



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Water diverted from Rock Creek flowing into the power plant turned the big generators that produced electricity.

HISTORY

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Daugherty, who bought the 58-acre property west of Haines in July 2015, said he enjoys showing off the historic site, including the plant itself, which is made of native granitic rock.

“What’s nice about it is it’s original,” he said.

Don Wagner, who works part time for Daugherty’s company, Riverside, has conducted the plant tours this year and last.

“It is very interesting to see the way that they did it and were successful doing it,” said Wagner, 69.

He said a group of Boy Scouts who toured the power plant on Sept. 14 “had questions galore” about how it operated.

“They wanted to see every-



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The office desk, typewriter and communication equipment speak of years past.

thing,” Wagner said.

The plant has been cleaned but no repairs or changes have been made to it, allowing tourists to see the original parts.

These include a pair of Pelton water wheels, the patent for which is dated Aug. 27, 1889.

Wagner said the plant during its heyday, when it powered among other things many gold mines, was open around the clock and employed five workers.

“It is very interesting to see the way that they did it and were successful doing it.”

— Don Wagner, who leads tours of the historic Rock Creek power plant

During the tour visitors could see the plant’s office, with typewriters, desks, a phone and other antique items that were integral to the plant’s operation.

Daugherty said he plans to keep the plant clean but to otherwise leave it as it was.

He said he is waiting to hear whether government officials will approve his plan to build another small power plant near Rock Creek.

If the plan is approved, Daugherty said he would work on the plant during the summer.

DONATIONS

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The program, which started in 1976, compensates counties for the loss of property tax revenue since federal land is exempt from that tax. About half of Baker County’s 2 million acres are managed by the federal government. The county expects to collect about \$975,000 from the PILT program this fiscal year.

The other program is SRS — Secure Rural Schools. It started in 2000 and was intended to partially offset the loss of revenue that counties and schools receive from the sale of timber on federal land.

Both programs have been on the federal cutting block several times over the past decade or so, and Harvey said one goal of the Eastern Oregon officials’ trip to Washington, D.C., was to lobby for the programs to continue.

Baker County uses the money for a variety of purposes, including snowplowing.

“They recognize that because they chose not to cut timber and allow us to use that natural resource that they had to supplement with something else, so that is what the PILT and SRS funding is for, to kind of replace what we would normally have had for timber receipts,” Harvey said. “It’s not solidified that we’re going to have it every year but we need it. So unfortunately we have to go back continuously and re-emphasize the need, what it’s for, and things like that.”

Several senators, including Oregon’s Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, are sponsoring a bill that would reauthorize PILT for a decade.

Harvey said he and the other Eastern Oregon commissioners met with Karen Budd-Falen, the deputy solicitor for parks and wildlife, Chris French, the Forest Service’s acting deputy chief, lead officials for the BLM and the Agriculture Secretary.

“That was really good to kind of see how their thinking is going in regards to these issues and others,” Harvey said.

This is the fourth year Harvey has traveled to the nation’s capital to meet with officials and lobby for issues important to Baker County.

Harvey said he and six other commissioners rented a house during their stay. The airfare was about \$1,000, and Baker County’s share for the home rental was \$310, he said.

In other business Wednesday, commissioners approved an agreement with Grant County for snow removal on the Granite Hill Highway between Sumpter and Granite.

Roadmaster Noodle Perkins told commissioners he will present a proposal for the county to buy a pavement grinder for \$35,000.

Commissioners also approved the second reading of a revised version of the county’s public nuisance ordinance.

Oregon voters might get to decide in 2020 on toughest gun storage law in nation

By Andrew Selsky
Associated Press

SALEM — Carol Manstrom says she lost her 18-year-old son when he grabbed his father’s unsecured pistol and shot himself. Paul Kemp lost his brother-in-law when a man opened fire with a stolen AR-15 assault-style rifle at a shopping mall.

On Wednesday, Manstrom and Kemp helped deliver 2,000 signatures to Oregon’s elections office as part of an effort to get a measure on the 2020 ballot that would create the stiffest law in America requiring the safe storage of firearms.

The initiative would require guns to be secured with a trigger or cable lock,

or in a locked container. It also mandates that a lost or stolen firearm be reported within 24 hours and makes violators of the measure liable for any injury from an unsecured weapon, except in matters of self-defense or defense of another person.

Massachusetts is the only state in the country that requires all people to keep their firearms safely stored when not under their immediate control, said Allison Anderman, managing attorney at Giffords, a gun-control advocacy group. The Oregon initiative goes further because it makes gun owners strictly liable to lawsuits if their unsecured weapons cause injuries or damage.

“I do believe this would be the first law of its kind in the country to impose strict liability on a person who violates the law,” Anderman said. “If your gun is used to harm someone else because you violated the state storage law, then you are strictly liable for those damages.”

Furthermore, each violation of the proposed law carries fines up to \$2,000.

Manstrom, with a cardboard box containing the 2,000 signatures next to her, described how she lost her son, Will, in 2017, just a month after he and his girlfriend split up. Teens sometimes make impulsive decisions, Manstrom said.

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DONATIONS

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“The community really took that and ran with it, which was great,” she said.

Some customers bought jeans off the rack at Maurice’s and donated the garments to

MayDay.

Others brought clothing or other items, such as winter coats and bedding.

The donations ended up basically filling the bed of a pickup truck, said Christina Scott, program coordinator for MayDay.

“It was an awesome response,” Scott said.

Tiny Byrne poker tourney Saturday

The sixth-annual Tiny Byrne poker tournament is set for Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St. Sign-ups are from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., with the tournament start-

ing at 6 p.m. Buy-in is \$30, with rebuys for one to two hours.

Dinner will be provided by Alfredo of El Erradero. More information is available by calling Al at 541-403-0166.

NEWS OF RECORD

DEATHS

Christine Laughlin: 75, of Baker City, died Sept. 18, 2019, at her home. Arrangements are under the direction of Gray’s West & Co. Pioneer Chapel.

Rose Branum: formerly of Richland, died Sept. 12, 2019, at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene. Online condolences can be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Vera Love: 75, of Baker City, died Sept. 18, 2019, at her home. ColesTribute Center is in charge of arrangements. To light a candle for Vera or to leave a

condolence for her family, go to www.colestributecenter.com

FUNERALS PENDING

Ronald Allan ‘Ron’ Gillis: Celebration of his life and potluck reception, Saturday, Sept. 21, at 3:30 p.m. at the Light-house Church in La Grande. For those who would like to make a donation in honor of Ron, the family requests these be made to Heart ‘N Home Hospice (Opal Foundation), which gave them so much help, comfort and support the past few months. Donations can be made through

Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Sharlene Cole: Memorial service, Monday, Sept. 23, at 11 a.m. at the McEwen Fellowship Church along Highway 7 near Sumpter. Donations in her honor can be made to Heart ‘N Home Hospice through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

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