us the bigger signs...”

He said that he was referring to having a visible sign for Motel 6 specifically, and Warner, Jr. said that the City is working on the issue, and that within a month, he hopes to see a resolution.

For Community Development/Main Street Update, Nudd mentioned the eclipse event and the increase in business revenue. She said that applications for Leo Adler grants are being submitted (due by September 1), and that the group Baker City Downtown will probably receive some awards. Nudd said that she spoke with Greg Sackos, who owns property adjacent to Central Park, about park access, and that he’ll get back to her on that topic. Warner, Jr. added that the City will be discussing a plan for 10th Street development with business owners, in connection with funding from the state’s transportation package.

For Economic Development Director Update, Smith said that the Industrial Park’s site certification expired earlier this year, and Scheuers explained the re-certification application process (Smith had a copy of that application and requirements).

Scheuers said that the certification was originally good for ten years, with re-certifications every two years, and that letters regarding utilities, as well as updated maps, are among the documents required with the application. He said that certification means that the site is “shovel ready” for development within 180 days.

Smith said that he’s invited representatives from Union Pacific Rail Road, as well as members of the EDC, on a tour of the Industrial Park, on Tuesday, August 29, 2017, starting at 3 p.m., at the Economic Development office (later in the meeting, Overton said that there are numerous potential rail

sites in the County, and Harvey said that those are marketed also).

Among other details, Smith said that his office is working with Atlanta-based United Georgia Loans, in the final stages of the purchase of the former motel, gas station, and convenience store property in Farewell Bend, owned by Bahadur Singh. Smith said, “As everyone knows, that’s in Malheur County, but the employment for that will come from the City of Huntington... The Mayor of Huntington (Candy Howland) is ecstatic about this opportunity...” which could mean 120 to 130 jobs.

Smith said that there have been issues in the past with inadequate water supply to the site, which need to be resolved, including the installation of a four-and-a-half mile long pipeline. He said that one solution is to purchase water from the City of Huntington.

Peacock asked how the site operated with enough water before, and Smith said, “They didn’t have enough water; they barely had enough water...” as he noted the experiences of guests and staff at the former motel.

Smith said, assuming the water supply issue can be resolved (he said that the company hasn’t had to deal with the “water fight,” such as that in Oregon), United Georgia Loans could invest from \$10 to \$12 million in the development project.

Smith also detailed efforts regarding marketing outreach to include the former Gentry Ford property, on Main Street, owned by Don and Jackie Phillips, such as a potential camper or trailer dealer, or possibly a dry cleaner facility (Smith said he plans to increase marketing efforts on a monthly basis for different properties). He also discussed county employment job listings, business updates, and Economic Development’s presence at the Baker County Fair, among other details. He said that his office handed out 3,000 Chamber of Commerce brochures over the course of two days during the Fair.

Prior to adjournment, Warner, Jr. moved that the EDC send a letter to the County Commission and City Council, recommending expansion of the Freeway Exclusion Zone, to increase the height limit for signs within that zone.

Peacock seconded the motion, and it carried.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, August 18, 2017 — Eastern Oregon

All prices reported today are 2017 crop, unless otherwise noted. Most producers are done with first cutting and out in the field working on second cutting. Extreme heat in some of the growing areas has slowed movement. Some rain and thunderstorms have diminished quality of hay. Retail/Stable type hay remains the largest demanded hay.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa Large Square Premium	28 160.00-160.00	160.00
Alfalfa/Grass Mix Small Square Premium	270 166.00-175.00	173.52

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, August 16, 2017
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 623

Steer Calves			
300-400#	Bulk 132.00-147.00	Top 149.00	
400-500#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A	
500-600#	Bulk 133.00-154.00	Top 155.00	

Heifer Calves			
300-400#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A	
400-500#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A	
500-600#	Bulk 125.00-136.00	Top 139.00	

Yearling Steers			
600-700#	Bulk 129.00-157.00	Top 159.00	
700-800#	Bulk 131.00-146.00	Top 151.50	
800-900#	Bulk 119.00-131.00	Top 131.25	
900-1,000#	Bulk 107.00-119.00	Top 120.00	

Yearling Heifers			
600-700#	Bulk 126.00-141.00	Top 143.00	
700-800#	Bulk 119.00-134.00	Top 139.00	
800-900#	Bulk 113.00-122.00	Top 124.00	
900-1,000#	Bulk 105.00-111.00	Top 114.00	

Thin Shelly Cows	51.00-68.00
Butcher Cows	69.00-77.00
Butcher Bulls	77.00-91.00
Stock Cows	N/A
Younger Heifers	83.00-103.00
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 land-owners.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD
Gold: \$1,295.20
Silver: \$17.16
Platinum: \$978.70
Palladium: \$935.96
Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$355.75/bu/USD
Wheat: \$430.00/bu/USD
Soybeans: \$938.00/bu/USD
Oats: \$246.00 bu/USD
Rough Rice: \$12.60/cwt/USD
Canola: \$508.00 CAD/mwt
Live Cattle: \$106.18/lb./USD
Feeder Cattle: \$141.70/lb./USD
Lean Hogs: \$63.55/lb./USD
Bloomberg.com