

Local / Opinion

Prepping for winter

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Christy explained that winter accidents don't appear as violent as summertime driving. He said that when a car is spinning sideways and going into the median, the slickness of the snow will make them skid where the car stays upright.

If they do roll, the snow cushions them a bit. He explained they don't see

a lot of bodily injury in the winter as they do in summer.

With commercial trucks, a majority of what they do is jackknife situations. They service all of Baker County, covering from Halfway and Hells Canyon, to Austin Junction and beyond.

On two lanes, they go to Haines and North Powder and on the freeway; they go from Farwell Bend typically to North Powder.

"We are prepared all the time, like the Fire Department," explained Christy. "We take almost daily inventory of all the trucks, we staff continually for worst case scenarios and we will be out this winter doing what we do best, which is keeping the roads open and offering service to the people of Baker County. We've done it for 20 years, we have no plans of quitting, and we're here to help."

City Council

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Lohner began by explaining that the ordinance's intention is to deter repeated criminal activity and deter repeated violations of City Property Ordinance violations at "chronic properties."

Lohner explained that chronic properties are defined as properties where at least three or more incidents during which the property had been cited for violating the City's property maintenance codes, animal regulation code and include arrests for certain crimes occurring within a six-month period at said property.

Once a property reaches two incidents a warning letter would be mailed.

If a third incident occurs, an order would be sought in Baker Justice Court that would allow properties to be closed to access for at least three months but not longer than a year.

Lohner clarified by saying that the purpose of the ordinance is to address properties where there are repeated crimes or city code violations, for which the current remedies are ineffective.

Lohner went on to say that after receiving complaints over the years from neighbors of chronic properties where reoccurring crimes, property maintenance issues and drug activity are consistently happening he began searching for solutions.

One neighbor of a chronic property shared an ordinance with Lohner from Tualatin, OR addressing the exact same problem.

Lohner had already contacted the Police Chief of Springfield, OR where a similar ordinance is already in place.

Lohner said that the Springfield Police Chief told him that the City had only closed one property due the ordinance and felt that the possibility of losing access to one's property seemed to be an effective deterrent.

Chief Lohner stated that his main goal by enacting such an ordinance was to encourage property owners to resolve issues, find solutions for compliance.

He said that it was his hope that seeking court orders to restrict access to properties would be unnecessary.

One by one residents came forward to express concerns about passing such an ordinance.

Targeting people was of concern for several residents who are unable to maintain their property, like seniors or people with disabilities.

Morgan Davis said, "My property is probably one of the ones Mr. Lohner is talking about."

Frustrated, Davis continued explaining some of her hardships and reasons why she was unable to clean up her property herself. "Instead of having help for people like me, you guys want to kick me out of my home?" she asked.

Lohner had earlier stated that often property maintenance issues are related to drug activity.

Davis argued this point saying that just because she has "junk" on her property didn't mean that there is a meth lab on it. She agreed that while such an ordinance in a larger city might be effective she did not see its usefulness for the community.

Joni Miner spoke again voicing her concern regarding seniors and the disabled. She asked, "What comes next? Where does it stop?"

Another concern that was voiced was, that if there was an ordinance such as this it would simply allow the City to "get rid" of what it didn't like.

Jerry Shaw stated that he agreed with the proposed ordinance. He said that many of the problem properties today were the same properties that were a problem when he was a kid.

He felt that maybe an ordinance such as this might make landlords accountable and therefore more responsible for whom they rent to and what activities occur on the property.

As Council discussed the issue, Councilor Nilsson brought up private property right concerns.

He felt such an ordinance would give the City too much jurisdiction over the uses of private property.

He warned fellow Councilors to be cautious before making any decisions regarding this ordinance as the consequences may be unfavorable.

"Every situation has a story. We need to dig deeper," he said alluding to a "one size fits all" ordi-

nance may not be the best way to go in addressing the problem.

Councilor McQuisten stated that he felt that he didn't "have enough information" currently to "make an informed decision."

While he stated that he understood Lohner's reasoning for the proposed ordinance, he had gotten feedback from concerned residents that was causing him to take pause.

He did say he agrees that the City needs to address chronic problems at individual properties but felt there were concerns with some aspects of the ordinance in its present state.

Acting mayor Abell said she felt that the idea of the ordinance was not a bad idea but that the ordinance as it was is "too complex."

Council voted upon a motion by Councilor Joseph, seconded by Councilor Nilsson to table the matter for the time being.

City Manager/Director Comments

City Manager Fred Warner Advised Council that they should expect to see some revised parade rules before them soon as they were being worked on currently.

Public Works Director Michelle Owen advised Council that one of the City's front loaders was experiencing mechanical issues and they may see before them soon a request to purchase a replacement.

Lohner took a moment to clarify some numbers regarding Muller's earlier comment about census numbers.

He stated that in 2016 the census reported the population of Baker City to be the same as it was in 2010.

He stated that the population was the same, but their case load had risen significantly.

He also noted that there is a huge heroin epidemic in this country that currently it is to the north and south of Baker City, the problem is quite large but not here because as he said, "We address drugs."

On a final note Smith commented that the applications for firefighters through the acceptance of the SAFER grant was the highest it's been at 26 applicants. Interviews would begin soon.

Council Comments

With none Abell adjourned the meeting.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Thanks to the Elks #338

To the Editor:
As an Army Veteran & former Army Aviator who is also a member of the Baker Elks Fraternity, I want to express my profound appreciation to the "core" members who hosted that fine dining experience last night. It was a VERY large crowd that showed up! A lot of hard work went into that "production". The Baker Elks are a vital & integral part of this community & adds many benefits to not only this area but, in the country at large with it's various programs to help others including this nation's veterans. It is uniquely American & you must be a US citizen to join. I joined the Elks very shortly after my wife & I moved here some 13 years ago. It's been a very rewarding experience.

I've served as chaplain several times & by being involved have met some very fine people who are concerned for their fellow man's welfare & not just their own.

Many charitable works & good deeds are performed for the benefit of the least fortunate around us. Holiday food baskets being distributed come readily to mind. In my view, charity is the most noble of human attributes & that's one of the reasons for being a member & to help that noble work go forward & come to fruition. The Elks Lodge here in Baker City has made our community a better place to be. It's a real red, white & blue outfit & that pleases me greatly to honor our wonderful if imperfect country, my/our beautiful America, a country like no other in the history of mankind. May Almighty GOD help us defend & protect it.

My sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all my fellow Elks who make this work & contribute to making Baker City the nice place that it is. Elks Care & Elks Share. Absolutely true!

Don Burrows, Chaplain, Emeritus
Baker City

Ferrioli speaks out on appointment

Senator Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day), released the following statement Wednesday:

"Today, by unanimous vote, the Senate has confirmed my appointment to the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council.

"This appointment will allow me to serve in some of most important policy areas facing Oregonians, including Native American Tribal and Treaty Rights, aquatic and terrestrial species recovery, stream and habitat restoration and maintaining the most

efficient, most renewable energy system in the world.

"I look forward to working with my NWPPC Commission colleagues from Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Washington States.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Senator Richard Devlin, also confirmed today, on such important issues as carbon reduction through careful planning, enhanced conservation and efficient management of clean, renewable wind, solar, geothermal and hydroelec-

tric energy.

"In my 20 years as State Senator, I've represented frontier districts containing more electrical energy co-operatives and public utility districts than any other, along with hydroelectric generation facilities on the Columbia and Snake River systems and much of the electrical energy distribution network for Oregon's renewable energy resources.

I have enjoyed working with my Senate colleagues and am deeply appreciative of their confirmation vote."

— EDITORIAL —

Crying wolf

It's fascinating that liberal conservation groups intent on protecting and promoting the local wolf population are given any attention on matter of the hunter who killed a wolf in self-defense. (See Todd Arriola's article on Page 1.) Sadly, big media has done just that, prompting us to give our contrary opinion.

First, these groups are openly promoting an agenda—one that in no way shows them as neutral parties. Second, they're armchair quarterbacking from in front of their social media accounts.

It is documented and not unheard of for wolves to threaten, kill

and consume humans when they stumble upon a person in the wild.

The hunter was there in person. He knows what he saw and felt. Having any wild animal, be it a coyote, cougar or wolf, run at you from just 80 feet away would be enough to get the adrenalin flowing in just about anyone.

Law enforcement was present afterward to go over the physical evidence. They had no reason not to be objective when they did.

The hunter, if he was intent on deception, could have walked away and left the wolf to lay without reporting it.

We're not sure what these groups hope to prove or accomplish other than vilify a hunter who had to make a judgement call and act in a split-second. Asking the Governor to step on OSP's determination is a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

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