

Retired General Surgeon Appointed to City Council

Story / photo by Gina Perkins

Baker City Council unanimously appointed Daniel Lowe, MD, a retired general surgeon who stated in his letter of interest that he has extensive experience in management and government process which will help him to



Daniel Lowe, MD

November of 2015 citing health concerns. The terms expires in Dec. of 2016.

City of Baker Well Run Organization in Enviably Position, Auditor Says

Bob Seymour of Guyer & Associates, Certified Public Accountants delivered the financial report regarding the audit to the Baker City Council. Seymour stated the City is in a much better financial situation than many of its peer cities. He went on to say that the City is a well run organization, in an enviable position and praised the work of Jeanie Dexter, financial director, the City's management, and Council.

"It doesn't happen overnight," said Seymour. While no material weaknesses were found in internal controls, two recommendations were noted. During the Single Audit testing over internal controls and compliance with federal award programs, one of the requirements is to complete a checklist of items required by the federal programs.

The audit found the checklist had been completed but nowhere on the checklist did it state who had completed the form, nor did it include any dates. The auditor suggested when a checklist is completed to show compliance with a federal program that it include the initials of the person completing the form and the date it was prepared. The auditor stated that he knew who had completed the form by the handwriting and had discussed it with Michelle Owen.

Owen, who is the public works director for the City, stated the issue can easily be corrected by modifying the template of the checklist to include date and initial lines. These steps will be taken moving forward.

The second recommendation was regarding a bank account at Umpqua Bank in the name of the Baker Volunteer Fire Department. It was opened in 2001 and has the City's Tax federal tax ID number attached to it. According to the report, the money in the account is from personal contributions by the Volunteer Fire Fighters which is not included in any of the City's financial statements, or revenues and expenses budgeted. It was suggested that either the City require those responsible for the account to obtain another tax ID number or the City take control of the account and include it in future City budgets.

Jeanie Dexter stated she has been in communication with Alan Blair of the Baker Volunteers and has given them a deadline of the end of this fiscal year to have the account removed from the City's tax ID number. She stated the volunteers were holding a meeting and she expected the situation would be resolved sooner rather than later.

Councilor's voted to approve the Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June, 30, 2015.

Council Discusses Proposed Email Policy

The City Council set a goal of improving transparency in March of 2015. Councilor Augenfied had stated the City of Corvallis was publishing City Council emails on their website. A software program called Oregon Records Management which has already been purchased by the City for another purpose, could provide the same results. An information technology policy has been drafted and includes a process for confidential emails.

Discussion took place regarding concerns some councilors had about such a policy deterring members of the community from contacting councilors because of a fear of the information not remaining confidential. City Manager Kee

will bring the matter forward to the next council meeting for their vote.

Glacier45, LLC Receives Approval for Loading Zone

An amended Resolution 3765 modifying parking downtown was unanimously approved. This will designate a loading zone on the north side of Court Street between the alley and Main Street for Glacier45 LLC, a new business owned by Ryan and Kaylin Chaves in the Neuberger-Heilner building at 1901 Main Street.

The original resolution included language to remove an ADA accessible parking place at the northwest corner of Court and Main. Council heard concerns made in a letter received from Gail Duman who was a part of the parking task force. It was noted that Duman's letter contained some errors. Council discussed at length ways to resolve the matter and will consider relocating the ADA space across the street near Mullan's after visiting with the business owner and others on the street.

On Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. the Baker City Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider a Conditional Use Permit request regarding Glacier45, the proposed micro-distillery and tasting room by the Chaves. The staff report is available for inspection at the Baker County Courthouse. The hearing will be held in the Council Chambers at Baker City Hall.

Chaves stated that he and his family are making a considerable investment into the building and into the business. The loading zone approved by the Council is needed to allow trucks to unload the 190 proof alcohol and the loading zone will be utilized by other businesses in the area. Mayor Mosier noted that she believes it is good to have the Neuberger-Heilner building back on the tax rolls and appreciates the Chaves' investment into the business and community.

Council Approves Profile for City Manager Description, Discusses Salary

Slavin Management Consultants was hired by the City to recruit a City Manager. Recently they were in Baker City and visited with the council, staff, and a variety of city members. A draft of a community profile which will accompany the advertisement was the result. Mike Kee noted staff is in the process currently of correcting several typos and misstatements with the profile and will resubmit it to Slavin.

A job description for the position (which did not previously exist, according to City Manager Kee) was also created by Human Resource Director, Luke Heaton. Duties were included from the Charter and minimum qualifications were added.

Kee asked the Council to concentrate on the minimum requirements and range of annual salary listed in the profile. It lists the beginning annual salary as \$98,000 which is approximately \$6,200 more than the current salary. The proposed salary is based on a survey of similarly sized cities in the region including Ontario and The Dalles where the current average salary is \$119,000. It was noted by Council that Baker City's compensation is the lowest of the nine cities used in the comparison survey.

Mayor Kim Mosier stated she suggested the higher salary to make Baker City more competitive while Councilor Langrell said he believes Baker is a much nicer place to live than either Ontario or The Dalles and was in favor of the lower salary, seeking to find someone who really wants to live in Baker.

Councilor Lewis commented that while we may think Baker City is wonderful, candidates may have other ideas and strongly factor the higher salary offered by Ontario and The Dalles which also have vacant City Manager positions. Councilor Downing stated that while he wanted to be sure and spend the tax payer dollars responsibly, he wanted to attract the best possible candidate. There was consensus to approve the salary range in the profile. A motion was made and passed to adopt the City Manager job description as well as the profile including the suggested salary range.

The advertisement is expected to go out next week. Kee stated that Slavin had stated that within 90 days from the advertisement goes out, they will have a final candidate for consideration. Mayor Mosier said she thought Slavin had said it would be 90 days from being hired; Kee stated that no, it was 90 days from the time the advertisement goes out.

OSU Extension to Offer Citizen Fire Academy

This month, OSU Extension Forester will be on hand to talk about a brand new program, called the Citizen Fire Academy, which will be offered for the first time in northeast Oregon starting next month.

The Citizen Fire Academy (CFA) is a collaborative education and service program designed to increase the outreach capacity of fire agencies and ultimately to maintain and enhance fire-adapted communities. The goal is to increase implementation of defensible space and other Firewise practices and build our human capacity to deal with wildfire where residents and landowners know how to prepare for and safely react to wildfire.

The comprehensive CFA curriculum will cover fire science, home protection strategies, fuels reduction, living in a fire environment, evaluating risk, emergency planning, and volunteer outreach. Collaborating partners include ODF, OSU Extension, rural fire districts, and other agencies who will design, deliver, and evaluate the curriculum.

If you are interested in learning more about this innovative new program and how you can participate, plan on attending the next Baker County Private Woodlands Association evening meeting starting at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 23 at the OSU Extension office, 2600 East Street in Baker City.

Baker County YMCA Fundraiser and Celebration Jan. 23

The Baker County YMCA Community Celebration and Fundraiser will be held on Jan. 23, 2016 at the Baker County Event Center, 2600 East Street. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$40 per couple. The event begins at 5:30 with a social hour. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. at the auction at 7:15 p.m. Live music by Johnny and the Law Breakers begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Fitness Center and Sam O Swim Center.

Dielman and Sidway Interviewed for Documentary airing Jan. 25

Oregon Experience's documentary The Jewish Frontier will be airing on OPB-TV and SPTV on Monday, Jan. 25, at 9 p.m. Gary Dielman, local historian, said that Kami Horton, who is the producer of the documentary was here in Baker City this past summer and interviewed him about Jews in Oregon from 1850-1924. She also interviewed Barbara Sidway, Geiser Grand owner. Dielman sent Horton many historic photos and said it will be interesting to see how many she uses in the documentary. "The Jewish Frontier" will be on the Oregon Experience program.

Those interested may see a preview by visiting: <http://www.opb.org/television/programs/oregonexperience/segment/the-jewish-frontier/>

Four Eastern Oregon School Districts Receive Major CTE Grants

On Monday, Jan. 11, the Oregon Department of Education announced on its website the awarding of CTE (Career and Technical Education) Revitalization Grants statewide. Four school districts in eastern Oregon were awarded substantial grants: Elgin School District \$378,000; La Grande School District \$379,852; Morrow County School District \$390,745; and Pendleton School District \$390,745.

The districts competed with more than 70 districts statewide for the \$9 million. North Powder Charter School was one of those which submitted a grant application but did not receive funding. The monies would have been used to assist in the construction of a new Ag shop and classroom.

Anthony Lakes to Offer Spring Break Camp

Back again for 2016 is the annual Anthony Lakes Spring Break Camp for Kids. This five day, all inclusive camp is open to the first 100 skiers/riders ages 7-18. Your child will receive five consecutive days a lift tickets, rentals and lessons for just \$80.

Open to students near and far, the Spring Break Camp focuses on health, physical activity, and fun. Not only do outdoor activities improve physical fitness, these activities promote social interaction, improve confidence, balance, a better appreciation of winter activities, and skills that your children will enjoy the rest of their lives.

For information on how to obtain a registration packet email chelsea@anthonylakes.com.

Forest Service Waives Fees in Honor of Martin Luther King Day

The U.S. Forest Service will waive fees at day-use recreation sites in Oregon and Washington on Jan. 18 in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

"Our fee-free days touch on every season and serve as an enticement to new and repeat visitors to come out and enjoy their national forests and grasslands," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "These public lands offer rich experiences for everyone, from the avid sportsman to the casual hiker or nature observer."

This fee waiver includes many picnic areas, boat launches, trailheads and visitor centers. Concession operations will continue to charge fees unless the permit holder wishes to participate. Fees for camping, cabin rentals, heritage expeditions, or other permits still apply. The fee waiver does not apply to SnoParks although they might be located on national public lands. The SnoPark permit program is sponsored by the States

of Oregon and Washington.

No fees are charged at any time on 98 percent of national forests and grasslands, and approximately two-thirds of developed recreation sites in national forests and grasslands can be used for free. Check with your local forest or grassland or on Recreation.gov to see if your destination charges a fee. Go online to find a national forest or grassland near you.

Mark your calendars for the following Forest Service fee-free days in 2016:

Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 18, 2016
President's Day, Feb. 15, 2016
National Get Outdoors Day, June 11, 2016
National Public Lands Day, Sept. 24, 2016
Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2016



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