

Forest Supervisor to Meet with Commissioners on April 29

By Emily Braswell

The Baker County Commission Board is preparing for a meeting with Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya and some of his staff on April 29 to re-initiate discussions regarding the Blue Mountain Forest Revision Plan Draft. The plan for this meeting is to compare the existence of roads on the County's maps against the maps the Forest Service created for the Travel Management Plan.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and it will be open to the public. However, Commissioner Harvey made it very clear that this was not going to be a public "Q & A" session where the audience would be able to openly comment during discussions. He encouraged citizens to submit comments or questions specific to the topic of road closures and what roads exist to the Commissioner's office before the day of the meeting so they can be screened and prepared beforehand.

Holcomb Park Update

Parks and Recreation department head Karen Spencer provided the Commissioners with an update on Hewitt-Holcomb Park, located along Brownlee Reservoir in Richland, Ore. The water has been turned on, the grass has been mowed and, pending all facilities within the park are operational, it should be fully open very soon. This spring they were required by the Army Corp of Engineers to draw down the water level to 25 feet below full pool for flood control measures. They were

released from that order a month ago, but because the smaller than normal snowpack has limited the inflows back into the reservoir, the water level has only come up five feet. They are hoping for some more moisture to bring it back up so all of the docks remain accessible.

Bass Tournament

A fairly large bass fishing tournament being held by Boise Cascade will be utilizing the park once again on April 25. "They left our area several years ago because of the water fluctuation and instability and we have gotten them back this year and hopefully we will be able to keep them if our water stays at a constant level," Spencer said. The club will be set up at the Woodhead Boat Ramp beginning at 6 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m. To help cover this event, the department is expecting to bring on one of its two seasonal employees two weeks ahead of their normal May 1 hire date. The floating restroom is scheduled to be anchored out on May 1.

Steven Sharp Makes Holcomb Egg Hunt a Big Success

Spencer also said the yearly Easter egg hunt organized by the County in Richland was very successful. It has always been a very intense happening as the eggs are actually well hidden, creating a true "hunt" for participants. Making this happen every year takes a lot of planning and organization and it has been done only by Spencer and her son for the past several years. So this

year the Parks and Recreation Board suggested searching for some outside help with the event, and Spencer was fortunate to find the help.

When he was 17, Steven Sharp had both of his arms cut off by a baler as he was attempting to unclog it. The entire Eagle Valley community did what they could to support and assist him and his family as they faced mountains of medical bills and an unknown future.

Taking the opportunity to create a community service project to give back to the local community, Sharp offered to assist, taking the event full on. Sharp currently works for an organization called Creating Memories. The group's sole purpose is to connect children and adults with disabilities to nature through outdoor activities, and this year they generously paid for all of the Easter eggs and candy for the hunt. Sharp also volunteered the youth group from his church to help hide the eggs and found an individual to dress up as the Easter Bunny.

"Having Steve Sharp taking on the event to give back, the community really appreciated it, especially those who helped when he was in a time of need. What a great story for him to be giving back!" Spencer concluded.

Blue Mountain Translator District Seeking Assistance

The Commissioners were recently contacted by the Blue Mountain Translator District. The group is still seeking assistance from both Union and Baker

Counties, whether it be from immediate funding or support in creating a taxable district to which it can generate funding on its own.

Draft Letter in Support of HB 1555

Commissioner Harvey asked for input from the board on a drafted letter to the Natural Resource Committee in Wash. D.C. in support of House Bill 1555 (H.R. 1555) which was introduced by U.S. Representative Greg Walden.

H.R. 1555 is titled "Forest Access in Rural Communities Act of 2015". It prohibits the implementation or enforcement of travel management rules for both the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

Upon enactment, "in all units of the National Forest System derived from the public domain, the Secretary of Agriculture shall cease all implementation and enforcement of the travel management rule under subparts A, B, and C of part 212 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, and subparts A and B of part 261 of such title;" from www.congress.gov.

The Bill left the House Committee on Natural Resources on April 8 as they referred it to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands for committee consideration.

The Commission Board moved into Executive Session to discuss legal matters with the County's attorney before adjourning. The Board met again to make final decisions on matters from this work session on April 15.

Cruise Covers Three Countries, Territories

By Gerald Hopkins

What a great experience it was to be on the cruise to the Panama Canal and see the work done on what might be called a "World Wonder." To realize the locks and 51 mile canal were dug by engineers over 100 years ago, one must think that this is one of the greatest feats of mankind in the 20th century. The narrow isthmus separating the Atlantic and Pacific oceans had a very colorful past, with Spanish conquistadors hauling Incan gold through the rain forests to ports on the Atlantic. English freebooters and Pirates sought to ransack those ports and rob the gold where collected. And the gold seekers of 1849 had to face mosquitoes and yellow fever to get to the California gold fields.

My wife, Mary and I had the opportunity to go through the three locks on the Atlantic side into Gatun Lake. I have much more re-

spect for Theodore Roosevelt as a president since studying his leadership with the projects. He was tenacious and demanding, and visited those workers suffering from the heavy rains, yellow fever and rock slides which killed men by the thousands.

From Gutian Lake, we boarded a catamaran boat and cruised up the pristine waterways often spotting a monkey, sloth or toucan. From there my favorite part was the visit to the Embera tribe of 37 members. This tribe still lives in harmony within the rain forest in small huts. They have contact with the outside world, by carrying their wares to the market and sending the children to school. But year around they live in their village. We were entertained with music including flutes and drums made of turtle shells. Then Mary and I got to do some native dances with the group. The tribe uses the contents of a jungle nut to put on the bodies of the small children to make their skin harder and resistant to bug bites, stings and other pests. The nut is also a mosquito repellant and used to tattoo their bodies. Their wares consist of dishes made from tree fibers and jewelry from animal teeth and jungle beads of various types.

Our first stop was actually Aruba, an 8 x 19 mile island, with a totally relaxed colony of very friendly people. Since this is a Dutch colony, it is the primary language, but the elementary children are expected to learn five languages including Dutch, French, Spanish, English and Papiamentu. Although only 106,000 people live in Aruba, 97 different nationalities are represented. We appreciated that the people pay no taxes, but the Dutch government acquires money through continuous land leases on the property. We saw magnificent beaches before going on the semi-submarine "Seaworld Explorer." The submarine explored a German freighter that was sunk off the coast of Aruba during World War II. We also saw colorful coral and many species of fish.

I always wanted to see Cartagena, after seeing Michael Douglas in "Romancing the Stone." It wasn't anything like the quaint village portrayed in the movie, as it is a city of about a million people, and having all the modern conveniences. We did visit the old city surrounded by 11 miles of fortress. Cartagena's well-constructed fortifications defended its borders against pirates, whose attacks lasted for more than 200 years. Old City covers about 12 square blocks and has many attractions, restaurants, old churches and theaters. The priest of one church was Petrus Clavier, who was given sainthood after working with the slaves medically and giving them certain amounts of freedom. He had them wear a rope around their arms so they were identified as "his" Catholics and not to be persecuted or tortured, which was common for the times. In fact, the Spanish tortured individuals for infidelity, being too fat, too thin, too tall, not belonging to the Catholic religion or reading European books. In short, many were tortured for just about anything. We saw a folkloric professional show of music and dance in an old theater converted from a 17th century church.

Published every Thursday at Haines, Ore. Office located at 914 Front Street. Telephone: (541) 856-3615. Periodicals Postage Paid at Baker City, OR 97814. Subscriptions and Postmaster: Send Address Changes to P.O. Box 70, Baker City, Oregon 97814-0070. Subscription Rates: \$39 per year in area, \$44 per year out of area. Contact us for advertising rates. Disclaimer: The Record-Courier does not endorse or make any claims on the advertising that appears in this publication. We recommend that you research advertising claims thoroughly before acting on them. The Record-Courier also reserves the right to reject advertising we deem to be misleading or inappropriate, however we do not verify advertising claims.

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*PAUL BLART: MALL COP 2 PG

Paul Blart has earned a vacation, but safety never takes a holiday.

FRI & SAT	(4:10)	7:10	9:45
SUNDAY	(4:10)	7:10	
MON - THURS		7:10	

*THE LONGEST RIDE PG-13

The lives of a young couple intertwine with a much older man as he reflects back on a lost love.

FRI & SAT	(4:00)	7:00	9:40
SUNDAY	(4:00)	7:00	
MON - THURS		7:00	

FURIOUS 7 PG-13

Deckard Shaw seeks revenge against Dominic Toretto and his family for the death of his brother.

FRI & SAT	(3:45)	6:45	9:35
SUNDAY	(3:45)	6:45	
MON - WED		6:45	

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Published every Thursday at Haines, Ore. Office located at 914 Front Street. Telephone: (541) 856-3615. Periodicals Postage Paid at Baker City, OR 97814.

Subscriptions and Postmaster: Send Address Changes to P.O. Box 70, Baker City, Oregon 97814-0070.

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Thursdays, April 16, 2015