

# NOVEMBER

■ Highest Temperature: 64, on the 2nd • Lowest Temperature: 10, on the 18th • Total Precipitation: .53 (avg.: .86)

## Harvey wins; 5J bond fails

By Casey Crowley, Chris Collins and Jayson Jacoby  
Baker City Herald

NOVEMBER 7 — Incumbent Bill Harvey earned another four-year term as Baker County Commission chairman, and voters by a wide margin rejected a \$48 million school construction bond for the Baker School District in Tuesday's election.

Harvey defeated challenger Bruce Nichols, who is also a commissioner, 4,142 votes (53.1 percent) to 3,626 (46.5 percent), according to unofficial results from

the Baker County Clerk's office.

Harvey won by a much larger margin than in the May primary, when he received 45 percent of the votes compared with Nichols' 43 percent.

A third candidate, Mike Downing, received 11 percent of the votes in the primary.

"I just want to thank all the citizens of Baker County that went through the process and I like the process, I appreciate it and it is the way our country is built on," Harvey said Tuesday night. "I look forward to serving for another four

years."

The school district bond measure, which would have paid to build a new elementary school for grades 1-6, remodel Baker High School to accommodate seventh- and eighth-graders, and make energy and safety improvements at other schools, failed by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

Voters rejected the measure, which would have been the first of its kind in the Baker 5J District since 1948, by a margin of 4,725 votes (68.4 percent) to 2,185 (31.6 percent).

Still reeling from the bond measure's defeat, Baker School Superintendent Mark Witty said Tuesday night that the discussion about how to pay for school improvements will continue.

"I think we need to keep at it," he said. "We need to do the best for our community and for our kids. We need to get to a place where we can agree."

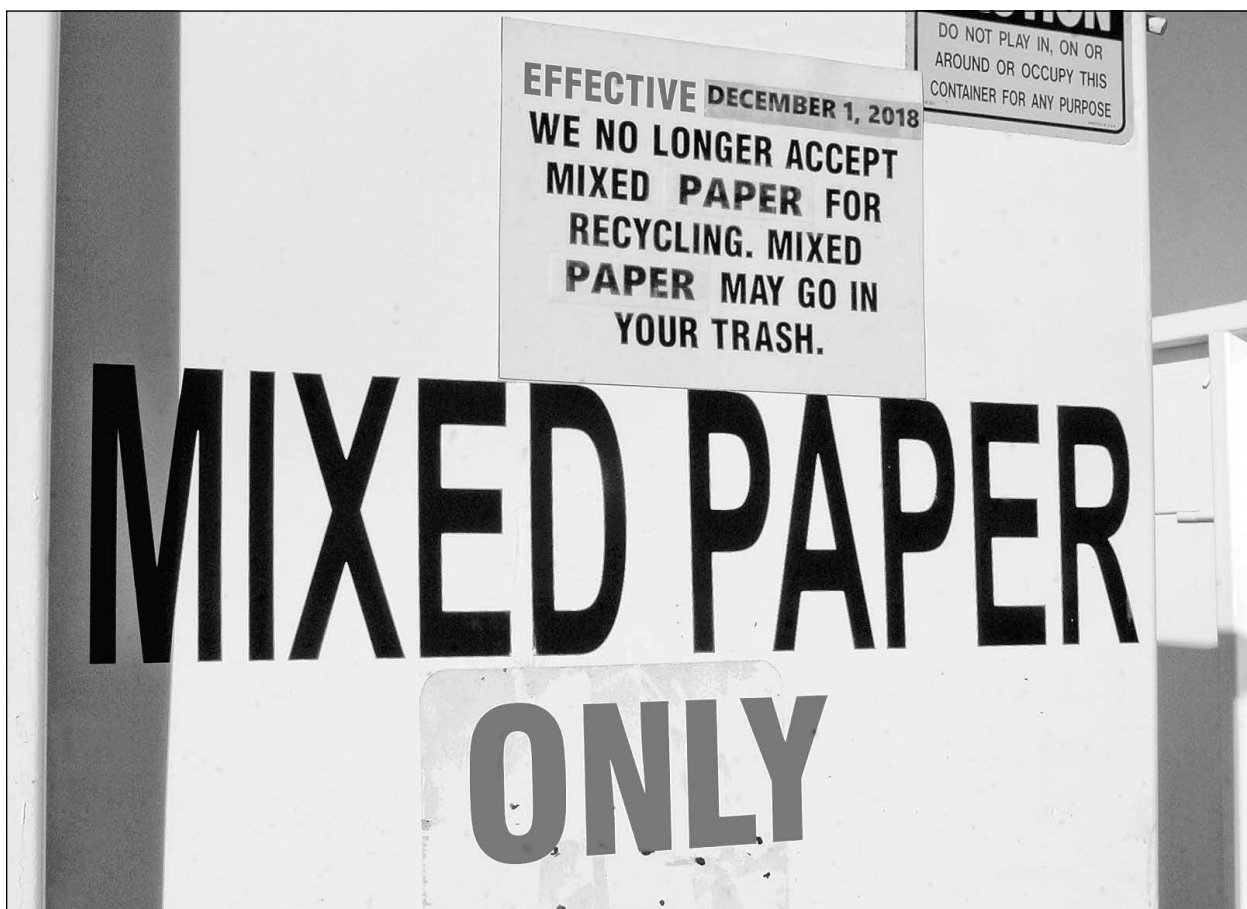
Witty, calling the plan to seek voter approval of a bond measure a "courageous effort," said he was surprised by the large number of voters who opposed it.

"We'll take a breath, study the results and get with the Board to try to figure out what next steps we take," Witty said.

He noted the hard work of the "Yes for Kids" group, led by volunteer Kim Mosier, that promoted passage of the bond and praised their efforts. Since organizing in August, the political action committee raised more than \$15,000 that was spent on signs, advertising and other promotions. Members also staffed information booths supporting the measure at various community events.

### Baker City Recycling Center Will Cease Accepting Mixed Paper On Dec. 1

## Problem With Paper



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Baker City residents are being instructed to dispose of mixed paper in their home garbage container.

By Casey Crowley  
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NOVEMBER 16 — Starting Dec. 1 Baker County residents will no longer be able to drop off mixed paper at Baker Sanitary Service's recycling center at 12th and Campbell streets.

The company will remove the mixed paper bin due to stringent standards for recyclables imposed by China, the main importer of materials from the U.S. The issue is affecting recycling operations across Oregon and the nation.

The effects actually started last September, when Baker Sanitary stopped accepting some plastic containers, also because of China's limitations on imports.

Mixed paper covers a wide range of products including office paper, shoe boxes, paper towels and more. Baker Sanitary takes in about 4 tons of mixed paper per month. The company will send fliers to all customers notifying and explaining the circumstances.

"We regret that we have to do this, it really is out of Baker Sanitary's hands," said Brent Freese, the company's general manager.

Although the mixed paper bin will remain until Dec. 1, Baker Sanitary has actually been hauling that material to its landfill near Baker City for several months under an agreement with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

After Dec. 1, Baker Sanitary asks its customers to put mixed paper with the rest of their garbage.

The issue with China has prompted DEQ, since Sept. 1, 2017, to allow 26 companies to take materials, including mixed paper and plastics that had previously been recycled, to the landfill.

Oregon law allows the agency to do that when the cost to recycle materials exceeds the cost to dispose of them in landfills.

Of the 26 companies, 13, including Baker Sanitary, are still authorized.

Baker Sanitary's agreement — it's known as a concurrence — covers only mixed paper and plastics.

But 11 other companies have concurrences that allow them to landfill rather than recycle materials of other types that customers place in curbside bins, what's known as "commingled residential" recycling.

Baker Sanitary Service does not offer curbside recycling, so its materials are segregated by way of the bins at the recycling center. That allows the company to landfill only mixed paper and plastics, while continuing to recycle other materials such as newspapers, cardboard, aluminum and glass.

The 11 companies that can landfill other recyclable materials include Waste Pro, which operates in La Grande and Island City and disposes of its trash, including some previously recycled items, at the Baker Sanitary Service landfill.

## Candidate move affects Council race

By Casey Crowley  
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NOVEMBER 21 — Carly Annable, who received the second most votes in the Baker City Council election Nov. 6 and was in line to serve a four-year term, has taken a job in Western Oregon and will not serve as a city councilor.

Baker County Clerk Cindy Carpenter said Monday that Annable, 28, had contacted the clerk's office. Annable has accepted a job in Independence, near Salem.

The Baker City charter requires that councilors live within the city limits.

## Shooter acted in self-defense, grand jury says

By Chris Collins  
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NOVEMBER 1 — A Baker County grand jury ruled Thursday that a Parma, Idaho, man feared for his life and acted in self-defense when he shot a Baker City man during a dispute between the two on Oct. 1.

District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said Thursday that Jason Crump, 35, will not be charged in the shooting of Lucas McMillen, 36, of 3220 Campbell St.

Crump said he shot McMillen after McMillen charged at him with "something shiny" in his hand, Shirtcliff said.

"The grand jury felt he was justified and in fear of his life when he shot," Shirtcliff said.

## Meet Baker City's new fire chief

By Casey Crowley  
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NOVEMBER 19 — While Baker City residents were voting on Nov. 6, John Clark was starting his new job as the city's fire chief.

Clark, 57, is a newcomer to the West, having lived most of his life in the Midwest, primarily Ohio and Michigan.

He grew up in Jackson, Ohio, a town of about 6,400.

### Noble Fir From Oregon Stops In Baker City En Route To U.S. Capitol In Washington, D.C.

## The most famous fir tree to ever visit Baker City?

By Jayson Jacoby  
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NOVEMBER 16 — A frosty pink dawn is breaking in Baker City on Thursday and the famous passenger, all 70 feet and 8,300 pitchy pounds of it, is ready to roll out of town.

The semi truck parked on the west side of the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative compound idles with the distinctive diesel clatter.

Several law enforcement officers, some from the Baker City Police Department, some from the U.S.

Forest Service, stroll across the asphalt.

Nikki Swanson is excited.

It's her day to ride in the cab of the truck that's hauling America's most famous noble fir tree across the country.

The tree, part of which is visible through the clear plastic that makes up the rear portion of the 80-foot trailer, will complete its journey Nov. 26 at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

On Dec. 5 the nation's official Christmas tree will be illuminated.

That moment will culminate more than two years of planning for Swanson, who is the Sweet Home District ranger on the Willamette National Forest in Western Oregon.

She had to keep it a secret for more than a year that her district had been picked to supply the Christmas tree for the Capitol in 2018.

But Swanson appreciated having so much time to select the right specimen. The dilemma on the Willamette National Forest,

which is among the most productive timber-growing areas in the national forest system, is not a shortage of suitably sized trees but rather a surplus.

"There are millions of trees on the forest, but it was hard to find the perfect one," Swanson said Thursday as she stood a few feet from the trailer.

Swanson and her staff eventually pared the possibilities to five trees. The finalists included Douglas-firs and grand firs, but Swanson said the noble fir — a species that,

unlike the other two, doesn't grow naturally in Eastern Oregon — was clearly the most comely of the competing conifers.

It was not, however, the most convenient.

The noble fir grew about eight miles up a gravel road that wasn't built to accommodate 80-foot trailers.

Workers had to widen the road in places to ensure the truck-trailer combination, which stretches 102 feet in all, could reach the tree.

The noble fir was cut on Nov. 2.