

COUNTY

Continued from Page 1A

East Eagle Creek bridge

Commission Chairman Bill Harvey announced that county officials have reached an agreement with the Forest Service to remove a bridge over East Eagle Creek that accesses public land and mining claims along Hudson Creek, in the Wallowa Mountains.

Officials from both agencies are working on the exact language of the agreement. Harvey said the county intends to replace the bridge after it is removed. There is no current estimate for how much the bridge replacement would cost.

Record attendance at Heritage Museum

Carly Annabe, director of the Baker Heritage Museum and Adler House, gave a yearly update for the museum department. She said the Heritage Museum had a record year with more than 9,300 visitors. That is about 1,000 more visitors than the previous year.

Economic development analysis

The county accepted a grant from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development to conduct an Economic Development

Analysis in every city in Baker County.

The county will not have any financial investment for the grant but it will require city staff to meet with a consultant to help determine economic goals and possible barriers to development. The project is open to every city in Baker County that wishes to participate.

The project is expected to kick off on Sep. 24 and be finished by the end of June 2019.

In other business Wednesday:

Commissioners announced that the county's application to extend the deadline for the start of construction on the Mason Dam hydroelectric project has been approved.

Commissioners agreed to submit a letter to the Federal Communications Commission that asks for less regulation on building infrastructure for wireless internet services. The letter lists high fees and lengthy review processes as a few of the problems caused by regulations.

On Sept. 12 the commissioners will have a public work session, starting at 9 a.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St., to work on a variety of projects including the future of the abandoned lime plant near Huntington, which was cleared of debris this spring.

DROUGHT

Continued from Page 1A

Hank Stern, a spokesman for Wyden, wrote in an email to the Herald that "Senator Wyden's staff has heard about the need for newer and better measurement tools from Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett and officials in other rural Oregon counties as well as from climate science officials at Oregon State University."

In their letter, the senators wrote: "In the western US, extreme temperatures exacerbate drought by increasing demand for water in the summer and limiting important mountain snowpack in the winter. In addition, the Drought Monitor heavily favors reservoir storage and capacity in the western US, but not all users are served by reservoirs."

Brian Fuchs, who works at the Drought Mitigation Center and is one of the authors of the weekly maps, said he and the authors already review many of the measurements that are listed in the senators' letter — including snowpack and temperatures.

"In any given week we're looking at several dozen pieces of data to produce the drought monitor map," Fuchs said. "Pretty much everything in that letter we're already doing."

As an example, Fuchs said snowpack data collected by a network of remote sensors called "Snotels" — there are more than a dozen in Northeastern Oregon — are "vital" to producing the weekly drought maps.

"That's how we measure snow drought," Fuchs said.

Wyden and Merkley's letter also mentions snow drought, writing that

their constituents are concerned that the Drought Monitor fails to include this measurement.

Wyden and Merkley wrote that they have constituents who believe the Drought Monitor should also include other measurements in addition to temperatures and snowpacks, such as:

- When irrigation water is shut off even to landowners with the oldest water rights
- Increased irrigation demand due to high temperatures
- Soil moisture levels
- Lack of water for livestock
- Ecological stress on forests
- Wildfire activity and danger

The senators also ask in their letter whether the list of authors who write the Drought Monitor includes "sufficient attention to including scientists from the Western United States. Is there a system for vetting the e-mail list serve of contributors to ensure the right expert voices are being amplified?"

Fuchs said Drought Monitor authors are always seeking to add new data to their calculations. When the program started in 1999 officials used just four or five measurements, compared with three or four dozen now, depending on the season, he said.

"We do incorporate new tools and data as they become available," Fuchs said.

He noted, however, that new data sources aren't automatically added to the suite of statistics that Drought Monitor authors can use.

For instance, new sources don't have a historical record, so current conditions can't be compared against the past to determine severity, he said.

"We have to scientifically vet the

sources, and it does take time," Fuchs said.

Wyden and Merkley's letter isn't the first such inquiry regarding the process used to develop the weekly Drought Monitor, Fuchs said.

He said questions have become more common since 2008, when the federal Farm Bill added a program that includes cash payments to ranchers who suffer losses due to drought. The amount of payments through the program is based on the Drought Monitor.

Fuchs said it's common for ranchers in one county to ask why an adjoining county is at a more severe drought level, even though conditions seem to be similar between the two counties.

According to the most recent Drought Monitor map, issued Thursday, most of Baker County is in a severe drought, on a five-level scale that starts at "abnormally dry" and continues through "moderate drought," "severe drought," "extreme drought" and "exceptional drought."

In early August U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue declared a natural disaster in Baker County due to drought.

The designation makes farmers and ranchers in both primary and bordering counties eligible for federal aid, including emergency loans through the Farm Service Agency.

Perdue's announcement followed two earlier drought declarations.

On June 6 the Baker County Board of Commissioners asked Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to declare a drought emergency for the county following a winter with a below-average snowpack and a relatively dry spring — normally the wettest period in the county.

DEMOCRAT HOPES TO UNSEAT 10-TERM REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN GREG WALDEN

McLeod-Skinner eager for election

By Andrew Selsky Associated Press

REDMOND — One of the largest U.S. congressional districts voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump in 2016, yet an Oregon Democrat campaigning against a Republican incumbent doesn't see it as hostile territory.

Buoyed by electoral wins by a couple of Democrats elsewhere in Trump territory, candidate Jamie McLeod-Skinner is undaunted, traveling the district — that's as big as North Dakota — in her Jeep, pulling a tiny trailer that she sometimes sleeps in. McLeod-Skinner is enduring all this because she doesn't think the incumbent is focused on the district's issues.

When a parade in the small town of Joseph (population 1,000) was set to start in July, she walked up to an antique convertible carrying Rep. Greg Walden, who's running for his 11th term, and challenged him to a series of debates.

"I look forward to debating you. We'll figure out a schedule that works," Walden replied. Five weeks later, a debate has not been scheduled.

Nationally, Democrats are hoping a "blue wave" in November will give them a majority in Congress. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is financing selected candidates

through its Red to Blue program, hoping to flip seats in Republican-controlled districts.

McLeod-Skinner's campaign isn't one of them. If the Red to Blue's 73 candidates are long shots, ones like McLeod-Skinner — running in very conservative districts — are real Hail Marys.

Walden, who typically wins around 70 percent of the vote, had a war chest currently totaling around \$3.2 million in late June — 31 times bigger than McLeod-Skinner's. "The biggest issue is the disparity in fundraising," said Jeff Dense, professor of political science at Eastern Oregon University. Without money, she can't afford a media campaign, Dense said, noting that Eastern Oregon is peppered with Walden campaign signs.

In an interview at a coffee shop in Redmond — the town near where McLeod-Skinner and her wife live — the candidate said she felt compelled to run because "our current representative is not focused on the district, not addressing the issues that folks in my district care about: health care, education, economic development."

She downplayed the funding factor.

"It's not about a TV spot or sending out fliers," McLeod-Skinner said, wearing faded jeans, red work shirt and scuffed cowboy boots. "It's about showing up. It's about listening to folks with respect and hearing the issues that

people are concerned about."

She accuses Walden of not speaking out for his constituents, including failing to oppose President Trump's trade war that risks increasing tariffs on Oregon wheat. Walden last year also advocated the repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

"His attack on health care would hurt one in five people in our district," McLeod-Skinner said.

McLeod-Skinner, who has degrees in engineering, regional planning and in law, distances herself from city Democrats, often derided here as liberal elites from Portland, uninformed about challenges in this sparsely populated, agricultural-ranching region. She calls herself a rural Democrat, with loyalty to constituents outweighing party loyalty. She's not big on gun control, for example.

"Some Democrats felt I was not far enough to the left in the primary," said the former Santa Clara, California, city councilor. Her stance resonated. She beat six other candidates in the Democratic primary for Oregon's 2nd

District, taking 43 percent of the vote.

Walden did not respond to requests for an interview. His spokesman, Justin Discigil, said in an email that Walden has raised concerns directly with the administration about the impact of tariffs on Oregon agriculture. Discigil also defended Walden on health care, saying he extended the Children's Health Insurance Program and responded to the opioid crisis.

McLeod-Skinner's role models are Cheri Bustos, a Democrat who beat a Republican by 20 points in an Illinois district that narrowly chose Trump in 2016; and Connor Lamb, a Pennsylvania Democrat who won a House seat in Trump territory in a special election in March.

"I think we have an opportunity to absolutely shock people," McLeod-Skinner said. "Eastern Oregon's not blue and I'm not looking to turn eastern Oregon blue. I'm looking to represent the folks in my district who are not represented."

CITED

Continued from Page 1A

Shirtcliff said Moore discovered Izah's body and took the gun before reporting the boy's death to people who live near the skate park.

"The District Attorney's Office takes removal of any item from a death scene very seriously as that affects investigations and in this case delayed getting answers to a grieving family," Shirtcliff stated in a press release. "This is a horrible tragedy and the law enforcement community of Baker County extends its condolences to Izah's family at this time."

The investigation into the gun sale is continuing and other charges are pending, Shirtcliff said.

Izah had recently enrolled at Baker High School, a press release issued by the Baker School District Thursday stated. He had been reported as a runaway at about 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Shirtcliff said.

The Baker School District also sent out information Thursday about Izah's death and the District

response via the new ParentSquare multimedia communication system put in place this year. It replaces the former Blackboard communication system.

Izah's sister is enrolled at Baker Middle School.

"Principal (Skye) Flanagan is aware of this connection and is following response protocol," the release stated.

A safe room was set up at Baker High School and counselors were on hand at BHS and at the middle school to meet with students throughout the day. Counselors also were available at all district schools to provide service as needed.

"We would ask you to use care in communication with your child regarding his incident," the press release stated. "In addition, we encourage parents to be sensitive to any disturbances or concerns your child(ren) might express, or any non-verbal signals that your child may be struggling with information surrounding this event."

"Please contact the school if you would like to request extra support for your child during this time."



McLeod-Skinner

as big as North Dakota — in her Jeep, pulling a tiny trailer that she sometimes sleeps in. McLeod-Skinner is enduring all this because she doesn't think the incumbent is focused on the district's issues.

When a parade in the small town of Joseph (population 1,000) was set to start in July, she walked up to an antique convertible carrying Rep. Greg Walden, who's running for his 11th term, and challenged him to a series of debates.

"I look forward to debating you. We'll figure out a schedule that works," Walden replied. Five weeks later, a debate has not been scheduled.

Nationally, Democrats are hoping a "blue wave" in November will give them a majority in Congress. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is financing selected candidates

Imagine The Difference You Can Make

DONATE YOUR CAR

1-844-533-9173

FREE TOWING TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Help Prevent Blindness Get A Vision Screening Annually

Heritage for the Blind

Ask About A FREE 3 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!!

DENTAL Insurance

Physicians Mutual Insurance Company

A less expensive way to help get the dental care you deserve

- ✓ If you're over 50, you can get coverage for about 51 a day*
- ✓ No wait for preventive care and no deductibles — you could get a checkup tomorrow
- ✓ Keep your own dentist! You can go to any dentist you want
- ✓ Coverage for over 350 procedures including cleanings, exams, fillings, crowns...even dentures
- ✓ NO annual or lifetime cap on the cash benefits you can receive

FREE Information Kit 1-877-599-0125 Or www.dental50plus.com/25

DIVORCE \$155

NO Court Appearances

www.paralegalalternatives.com

Divorce in 1-5 weeks Possible!

Complete Preparation Includes: Children · Custody · Support · Property · Bills Division

legalalt@msn.com 503-772-5295

Mobile Service Outstanding Computer Repair

Any issue \$40 flat rate

Text or Call for Appointment: Dale Bogardus 541-297-5831

NOW SERVING BAKER CITY TO LA GRANDE AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN

www.outstandingcomputerrepair.com

Refurbished Desktop & Laptops For Sale

House calls (let me come to you!)

Drop Offs & Remote Services are Available

Office Hours 7am-7pm • Weekdays

All credit cards accepted

OUT WITH CABLE. IN WITH SAVINGS.

Get a \$100 AT&T Visa® Reward Card* when you sign up for DIRECTV SELECT® Package or above.

Ask me how to Bundle and save. CALL TODAY!

N SUPPORT HOLDINGS LLC 855-502-2578

AT&T Preferred Dealer

Your Family Deserves The BEST Technology... Value... TV!...

Upgrade to the Hopper 3 Smart HD DVR

- Watch and record 16 shows at once
- Get built-in Netflix and YouTube
- Watch TV on our mobile devices

Hopper upgrade fee \$5/mo

Add High Speed Internet \$14.95/mo.

190 Channels

CALL TODAY Save 20%! 1-866-373-9175

dish

EARTHLINK INTERNET

HIGH SPEED INTERNET

Enjoy big-time internet speeds without spending big bucks

Get Connected for as low as \$14.95/mo. or \$49.99/mo.

HyperLink™ High-Speed Internet

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED RETAILER 855-977-9436

Authorized Dealer EarthLink