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Commissioners Discuss Duties, SRS and PILT Funds at Work Session

By Emily Braswell

As a whole, the Board of County Commissioners is responsible for county administration, management, and policy. The Board prepares, adopts and monitors county budgets and provides administrative services, support, and liaison to cities, public agencies, organizations, the Oregon Legislative Assembly, and federal and state officials. It is responsible for con-

ducting public meetings, hearings, private and public land sales and exchanges as well as enacting ordinances, orders, resolutions, contracts, leases, and other legal agreements; just to list a few.

The Baker County Board of Commissioners met last week for their first work session of the year. Because each Commissioner holds various duties outside of the boardroom, sittings dedicated to discussing current and upcoming issues, and agreeing on staff appointments, orders and resolutions before they come to a final vote during the regular Commission Session are a routine necessity. This session was particularly important for new Commissioner Chairman Bill Harvey, who is currently amid week three in office and is still learning the ropes of his new position.

A large portion of this meeting was used to delegate each Commissioner to other important local, regional and state-wide advisory boards, committees and commissions. Some of these groups are to be led by a Commissioner while others simply require the attendance of an elected official. The page-long list of groups was reflected upon as it was carefully divided among the three Commissioners. The appointment order paperwork will be written up and the Commissioners will formally vote for the placements at the regular Commission meeting on Jan. 21.

Other business matters were discussed during this session, including a brief mention of a 90-day extension period for comment on the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Travel Management Plan from Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya. This extension will allow for the handful of Baker County groups who pushed for the extra time to come together and create a strategy on how to validate the proposed road maps created under the new plan. It was not discussed any further.

Baker County Attorney, Dan Van Thiel, was present during the ses-

sion to talk about current legal matters involving the county. He first inquired what the Board wished to see happen with several properties owned by Baker County. These particular properties came to the County's ownership through foreclosure of delinquent tax liens. Van Thiel's major concern was for the homes that are still occupied and the amount of time they have been inhabited since the County obtained ownership.

Commissioner Mark Bennett stated, "We really shouldn't be in the rental business, and we need to get [these properties sold and] back on the tax rolls." So the County can prepare them for sale, Van Thiel was instructed to send eviction notices to the occupants of the properties that had failed to follow through with any pre- or post-foreclosure agreements.

Timothy Bishop, Tourism Marketing Director for Baker County, came before the Board as a private citizen to ask for support for a Bill that will soon be voted on in the Oregon legislature. The Bill was written by Restore Oregon; a non-profit organization founded in 1977 with the intent to safeguard historic homes, neighborhoods, bridges, barns and churches; and which, today, has a new focus of protecting the loss of historical buildings due to insufficient economic incentives. The Bill, entitled the Revitalize Main Street Act, would create a state rehabilitation tax incentive program specifically for Oregon's historic downtowns and commercial buildings. It would provide a 25 percent rebate for certified rehabilitation of commercial buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places, so long as the building retains its historical integrity. Thirty-five states across the U.S. utilize this type of incentive or tax credit and they continually report proven economic benefits for all involved parties.

See COMMISSIONERS on page 4

Thank You




Thank you friends, neighbors, and family for your prayers, cards and words of condolence at the passing of our mother, **Leona I. Speelman**.

Thank you to the Richland Christian Church, those who helped serve, and the many people who brought food for the reception following Mom's funeral. The meal was excellent. The visiting and remembering with friends and family was enjoyed by all. Thank you Dr. Jon Schott for taking care of Mom all these years. Thank you Tami at Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home, Pastor Gordon Bond, and Dona Schmitt for the beautiful service. Thank you to the folks at Meadowbrook Place for providing Mom a peaceful and understanding home during her last days. And a special thank you to the folks at Heart 'n Home Hospice for the help and all the loving care given Mom the past several months. We deeply appreciate all of you for all that was done to ease the passing of our Mother.

Sincerely,
Larry, Terry, Janice and the rest of the Speelman family

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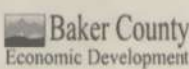

Register Online At:
www.EasternOregonMiningSummit.com

Date, Time, Cost:
Tuesday, January 27, 2015
12:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Free to Attend

Location:
Baker County Conference & Event Center
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Discussion Panels Include:

- Economic Benefits of Mining: How Eastern Oregon Can Prosper
- Legal Analysis: Why it is Hard to Mine in Oregon
- How We are Trying to Fix the Problem
- Discussion & Questions



Guest Speakers Include:
Rich Angstrom, Director of Oregon Concrete & Aggregate Producers Assoc.; **Dave Hunicutt**, Executive Director of Oregonians In Action; **Dana Bennett**, Executive Director of Nevada Mining Assoc.; **Representative Cliff Bontz**, Oregon House of Representatives; **Larry Givens**, Chairman of the Oregon Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries; **Jan Alexander**, Eastern Oregon Mining Assoc.; & More...

For More Information:
 Contact Baker County Economic Development at (541) 523-5460 or at bakercountyeds@gmail.com.



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***AMERICAN SNIPER R**
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 (3:45) 6:45
MON-THURS 6:45

***STRANGE MAGIC PG**
Disney, Animation. Goblins, elves, fairies and imps, and their misadventures sparked by the battle over a powerful potion.
FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:40
SUNDAY (4:10) 7:10
MON-THURS 7:10

THE IMITATION GAME PG-13
During World War II, mathematician Alan Turing tries to crack the enigma code. Nominated for 8 Oscars, including Best Picture.
FRI & SAT (4:00) 7:00 9:35
SUNDAY (4:00) 7:00
MON - THURS 7:00

** No Tightwad Tuesday () = Bargain Matinee