

The Baker County Press

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Employees head into new year after layoffs

• AFTER LONG FIGHT, CHAVES LOSES CONTRACT

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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Richard Chaves, of Chaves Consulting in Baker City, which operates a call center in the Old Post Office Square building, summed up the

State's decision this year to decline to extend contracts with Chaves, resulting in the loss of jobs and a significant local economic hit: "I think that the sad reality is that, at this point, the decision was made in order to—I don't know how to say this, except to say it—keep the unions happy."

Chaves Consulting, which has provided services for the Department of Human Services (DHS)

and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for the last ten years, had secured a one-year contract with the State to provide services related to the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), with an option of four more, one-year extensions, for a total of five years.

With 63 employees working in the call center at the time, the State declined to extend the contract last year, eliminat-

ing 54 jobs.

Chaves then secured a temporary contract, and a 90-day extension, with an option to potentially extend that contract for up to five years.

However, at the end of the 90-day extension, the contract was declined, costing around 30 local jobs near the end of 2017.

SEE CHAVES PAGE 8



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Richard Chaves talks about his call center and the recent employee layoff.

OSP vehicles get new look



Photo courtesy of OSP.

Oregon State Police unveiled their new patrol vehicle design at the end of last year.

• SILVER TO REPLACE FAMILIAR NAVY, BADGES ALSO GET OVERHAUL

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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Bringing in the New Year, Oregon State Police (OSP) Officers will have new vehicle colors and badges. The new OSP vehicles were introduced via their Facebook page on December 22nd. The new design was chosen by OSP staff.

The badges on the cars is of their new OSP Logo promoting their five values; honor, loyalty, dedication, compassion, and integrity.

According to Sgt. Kyle Hove of OSP La Grande, the new cars will save the state money as the silver color is cheaper to have on the cars and to repair after damages. They also believe the new silver will be easier for people to see at night and to recognize the OSP vehicles in an emergency situation.

The new black badges on the sides will not fade as much as the previous yellow reflectors did. The previous blue was a special color that cost \$430 per vehicle and it was a difficult shade to match.

Sgt. Hove explained that the new badge allows officers to present their logo, their standards, and what they represent for the public to see. They have not had their logo presented to the public before.

According to their Facebook page, the first new patrol



Photo courtesy of OSP.

The familiar OSP paint jobs will be a thing of the past.

car was assigned to Sr. Trooper Reel, who has been with OSP for over 13 years and is currently assigned to the Government Camp Worksite.

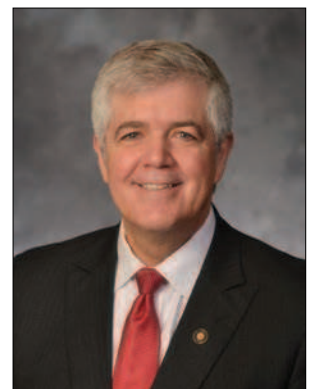
He has spent time in Fish & Wildlife, Honor Guard, Defensive Tactics Instructor, as a Field Training Officer and as a Background Investigator.

Their Facebook page also stated the first Fish & Wildlife Truck was assigned to Sr. Trooper Andrews, who has been with OSP for over eight years and is currently assigned to the Albany Area Command.

Sr. Trooper Andrews has spent time as a Patrol Tactics and Defensive Tactics Instructors, instructs at the Jet and Drift Boat Schools, as a Field Training Officer, and a member of the Marijuana Eradication team.

Bentz sworn in to Senate seat

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Submitted Photo.

State Representative Cliff Bentz from Ontario was appointed to fill the vacated state senate position previously filled by Ted Ferrioli of John Day.

Bentz was one of three nominees set forth by the Precinct Committee People in Senate District 30 after Ferrioli's resignation.

On January 4, County Commissioners gathered in John Day to complete the next step in the process, which was to vote for their choice of those three candidates.

Sen. Cliff Bentz.

SEE SENATE PAGE 9

City approves pay increases

• SIGN CODE CHANGES MAY STILL BE LOOMING ISSUE

GINA K. SWARTZ
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The first City Council meeting of 2018 was called to order by Mayor Mike Downing at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday Evening. The Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were given By Councilor Thomas. Julie Smith Human Resource Manager and City Recorder called roll. All Councilors were present. Mayor Downing focused next on the consent agenda which consisted of minutes from the December 12, 2017 work session and minutes from the December 12, 2017 regular Council meeting.

Councilor Joseph moved to approve the consent agenda without additions or corrections with a second to the motion made by Councilor Nilsson. A unanimous vote was cast. Mayor Downing called for Citizen Participation for anything that was not on the evenings agenda. Seeing none he moved forward.

SEE CITY COUNCIL PAGE 9

Friday Mostly cloudy and seasonable. Highs near 40. Friday Night: Clearing then patchy fog. Lows in the mid 20s.

Saturday Mostly sunny and seasonable. Highs in the upper 30s. Saturday Night: Patchy fog. Lows in the mid 20s.

Sunday Mostly sunny and seasonable. Highs in the upper 30s. Sunday Night: Patchy fog. Lows in the mid 20s.

The Fire, Weather & Avalanche Center forecast:

Our forecast made possible by this generous sponsor:

Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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