

Local

Dutch Oven cookoff uses espresso this year

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Saturday, October 7th, the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive center and the Trail Tenders volunteer group held the third annual Cast Iron Chef: Dutch Oven Cook Off.

This year there were five teams competing; The A Team, Save the Ta Tas, the Rattlers, Team Champs, and Gun Point Gang.

Teams could be made of up to three people.

The Judges for the event were Joe Yeates from Latitude 45 Grille, Joeline Murray from AJ's Corner Brick Bar and Grill, Mike Ware of the Elks lodge, and Steven DeLeon from Big Chiefs BBQ. Brian Vegter made announcements for the event.

The winners of the Cast Iron Chef: Dutch Oven Cook Off were the Rattlers. Their winning dish was Buffalo Espresso Gumbo and Pumpkin Apple Crisp.

Rachael Nickens explained the Trail Tenders and the Interpretive Center had participated in Dutch Oven Cook Offs on Main Street before it ended and now hold it on a free day at the center.

According to Trail Tenders website, "Teams will be assigned an open fire cook space at the Trail Center outdoor wagon encampment.

Teams will not know what ingredients they



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

The winning team, The Rattlers, creating Buffalo Espresso Gumbo and Pumpkin Apple Crisp.

have to work with until the Master of Ceremonies reveals this information. Using their wits, ingenuity, and cooking skills, the teams must use the ingredients and the Dutch ovens provided to produce a delicious menu item within the next two hours. Judges with cooking expertise will be watching!"

This year, the base ingredients were potatoes, onions, squash, and tri-tip bison meat that was donated by the Stangel Buffalo Ranch.

The secret ingredient the teams needed to use was espresso.

Each team was given a cup and they needed to use at least some of it in their dishes.

Teams were also able to use miscellaneous optional ingredients provided. They had two hours to make their dishes and they could not bring their own supplies.

Other events for the day included a blacksmith, Cooking on the Oregon Trail, Heirloom Gardening, Buffalo Chip Toss, and ice cream making.

Kathleen Martin presented Heirloom Gardening, where audiences were able to sample some of the

vegetables people would have had seeds for on the Oregon Trail.

Some of the items shown were beets from Italy, white carrots, turnips and others.

Martin also had samples of Hard Tack, hard bread made from flour, salt, and water that is baked until the water is gone.

Cheri Carver demonstrated Cooking on the Oregon Trail, making Heirloom Bean Soup that had ham, bacon, onion, and Mayflower beans and Jacobs Cattle beans.

City Council: SAFER grant

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SAFER Grant.

City Council will meet with County Commissioners on Wednesday, October 11, 2017 to discuss funding options to meet the required grant match obligations needed to accept this grant.

With a looming deadline to accept the grant of October 31, 2017, there is not much time left to secure the funds necessary.

The SAFER grant, if accepted, will partially fund three additional full-time firefighter positions. Baker City Fire provides ambulance service to the entire county; it does not operate just within City limits.

The City is looking to the County to help provide funding, which would help the City free up funds toward grant match obligations, if the County takes on responsibility for ambulance calls outside the City Limits, in the County.

The majority of ambulance calls in Baker City and Baker County are Medicare or Medicaid covered.

Those two payors have a set amount that is paid.

The amount paid does not truly cover the expenses.

Private insurance patients are charged a slightly higher rate for ambulance services outside of City limits but currently the County does not pay the City for the services.

Any additional monies received are through the higher rate billed to the patient for out of City

services provided.

City Manager Warner advised Council that in preparation for the October 11 meeting he had provided them with an analysis of the fire department so that each Councilor had information to assist in the discussion with Commissioners.

Warner advised that he thought it in the best interest of the process for the Council to discuss the matter before the meeting to gain insight and be prepared for the meeting.

Warner also advised he thought it would be best if the Council and the Commissioners handled most of the discussion with him on hand to help provide further information or answer any questions.

The SAFER grant has triggered not only the need to discuss the ASA (ambulance service area) but also how EMS (emergency medical services) are delivered throughout the County.

Earlier this year as both the City and the County prepared their 2017-2018 Budgets it became apparent that changes to the 911 center were necessary to fund the center.

Operation of the center was returned to the control of Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash.

Warner advised that due to the situation that arose with the 911 Center during the last budget cycle his opinion was that the SAFER grant and the 911 budget should be discussed together and a more sustainable plan be found.

Warner said, "That I

realize that we are going to have to try to adequately add resources or cut expenses. Both are extremely hard to do."

Warner advised that some additional resources becoming available that were not expected were monies from a recently passed transportation bill via gas taxes and he also stated that the City was going to be receiving a portion of tax money collected from the legal sale of marijuana.

He made clear that money estimated to be around \$28,000 would be a one-time payment since the City has opted out of allowing dispensaries within the City limits.

It was then mentioned that perhaps that ban on dispensaries would need to be revisited.

Warner also advised Council that there was a possibility to tap into some funding from ODOT to help cover ambulance calls to public highways.

Mayor Downing said that the money anticipated from the gas tax was earmarked for the street fund, councilor Joseph asked, "If those funds could be shifted around between departments?" (Such as when funds are borrowed from another fund, then repaid at a later date.)

On a final note, Warner told Council that the Police Department had just received the resignation of one of its officers, Dan Vile, effective Friday October 13.

He said one idea he was considering was not replacing that officer for at

least three months to divert the cost savings toward SAFER grant match.

He stated he felt bad about that option: "Replacing one police officer for three firefighters."

Councilor Abell questioned that strategy, citing the costs of officer overtime, which is a certainty, to cover that lost position—and would that really save any money in the long run?

Also, a public safety fee was recently implemented on each sewer/water bill to assure no police positions would be cut.

City Manager/Director Comments

Warner updated Council on the watershed saying that he was anticipating a meeting with Jeff Tomack in which a fire crew would tour the watershed and help identify areas that could be worked on next spring to reduce the threat of catastrophic damage should there be a fire.

Jeanie Dexter updated Council on the ambulance billing that was recently taken back from a third-party provider.

She told them she had found several instances where the billings had been rejected and never re billed so she was anticipating some additional revenue from that.

She advised that the new e-billing the city was doing seemed to be going well.

She encouraged everyone to spread the word that this was available and by signing up for the service customers could save \$1 on their bill.

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Gun grab repeal

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So if the new law is so widely opposed, why did the attempt to get a repeal on the ballot fail?

State Representatives Mike Nearman and Teri Grier spearheaded the effort, and said that effort failed for one reason—Governor Kate Brown played the timeframe until they had half the usual allotted time signature gatherers typically have to collect.

Gatherers legally have 90 days after the end of the legislative session in which to collect signatures on petitions. However, the law also states that the petitions cannot be signed before the Governor signs the bill.

Brown typically signs bills promptly, however, according to Nearman she dragged her feet on SB719.

"The foot-dragging cost us 39 of our 90 days," said Nearman. He also pointed out that when the signature happened it was at the start of the full solar eclipse weekend, which used another three days. Many offices were closed that Monday as well, and by the time gathering could begin, half the time had passed.

Rep. Bill Post, also a co-petitioner, said there "was no reason" for Brown to put off signing the bill except to prevent the repeal from going on the ballot for a vote of the people.

In the end, the group collected 25,000 before realizing there was no physical way to achieve the over 58,000 needed signatures to get the repeal on the ballot.

Drug takeback scheduled

On Saturday, October 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Baker City Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration will give the public its 14th opportunity in 7 years to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your pills for disposal to the Baker City Police Department at 1768 Auburn Avenue, Baker City. (The DEA cannot accept liquids or needles or sharps, only pills or patches.) The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last April Americans turned in 450 tons (900,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at almost 5,500 sites operated by the DEA and more than 4,200 of its state and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 13 previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in over 8.1 million pounds—more than 4,050 tons—of pills.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards.

Peck graduates basic training



Submitted Photo.

Airman Austin Peck.

U.S. Air Force Airman Austin L. Peck has graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training also earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Peck is the son of Lance D. Peck of Weiser, Idaho, and Celinda M. Linscott of Baker City. He is a 2016 graduate of Baker High School.