

# Local & State

## OSU Extension Community Appreciation Night attracts crowd of more than 100

OSU Baker County Extension had a Community Appreciation Night Feb. 7.

More than 100 people attended the event, which had a theme of “Dinner’s on us!”

The OSU Extension staff served baked potatoes, chili and homemade cupcakes. Everyone who attended received a Beaver swag bag containing either a water bottle or a Beaver car flag.

Grand prize winners Toni Myers and Andrew Charpillot both took home a basket of Beaver-themed gear.

“We are just taking the opportunity to thank the many people in this community who support the OSU Extension office with their time and involvement,” Angela Robb, Extension Office manager, said in a press release. “Attendees ranged from those who have attended a livestock-handling

clinic to a forestry workshop. Many were 4-H volunteers or the parents of kids who’ve enjoyed the SNAP Ed nutrition classes in the fourth grade. We just wanted to take a moment to say thank you.”

Leticia Henderson, Baker County Extension livestock, forages and ag economist, was happy to see such a large turnout.

“It’s so hard to choose the right time of year,” Henderson said. “Many people are getting ready for calving season right now, but hot chili on a cold night seemed to work out just right. I appreciated getting to visit with those I’ve worked with throughout the year. One goal I have this year is to get out there and get my hands dirty on farm and ranch visits. I’m scheduling visits this spring and summer and would like to hear from producers”

The station for forestry provided resources for woodland owners, and got people asking about Tree School and the future of the Forestry program in Baker County.

Retired Forester Bob Parker was on hand to answer questions and visit.

“OSU has opened the hiring for that position,” Parker said. “The forestry position is such a great opportunity for someone in the forestry field to have an impact on this amazing community. It’ll be exciting to see that take shape.”

The kids in attendance had a great time playing games in the kid section. Becca Colton heads up the SNAP Ed programs for Baker County Extension and had her BEPA kits (Be Physically Active) set up to keep kids moving and engaged during the party. BEPA kits are utilized in pre-

K to fifth-grade classrooms in Baker County by teachers to fulfill their scheduled minutes of activity for students.

Information booths were also manned by OSU experts, including Mindy Sherrieb for Master Gardeners; Robin Maille for Family & Community Health; Darrin Walenta for Crops; Natalie Kinion and Karrie Kelley for 4-H; and Sarah Cuddy from the Outdoor School Program.

For more information on any of the Baker County OSU Extension Programs, visit [www.extension.oregonstate.edu](http://www.extension.oregonstate.edu) or call the Baker County Extension office at 541-523-6418.

For more information about the open position: Assistant Professor of Practice — Extension Forester, visit <https://jobs.oregonstate.edu/postings/71544>

### OREGON LEGISLATURE

## Bills would protect employees who use marijuana while not at work

By Gary A. Wamer  
WesCom News Service

SALEM — You can buy it, sell it, grow it, smoke it, eat it, rub it on as a cream. Storefronts and billboards advertise it, doctors prescribe it, the state taxes and regulates it, and business groups promote it.

But if your employer finds out you’ve used it — marijuana — you can be fired.

Two bills before the Legislature are trying to change the situation. They are part of a broader effort by some lawmakers to normalize the use of legal marijuana by adults.

A major problem is that the bills would create state laws that conflict with federal law, which treats marijuana as a dangerous, illicit drug. Oregonians who are unclear about the legal clash could find themselves and their livelihoods caught in the middle.

House Bill 2655 and Senate Bill 379 would bar employers from using a positive drug test for a legal substance as the sole grounds to fire an employee or refuse to hire an applicant.

“Folks who are using recreational or medical marijuana in their off time would be treated like someone who has a beer after work,” said Rep. Chris Gorsek, D-Troutdale, author of HB 2655. “If you come to work the next day, and you are not impaired, testing should not be an excuse to fire someone.”

But even if a bill were to win an uphill battle for approval, it would likely just set up a clash with federal law — a fight states have lost in the past.

Marijuana prohibitions

have fallen by the wayside in Oregon. Medical marijuana became legal in 1998. Voters approved recreational marijuana use in 2014.

Last year, Oregonians consumed 166,000 pounds of legal cannabis. The Oregon Health Authority reported in 2016 that 55 percent of adult Oregonians say they have used marijuana, while 16 percent said they have used it in the past 30 days.

Some lawmakers are working to expand what is legally acceptable in Oregon. There are at least 20 pending bills dealing with changing laws and regulation dealing with marijuana. They include legislation to allow for marijuana to be sold at special events, allow limited home delivery, streamline regulation, expand taxation, and attempt to find a way to export Oregon’s overabundant harvest of weed to other states where marijuana is legal.

Under the Controlled Substances Act, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration puts marijuana on the highest restrictive list, Schedule I: “drugs, substances, or chemicals are defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.” Marijuana shares the list with heroin, LSD, ecstasy, quaaludes and peyote.

Nowhere is the rift more pronounced than on workplace issues.

Employers point out that knowingly allowing workers who test positive for marijuana to stay on the job would violate the 1988 U.S. Drug Free Workplace Act. The federal government makes adherence to the law a

condition of receiving federal contracts, grants and other kinds of aid.

When state and federal laws clash, courts have ruled the federal prohibition wins. Such was the case in Oregon, where a 2010 case, Emerald Steel vs Bureau of Labor and Industries upheld the employer’s right to fire employees who tested positive for marijuana.

“As a matter of law, it’s settled,” said Saul Hubbard, bureau spokesman.

That reality is especially problematic for marijuana users. While levels of alcohol and many drugs fall off rapidly after consumed, cannabis is different. Marijuana’s psychoactive effects may only last for minutes or hours, but its presence in the body can be detected for up to a month.

“At present, if an employee is forced to take a drug test at work, he or she can be fired for having cannabis in their system even if they ingested it weeks ago and are stone cold sober at work,” said Beth Creighton, president of the Oregon affiliate of the Nation Employment Lawyers Association. She made the comments in testimony at the Wednesday hearing on HB 2655 held by the House Business and Labor Committee.

The legislation is backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, National Organization for the Repeal of Marijuana Laws, Oregon Retailers of Cannabis Association and Compassionate Oregon, an Oregon non-profit organization advocating for medical marijuana patients.

Supporters of the bills

say that without a test that measures inebriation, the use of urinalysis is inexact and unfair. There is no widely accepted device to measure marijuana intoxication that is similar to a Breathalyzer, which can measure the current level of alcohol in the blood.

“Cannabis consumers have been plagued forever — they have been able to be fired for something that has never really been able to be tested for accurately by urinalysis,” said Sarah Duff, outreach director for the Oregon branch of NORML. “Urinalysis can show a drug test is positive if you have used within the last four weeks. There is little evidence to show that it ever is keeping someone impaired that long.”

This year’s legislative attempts to negate the use tests for marijuana is giving nightmares to some businesses in the state.

“You guys are scaring the bejesus out of all my clients,” lobbyist Darryl Fuller told the Senate Judiciary Committee about SB 379 on Feb. 7. Fuller is a lobbyist for auto and construction groups.

Opposition to the two bills includes the Association of Oregon Counties, Oregon Trucking Associations, Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, National Electrical Contractors and several other business and trade groups.

Opponents argue the bills would create an unsafe workplace and conflict with federal law. The federal restrictions affect school districts, universities, contractors and a host of others.

### LOCAL BRIEFING

#### Crossroads hires education coordinator

Crossroads Carnegie Art Center in Baker City has hired Cherie Ward as its education coordinator.

Ward retired in 2018 after a 34-year career as a teacher and reading specialist for the Baker 5J School District.

“Crossroads is thrilled to have an educator of Cherie’s skills join the team at Crossroads and we are so excited at what she will be able to do for our programs,” Crossroads executive director Ginger Savage said in a press release.

Ward’s duties will include managing teachers and their class offerings, expanding class offerings, recruiting and training teachers, creation of the class schedule and working and expanding all program opportunities involving community volunteers. This will allow Savage to work on increasing local funding sources such as membership, donations, and special events to increase the local dollars critical to match grant revenues.

Ward was raised in Baker County and is a graduate of Baker High School and Pacific University where she had an emphasis in elementary education and a minor in studio arts.

Crossroads will have a welcome reception for Ward on Feb. 26 at 5:30 p.m. at the Art Center, 2020 Auburn Ave. More information is available by calling Crossroads at 541-523-5369.

#### Pesticide applicator training set Tuesday

The Oregon State University Extension Service has scheduled a free pre-exam training session for people preparing to take a private pesticide applicator license or laws and safety exam. The session will take place Tuesday, Feb. 19, from 9:45 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Extension Office, 2600 East St.

Oregon pesticide applicator CORE/general recertification credits will be available — up to four credits, two for the morning session and two for the afternoon session.

People interested in attending should RSVP by calling the Extension Office at 541-523-6418.

#### County Commission meets Wednesday

Baker County Commissioners will meet Wednesday starting at 9 a.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St.

Commissioners will hear an update on the county’s emergency management department from Jason Yencopal and Garry Timm.

Acting as the county’s contract review board, commissioners will review an architectural services proposal for the Richland fire station.

Commissioners will also meet in an executive session to meet with legal counsel.

#### Baker County Democrats meet Thursday

The Baker County Democrats will have their monthly meeting on Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Rogers Fellowship Hall, Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. Social time starts at 5:30 p.m., with the meeting at 6 p.m. All are welcome.

#### CPR, First Aid class scheduled Thursday

The Baker City Fire Department will have the American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR/First Aid class on Feb. 21 at the Fire Station, 1616 Second St.

The cost is \$47 for the eight-hour class, which starts at 8 a.m. To sign up, call the Fire Department at 541-523-3711 or text Lt. Alan Blair at 541-519-6637.

#### BHS Class of '74 reunion meeting set

The Baker High School Class of 1974 has scheduled an organization meeting to help plan for its 45th reunion this summer. The meeting is scheduled for Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. at Lefty’s Taphouse, 1934 Broadway St.

The reunion is set for July 5-6. More information is available by calling Kent Bailey at 541-523-4471.

#### Social media classes rescheduled

Two seminars focusing on helping businesses use social media and digital media originally scheduled for Feb. 13 and Feb. 20 have been rescheduled for Feb. 20 and Feb. 27 due to wintry weather last week.

The classes will be at the Blue Mountain Community College Baker City campus, 3275 Baker St.

The courses, through the Small Business Development Center, will be led by Michael Mettler, founder and director of possibilities at MCM Strategic + Communications at Walla Walla, Washington.

- Feb. 20, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. — “Next Level Digital Advertising: Cost Effective Marketing Strategies In Rural Markets”

- Feb. 27, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. — “Content is King: Building a Two-Way Conversation Online”

Each seminar costs \$59, payable to the Small Business Development Center. More information is available by calling Andrea Fowler at 541-278-5833 or at the Small Business Development Center’s Facebook page.

Friends of the Baker Heritage Museum’s  
10th Annual Fundraiser  
**“A Night at Old Auburn”**

Saturday, February 23th  
6 pm–10 pm

Tickets \$30.00  
after Feb. 17th \$38.00

Dinner, Door Prizes,  
Casino style gaming, BINGO  
“Paint Your Wagon”  
Costume Contest  
Visa Card Raffle

Let’s make history! Deal me in!

541-523-9308  
[www.BakerHeritageMuseum.com](http://www.BakerHeritageMuseum.com)

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Elkhorn Chapter 23rd Annual  
**Big Game Banquet**

March 2, 2019  
Baker City Elks Lodge · Doors Open 5 PM  
Live Auction, Silent Auction, Games & Raffles

For membership and dinner ticket information,  
call Luke Harriman 1-208-602-0439 or go to [RMEF.com](http://RMEF.com)