

'Back to the Future' is Chamber Banquet Theme for Saturday Night

"We have an amazing list of winners this year, thanks to a plentiful list of nominations," said Debi Bainter, Chamber Director. The annual banquet is set for this Saturday night, Jan. 17 and will be held at the Elks Lodge. Social hour begins at 5 p.m. and dinner, catered by the Baker Truck Corral, will be served following the opening comments at 6:30 p.m.

Awards will be given in the following categories: Legacy Man and Woman of the Year, Business of the Year, Excellence in Agriculture, Service Organization/Nonprofit of the Year, Man and Woman of the Year and a new category: Up and Coming/Young Entrepreneur.

Last year's winners included: Business of the Year-Elkhorn Adult Foster Care, owned by Pam Peyron; Crossroad Carnegie Arts Center as the Non-profit Business of the Year; Roberta McCall -Woman of the Year; Kurt Miller- Man of the Year; Nancy Myers- Legacy Woman of the Year and Dave Lindley- Legacy Man of the Year; Cliffs Saws and Cycles earned the Excellence in Agriculture award.

Submitted photo
Elkhorn Adult Foster Care owned by Pam Peyron won the Business of the Year Award last year.



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The story of Navy SEAL sniper, Chris Kyle, the most lethal sniper in US History. Directed by Clint Eastwood.
FRI & SAT (3:45) 6:45 9:30
SUN & MON (3:45) 6:45
TUES-THURS 6:45

***TAKEN 3 PG-13**
Bryan Mills is accused of a murder he didn't commit, and sets out to find the true killer.
FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:45
SUN & MON (4:10) 7:10
TUES-THURS 7:10

WILD^R
Cheryl Strayed's 1,100-mile hike along the Pacific Crest Trail, undertaken as a way to recover from a recent catastrophe.
FRI & SAT (4:00) 7:00 9:35
SUN & MON (4:00) 7:00
TUES - THURS 7:00

* No Tightwad Tuesday () = Bargain Matinee

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Thursday, January 15, 2015

County Commissioners Hold First Meeting of the Year

By Emily Braswell and Gina Perkins

The Baker County Commissioners held their first meeting of the year last Wednesday. The meeting was opened by the pledge of allegiance, followed by a prayer given by Commissioner Harvey.

Citizen Participation

Commissioner Harvey called on Arthur Sappington to begin citizen participation. Sappington had emailed several articles to the Commissioners regarding rural Oregon, rural communities and how they are represented. Three of the articles were written by Jim Beers and three were written by Sappington. In conjunction, regarding core process and coordination, he also sent to the Commissioners for review a video of a coordination attempt that was done in northern Idaho. Sappington pointed out from the video how the female Forest Service Representative, who had done most of the talking, has a degree in Cooperation and Collaboration, not in Coordination. He felt the content of the video was a good example of how not to coordinate and thinks that is what the Forest Service is trying to do.

Justice of the Peace Pro-Tems Appointed

Additions to the agenda included appointing Damien Yervasi and Jeremy Thamer to the position of Justice of the Peace Pro-Tem for the Baker District and a staff report from Health Director Robin Nudd regarding a dental agreement, which was tabled until Nudd could be contacted for more information.

Function of NEOEDD Explained

Another agenda addition was to approve the Microenterprise Grant Contract and a grant contract with Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD). The grant comes from the State of Oregon Community Development Block Grant Program and, after implementation, becomes the Baker County Microenterprise Project. Baker County will receive the \$40,000 grant and then enter into a sub recipient agreement with the NEOEDD. From there, the County simply holds the funds and distributes monies to NEOEDD as requested. NEOEDD will utilize the funds to provide microenterprise training services to low and moderate income individuals in Union, Baker and Wallowa counties. The classroom trainings include, but are not limited to, entrepreneurship, financial fitness, internet marketing, bookkeeping, marketing, understanding and using financial statements, customer service, social media, Quicken software and learning about business financing. Answering questions raised by Harvey about NEOEDD, Bennett explained this grant agreement has been ongoing for several years and each of the three counties involved share responsibility by alternating which one applies for the grant each year. Wallowa County was responsible for the grant last year and next year it would be Union County's responsibility. The Commissioners unanimously voted to pass the grant contracts.

Bids on Jail Being Sought

Baker County Sheriff Mitch Southwick began his report giving the Commissioners a heads up on the overall condition of the department's 30-year old building as budget time is nearing. Last year the department replaced two water heaters and the washing machine in the jail, which are all commercial grade and therefore, fairly expensive. They have also had several problems with different water lines and with the roof leaking into various parts of the building. They are currently in the process of attaining bids to replace the entire roof. The need to replace the fatiguing 30-year old thermostats, and possibly the entire furnace, in the near future is also an issue.

Southwick described the year-end totals for the department's 45 bed jail. The jail had no forced releases due to space constraints and the inmate roster showed an average of 40.01 inmates per day, which is the highest average daily count the jail has ever seen. The Sheriff assured the Commissioners that crime in Baker County has not gone up, as the higher than normal inmate count might suggest. Baker County continues to have one of the lowest crime rates in Oregon, so he attributes the higher numbers to more parole and probation clients being held to higher accountability by the Parole and Probation Department.

Southwick informed the Board how the relocation of Parole and Probation to the lot adjacent the jail has proven to be of a significant advantage to the entire Sheriff's Department.

He stated, "It's going excellent; it should have been moved out to that location a long time ago." Southwick would like to hire a secretary and a work crew supervisor for the Parole and Probation Department sometime soon.

Harvey asked if inmates were on work crews. South-

wick explained that doing so would be too costly and risky. "Putting people out of jail on work crews is hard to do given the flight risks." Southwick did state that inmates do work inside of the facility on clean up projects and occasional projects like painting. The work crews to which he was referring are through parole and probation.

Baker County Search and Rescue personnel responded to higher than average emergencies last year, beginning with an avalanche that killed two people and seriously injured two others. They were able to utilize their Snowbulance for the first time with its skis on and it worked better than they had anticipated. It was used on a total of four separate occasions last year to transport injured recreationalists.

The Snowbulance is a fully enclosed, heated rescue unit with an interchangeable set of wheels and skis for use in various terrain and conditions. It can be pulled behind a snowmobile or an ATV or UTV. Each unit has room for the patient and one or two attendants. Because of the increase in outdoor recreation, especially in more remote and hard to access areas, Search and Rescue sought and received funding in the amount of \$8,000 from The Leo Adler Foundation to purchase a second Snowbulance. The total purchase price for the second Snowbulance, including shipping costs, is \$8,380. A second unit would assist Search and Rescue in transporting more than one patient in injury accidents involving two or more people.

"We've have a couple of incidents where there was more than one person injured and we had to make a couple trips to get everyone out to Life Flight or the ambulance," Southwick recalled.

After a shift into Contract Review Board, Bennett moved to approve the Sheriff's Department's purchase of a Snowbulance. Kerns seconded the motion, but asked that it be amended to declare the purchase as a sole source through MicroConn, Inc. Bennett did so and the motion carried unanimously.

Community Connections MoU

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Community Connections was brought to the Board for review. The MoU was written to allow funds from the Oregon Department of Veteran's Affairs grant agreement to be apportioned through Baker County to Community Connections. These funds will go to provide transportation for veterans on a local scale. This service would be separate from the federally funded Disabled American Veterans (DAV) transport, which is used to transport veterans to medical appointments in the Boise area. Community Connections would be assisting veterans needing transportation to appointments within Baker City and to La Grande. Bennett suggested having Community Connections sign the MoU ahead of the Board to assure that all parties are in agreement with the terms. The Board consented and the MoU was tabled.

Harvey Appointed as Budget Officer

Harvey was appointed to serve as Budget Officer of Baker County for the remainder of the current, and for the entirety of the subsequent, fiscal years. This appeared to come as a surprise to Harvey.

When Bennett brought the Budget Officer agenda item up for discussion, Harvey looked over the audience and stated, "She isn't here."

Bennett replied to Harvey's comment, "It's a real easy appointment. It's you."

Commissioners Still Acting on Behalf of Unity

The Board shifted hats once more as they moved into session as the Unity City Council. Kerns and Bennett explained to Harvey that since 2010, the commissioners had been required to fill this role. Bennett was re-appointed to serve as Budget Officer for the City of Unity. Bennett and Emergency Management Department Head, Jason Yencopal were granted authorization to sign checks and documents on behalf of the City of Unity.

Harvey closed the open session and transitioned the meeting into Executive Session to discuss upcoming County litigation and Labor Negotiations.

Following the Executive Session, the dental agreement tabled earlier in the session was brought back into action as Health Director Nudd entered the room. After some discussion, Harvey requested more time to discuss the agreement further before he signed. The agreement will likely be revisited during the next Commission Session.

The Commissioners will hold a Work Session on Jan. 14 at 9 a.m. and the next regular Commission Session will be Jan. 21 at 9 a.m. In addition, there will be a Wolf Committee Meeting at 3 p.m. on Jan. 20.

B2H

Continued from page 1

Background on B2H

The B2H Project started as an idea written in Idaho Power Company's 2006 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). That IRP, which is a plan describing the mix of energy supply resources and conservation to meet current and future needs at the lowest reasonable cost to both the utility and ratepayers, reiterated the company's need to upgrade the Pacific Northwest transmission; a task first identified back in 2000. Idaho Power initiated the permitting process with federal, state and local governments in Idaho and Oregon and began an all-encompassing environmental evaluation to determine preliminary routes between Boardman, Ore. and Melba, Idaho in 2007. By Aug. 28, 2008, the B2H Project was fully modeled and Idaho Power submitted a Notice of Intent to Apply for a Site Certificate to the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE). The following month, in response to the right-of-way (ROW) applications filed by Idaho Power and pursuant to section 102 (2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the BLM and U.S. Forest Service filed Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and began public scoping meetings. The BLM, specifically the Vale District Office, was appointed as the lead federal agency responsible for NEPA compliance. Unable to move forward without ROW grants, Idaho Power transferred focus and initiated a Community Advisory Process (CAP) in 2009 with the intent of increasing public feedback and interest.

Seven years, dozens and dozens of meetings, and several revisions later, a milestone was reached when the BLM, in coordination with all of the involved federal agencies, published the DEIS. This 3,000 page

document contains issues raised by the public and interdisciplinary expertise produced from years of data collection and research. A full description of the affected environments, a reasonable range of alternatives, and an analysis of the impacts of each alternative of the B2H Project are detailed in the document's six chapters and eight appendices.

The subsequent release of the DEIS is currently taking place. This period of public meetings, review and comment on the DEIS is particularly significant as it provides everyone the option to participate in the federal decision making procedure. All comments submitted during this point in the NEPA Process will be read and reviewed. That means all responses received by the BLM could have weight in the preparation of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), provided they are substantive.

Strongly encouraged public participation, questions and input on the B2H Project will help involved agencies make informed project decisions. Getting involved is as straightforward as staying informed by signing up for the project mailing list, reviewing project materials via the project website (www.boardmantohemingway.com) or by contacting one of the four key agencies with your questions or concerns. More advanced participation includes attending public meetings, such as the series of seven public open houses previously scheduled in different communities throughout the project area. Community members who attended those events had the opportunity to interact directly with project staff, view general information about the DEIS, submit comments, ask questions and more.

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