

Local

Sumpter begins its festivities

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
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Sumpter's holiday events of December 9th and 10th spread out over town this year, with bazaar booths in four locations and two art showings. The Sumpter Valley Railroad also ran trains over the weekend. Heather Wilson, who helped coordinate this year's event, praised the cooperative effort.

Wilson said Toni Thompson was an invaluable source of ideas and help. Laramie Shanks, of the Stockade Motel, also helped with ideas and Wilson was excited to find guests for the Motel, which had no vacancies through the weekend. Wilson said many others pitched in to make everything run smoothly.

The town-wide bazaar was held at the Community Center, City Hall, Stockade Motel, and the Museum and featured vendors selling everything from mustard to leggings. Hot soup was served at the Community Center and proved to be such a best seller on Saturday that they had to start serving Sunday's stock.

Lynn Bean's art gallery was open for the event. Bean said this will be her second year to stay all winter in Sumpter. She laughed as she said she's been accused of visiting the nearby marijuana shop (she hasn't) as the inspiration for her line of brightly



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The lineup for Sumpter's Christmas parade.

colored wildlife paintings. The colors correspond with a new jewelry line she has coming out in February. The gallery is generally open every day except Monday, but Bean recommends calling before coming out to make sure. Her number is 310-944-4843.

Jennifer Lake also held an art showing Saturday at Rustic Realty, featuring whimsical winter paintings with small woodland creatures enjoying the season. Lake's work can be seen at jenniferlakeart.blogspot.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/jennifer.lake.988. Also featured on her Facebook site is the story of Sumpter's real life "Elf on a Shelf" who has been spotted all around town trying to figure out how to get back to the North Pole.

The annual parade was held Saturday evening, with John Young announcing. The parade honored Glen Wulff, long-time parade fixture. Brian Love and Richard Epler served as the color guard. Kathi Vinson sang the national anthem.

After the anthem, Young turned the microphone over to Lynda Hempel of South Carolina to make an announcement about the Quilts of Valor program. Quilts of Valor matches up quilt top makers with machine quilters nation-wide to complete and give quilts to service men and women who have been touched by war.

Hempel's group had the goal to "wrap" 250 service members this year and have exceeded that goal, wrapping 300.

Heather Wilson, Hempel's daughter, read the dedication on the quilt she and Lila Young were displaying, and they then "wrapped" John Young. Hempel announced Young served in the Vietnam War and told him, "Welcome home."

The parade recommenced with a Santa Claus float constructed by the Sumpter Valley Community Volunteers. Wulff's son, Jon Wulff, rode in the float where the Grand Marshall would normally have ridden. Brightly lighted ATVs and local emergency vehicles followed. Immediately after the parade, Vinson led the crowd in several Christmas songs. Jon Wulff performed the honorary tree-lighting duties.

Man sentenced in elk poaching

In November of 2016, an Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish & Wildlife Trooper responded to a location near Elgin, Oregon where two large bull elk were shot and completely left to waste. At the time, OSP was not able to develop any suspects and therefore, put forward a public request for information relating to the unlawful taking of the two bull elk. Through the assistance of the Oregon Hunter's Association Turn-In-Poacher (TIP) program, as well as the public information request, three suspects were identified and following the investigation, were charged with multiple wildlife offenses.

One of the individuals, Nathan William Crouch (27) of Elgin, was recently sentenced for his involvement with these crimes after admitting that he was the one that shot both elk. On November 27th, 2017, Crouch plead guilty to four misdemeanor offenses and Union County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Powers sentenced Crouch with the following: 60 days in jail, an eight-year hunting license suspension as well as other stipulations, and \$17,500 in restitution, \$16,000 of which will go to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

In an Elkhorn Media Group article, Union County Senior Deputy District Attorney, Christopher L. Storz commented, "The defendants in this case just left these animals to rot. They took nothing and by the time they were found, no meat was salvageable. Cases like this one emphasize the need for felonies in the Oregon Game Code, something that currently just isn't provided for under Oregon law."

Under current Oregon law, wildlife offenses such as this can only be charged as a class A misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of one year in jail and fines not to exceed \$6,250.

City Council

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Work Session

The sole purpose of the work session meeting was to review the Wastewater Facility Plan being proposed. An MAO (Mutual Agreement and Order) was entered earlier this year between the City and DEQ. A requirement of that MAO was that the City provide a new wastewater facility plan by December 31, 2017. Anderson Perry and Associates was retained by the City to assist in the development of the plan. On hand at the work session were Brett Moore and Eric Smith from Anderson Perry. Moore addressed Council with information in the plan. Public Works Director Michelle Owen introduced Smith and Moore to Council then turned to floor over to Moore.

Moore gave a brief overview that included some history and why the City is where it is.

He also spoke of what is trying to be accomplished and how to move forward and costs. He noted also that DEQ did have requirements, a timeline in which the City would need to abide by.

He explained that the City's wastewater system is divided into three components. The collection system, the treatment system and the disposal system.

First Moore explained the collection system, the pipe that collects the water and takes it out to the lagoons. He noted that there is one pump or lift station on H Street that is part of the collection system. Since 2005 the City has done some work on the collection system to try and improve that system, reducing groundwater infiltrating the system by approximately 345,000 gallons a day through replacing leaky pipes. Moore stated that the H Street lift station was found to be old and corroded therefore struggling.

He noted that in 2005 when it was last looked at it was struggling as well. His opinion was that because of its age rehabilitation would be difficult and suggested it be replaced.

He told Council, "The City is at a point now, quite frankly, where they are probably spending more money in man power trying to keep the thing operational than if they would just invest some capital dollars and replace it."

Next he addressed treating the water. He told Councilors, "How we dispose of the water dictates how we have to treat it." He advised that in the past rules were if you were going to irrigate with it then it needed to be treated to higher levels, those rules have changed. As it stands now wastewater disposed of into the river, which is how the City currently disposes of its waste water, must be treated to a much higher level that in turn is more expensive.

Moore noted a few things at the wastewater treatment facility that need to be improved. He explained that water heading to the facility travels through 36" pipe. Along the way it passes through a grinder before going into the pumps. Things flushed, that shouldn't be such as toys are caught and ground up before being pumped into the lagoons for processing.

Moore told council that there is a metering system in place, which is required by law so that it is known how much water is actually produced.

"The metering system is experiencing a lot of grit, sand and rocks," he said and recommended the City add a screen to further assist in catching larger particles to enhance the performance of that portion of the system.

He then spoke of the treatment facility that currently consists of four ponds, one large and three smaller ones.

He noted that some of the concrete is beginning to deteriorate and some of the valves are not operational.

He advised Council that those need fixed and the ponds in general needed maintenance.

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Sumpter City Council meets

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Sumpter City Council met briefly the crisp evening of December 12th. Councilors Linda Wise and Samantha Rowan were in attendance, with Mayor Cary Clarke and Councilor Robert Armbruster both out of town. Rowan chaired the meeting. Minutes from November 14th were approved with minor spelling corrections. Bills to be paid were approved.

Fire Dept. Report

Kurt Clarke reported one flue fire during the previous month, which was pretty much out by the time they arrived.

They checked the attic for hot spots.

Food boxes are out at the library, post office, gas station, City Hall, Elkhorn Saloon, and Gold Post.

Cash donations can go to Angie Borello at the Gold Post. The boxes will be out until the 20th.

Julie McKinney suggested next year thinking about a fund for helping those having a difficult time paying utilities.

Rowan thanked the Fire Department and all volunteers who helped on Saturday.

She said there was an awesome turnout for the event and it was great to see all the love for the town.

Planning Commission Report

John Young reported the Commission held their normal first of the month meeting.

They had one application, which was a no-brainer, and they approved it right away. They also did some work on the evacuation plan.



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Kurt Clarke (R) giving Fire Department Report while John Young (L) waits to give Planning Commission report.

Utility Manager Report

LeAnne Woolf reported for Jeff McKinney.

A couple trips have been made to the intake to keep it open. The sand filters have been cleaned.

Water is mostly running really well.

Trees are being trimmed back so the snowplow can get past without knocking off bits and pieces off the machine or without leaving bits of trees in the street.

The town has saved lots of money by not having snow.

Alley Vacation

Woolf reported the city does not seem to have an ordinance with guidelines for vacation processes. She included state guidelines in the information given to Council.

A hearing has been held and the Planning Commission decision was split.

Wise stated she would not want to make a decision until reading all the information. Issue was tabled

for January.

Baker County Nuisance Ordinance

Council discussed holding a workshop to go through the ordinance. Julie McKinney will poll the remaining Council members regarding the workshop.

Council Input

Rowan stated the mayor reminds everyone to keep water running to avoid freeze-ups. There have already been a couple of houses in town that have had the water freeze.

Public Input

Young announced the Snowmobile Club will be holding a New Year's Eve bonfire and has requested the use of the Community Center this year.

They would like to invite everyone to come out from about 5-8 p.m. or whenever the fire burns out.

There will be hotdogs for roasting and a warm place to go inside the Community Center. All are

welcome.

Woolf asked if there are any questions about the bookkeeper's report.

Wise asked when letters were sent regarding delinquent accounts and how long they have to respond.

Woolf replied that on two of the accounts, action can be taken immediately.

On four, water will be turned off on the 21st if there is no response.

Rowan asked how much the City has spent on the Robert Armbruster matter regarding his water hookup to date.

Woolf checked the paperwork and reported about \$6,600.

Council agreed to set a special meeting after the mayor returns.

Rowan reiterated the importance of keeping water running to avoid pipes freezing.

McKinney commented that the air warming up does not change the ground temperature.