

Local & State

Walden hosts 'civil' town hall

By Kyle Spurr
WesCom News Service

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, held his first town hall in Bend in nearly two years Saturday to discuss national and local issues facing his 2nd Congressional District.

A crowd packed into the Mountain View High School auditorium to hear from Walden. It was Walden's first town hall in Bend since April 2017, when he faced a rowdy crowd in Mountain View High School's gym. It was also Walden's first Bend town hall since he lost Deschutes County in last fall's general election for the first time in two decades.

The town hall had a more civil tone with a mix of supporters and challengers seated together in the auditorium. Walden did not allow people to bring signs, and only a few people shouted in disagreement.

"Let's be civil to each other as Oregonians," Walden said before fielding questions. "That is my pledge to you from this podium."

A big issue hanging over the town hall was Walden's

thoughts on the federal government shutdown and President Donald Trump's offer Saturday to exchange three years of deportation protection for some immigrants for border wall funding.

Walden did not offer a firm answer on whether he supports Trump's proposal, but he earned applause from many in the crowd when he reminded them he recently voted with Democrats to reopen much of the government.

He also told the audience he supports Trump's views on strengthening border security.

"We have a humanitarian crisis on the border, and we have a broken immigration system in the interior, and we need to fix both," Walden said.

Walden received push-back from some in the audience when he described his support for the federal tax cuts that some say benefit corporations more than individuals.

"It is no secret I supported them, and I think they have had a strong effect on the economy," Walden said as audience members bellowed in unison, "No."

Erik Fernandez — wilder-

ness program manager for Oregon Wild, a conservation organization that works to protect the state's wild lands, wildlife and waters — questioned Walden's approach to logging practices. Fernandez said he was disappointed in Walden's focus on aggressive logging in the region, and asked that Walden consider a more balanced approach to protect the area's natural resources.

"I would encourage you to move more toward the middle, and not be so far to the right when it comes to forest policy," Fernandez said.

Walden, who is familiar with Fernandez and Oregon Wild, playfully asked if they could move more toward to right, the Republican viewpoint.

Fernandez then jokingly moved his body to the right, to which Walden responded from the stage, "It's actually left from my point of view."

All ages were represented, and many men and women came directly from the Central Oregon Women's March in downtown Bend.

A couple of high school students asked questions about

planning for Bend's growing population and Walden's plans for gun safety, especially after all the school shootings in America.

"I'm fully committed to making sure our schools are safe," Walden said.

Walden explained he is working on creating more training for law enforcement around active shooter situations, more access to mental health services and a stronger background check system for gun owners.

Walden said he fully supports the Second Amendment.

"I also take an oath of office to stand up and support every amendment of the constitution," Walden said.

A group of Mountain View High School juniors said they were encouraged to attend by their government teacher. They saw it as a good opportunity to hear from Walden and learn more about the issues facing their generation.

"I just like to be involved as possible in politics as a young person because I feel like not enough young people are these days," said Sydney Pickett, 16. "So I try to get out there as much as I can."

Survey asks about failed bond measure

By Chris Collins
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The Baker School District is asking community members to complete a survey aimed at helping school leaders determine the next steps in addressing recommendations made by a Long Range Facilities Planning Committee.

Here is the link to the online survey:

<https://www.survey-monkey.com/r/BSDBond>

The survey, which will be available for community members to complete online until midnight Feb. 15, will help guide the District's future planning.

For those who don't have computers in their homes, the District will make a couple of laptop computers available for public use to complete the survey at the District Office at 2090 Fourth St., said Jason Todd, digital communications and technology coordinator. A QR (quick response) code (see below), may be scanned on cellphones equipped with a scanning app that also will provide a link to the survey, Todd said.

The District also is printing copies of the QR code in its next edition of the Bulldog Pride newsletter and on business cards. The cards will be passed out to fans attending various sporting events, Todd said.

The Long Range Facilities Planning Committee recommended seeking voter approval of a \$48 million bond measure in the Nov. 6 election to fund a new elementary school, moving middle school students to a separate section of the high school building and transforming Brooklyn Primary School into an early education center for children up to kindergarten age. The bond funding also would have been used to make security and energy efficiency improvements throughout the district.

Voters rejected the measure by a margin of 4,725 votes to 2,185 votes.

"As we consider our next steps, it's important to have a clear understanding of why voters

responded the way they did to the bond proposal and what they would support in the future," the introduction to the survey states. "We value your feedback and would appreciate your participation in a short survey to give us more information."

The responses will be completely anonymous, survey participants are assured.

The first question asks respondents how they voted. The second question asks them why they voted the way they did.

Choices for those who voted against the bond measure, which the survey asks respondents to rate from 1 to 7 with 1 being the highest score and 7 being the lowest, include these statements:

- Taxes are already too high
- Asking too much money at one time
- Not enough information about the bond
- Don't believe there's an urgency to address bond issues
- District is not a good steward of tax money
- Would rather remodel than build new elementary school
- Don't want to combine middle school with high school

Respondents who voted in favor of the bond measure were asked to rate these issues from 1 to 6 to show how they prioritize the District's needs:

- New elementary school to address overcrowding
- Seventh- and eighth-graders to Baker High School
- Energy efficiency upgrades at all schools
- Safety and security upgrades at all schools
- More vocational opportunities and advanced classes for seventh- and eighth-graders
- Will benefit children/grandchildren enrolled in the District

The survey leads respondents through a brief series of other questions all aimed at trying to determine what they see as the top priorities for improving school properties.

WESCOM

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Western Communications previously filed for Chapter 11 protection in August of 2011 following a three-year dispute with the Bank of America,

the company's largest creditor at the time. The company emerged from Chapter 11 protection in April 2012. In addition to the Baker City Herald and The Observer in La Grande, Western Communications owns three newspapers in

Oregon and two in California.

The Chapter 11 process allows companies to reorganize while remaining in operation.

"This will give us time to further restructure our organization for a changing media world, a process we have been

undergoing, as most newspapers have," said John Costa, president of Western Communications.

"That restructure is critical to continuing to serve our local communities in California and Oregon," Costa said.

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1A

Councilors will discuss the proposed ordinance during a work session set for Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St.

In a report to councilors, Warner also suggested they consider forming a citizens committee to look at possible solutions to chronic nuisance issues.

Angie Stewart, who lives near the Birch Street property, attended Tuesday's meeting and thanked the city for cleaning up the property. She said an infestation of mice in the area has decreased since the city removed the trash on Jan. 11 and 12.

Other business

- City Recorder Julie Smith announced the results of the mayoral election from the Jan. 8 meeting.
- Loran Joseph was elected to a two-

year term as mayor by a 5-2 vote. Councilors Randy Schiewe, Lynette Perry, Doni Bruland and Arvid Andersen voted for Joseph, as did Joseph himself.

Councilor Ken Gross voted for Mike Downing, the outgoing mayor and only other candidate, as did Downing himself.

- Koby Essex was sworn in as a Baker City Police officer.
- Councilors voted to support two bills introduced to the Oregon Legislature that would make it easier for the Blue Mountain Translator District to collect its annual \$100 fee from residents in Baker City and Haines who use the district's over-the-air TV signals.
- The Council appointed 10 residents to various boards and commissions. Appointments were unanimous with one exception.

Downing made a motion to appoint four people to the budget board, including Gina Clark.

But the motion failed 5-2, with Downing and Gross voting in favor, as Smith pointed out a potential conflict of interest in having Clark on the board. Her husband is John Clark, the city's fire chief, and if appointed she wouldn't be able to vote on the approval of the budget, which includes the fire department.

The Council then voted unanimously to appoint the three other candidates, Jerry Shaw Jr., Penny Rienks and Shelly Cutler.

Alan Blair was appointed to a one-year term on the planning commission, and Ken Rockwell, Marvin Cassidy, Shelly Cutler and Larisa Bogardus were appointed to four-year terms.

Keith Magnuson was appointed to the public works advisory committee, and Nathan Defrees to the parks and recreation committee.

- Councilors scheduled a goal-setting session for Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 6 p.m.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Saint Alphonsus Auxiliary offering \$1,500 health care scholarship

Saint Alphonsus Auxiliary-Baker City is offering a \$1,500 scholarship to a graduate of a high school in Baker County or a current county resident who will be at least a sophomore in college by September 2019 and who is enrolled in a health care profession course.

Applications are available in the Auxiliary's gift shop in the front lobby at Saint Alphonsus, 3325 Pocahontas Road, or from a member of the Auxiliary Scholarship Committee — Peggy Payton, 541-519-8118; Marilyn Bloom, 541-523-2750; or Marilyn Delfatti, 541-523-4598.

Applications are due by April 15. The winner will be notified by May 20.

Auxiliary members help with the annual blood draw and other hospital events, and they operate the gift shop. New members are always welcome. More information is available by calling Payton, the Auxiliary's president, or Laura Huggins at 541-524-7732.

Eagles Past Presidents Club dinner set

The Baker City Eagles Past Presidents Club is having a dinner Friday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 2935 H St. The menu includes chicken-fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and dessert for \$9. Eagle members and their guests are welcome.



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MOVIE TIMES JANUARY 18-24

THE UPSIDE PG-13

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THE MULE R

FRI & SAT: (4:10) 7:10, 9:45
SUN & M: (4:10) 7:10 T-TH: 7:10

REPLICAS PG-13

FRI & SAT: (4:20) 7:20, 9:50
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