

Huntington voters recall mayor

By Jayson Jacoby
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Huntington voters have recalled Mayor Richard Cummings, based on unofficial results from the Baker County Clerk's Office.

In Tuesday's election a petition to recall Cummings passed by a margin of 93 votes to 71 votes, according to the unofficial results.

The Clerk's Office has 20 days to certify the results.

Christina Wiley of Huntington filed the petition to recall Cummings. In her petition, dated July 29, Wiley contends that Cummings has "harassed, intimidated, threatened and assaulted either me or my husband, Michael Wiley on six different occasions ranging from February 2019 to present (July 29, 2019)."

Christina Wiley said several incidents

were related to the clean up following the May 23, 2019, arson fire that destroyed the historic building, which the Wileys owned, housing Howell's Cafe and the Streamliner Lounge.

In a written statement that was included with the recall ballot, Cummings wrote that "I have documents in my office that disputes the claims of my accuser & those that I don't have documents for, I will volunteer, along with accuser, to take a lie detector test."

Christina Wiley said this morning that she's "so relieved" that voters recalled Cummings.

"It's been awful," Wiley said. "I'm not into confrontations. I don't like it."

Cummings could not be reached for comment this morning.

In his statement printed on the recall ballot, Cummings addressed an inci-

dent that Wiley mentioned regarding a photograph allegedly showing a vehicle parked on a sidewalk in Huntington.

Wiley said that after her husband posted a response to a Facebook post that included the photograph, Cummings arrived at their home within 10 minutes and threatened Michael Wiley.

In his statement, Cummings wrote that "Having been called the sidewalk cop & wasting city resources, when the money could be better spent on other projects. Ladies & Gentlemen, it did not cost the city any money. The Mayor does not receive any pay & you the people, are cleaning up the town. Great job folks!"

Wiley also claimed in the recall petition that Cummings had put up fencing around the couple's property to prevent them from working there.

ODOT reopens lanes in Ladd Canyon

By Dick Mason
The (La Grande) Observer

The Oregon Department of Transportation has good news for motorists traveling through Ladd Canyon on Interstate 84.

Both I-84 eastbound lanes at the west entrance into Ladd Canyon are now open almost continuously from milepost 271 to 273 for the first time since last spring, ODOT has announced.

The lanes were reopened this weekend as the first phase of the Oregon Department of Transportation's \$30 million Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement project, which began in April, nears completion. One eastbound lane at this site has been closed for much of that past six months to allow for construction work.

Mike Remily of ODOT, manager of Ladd Canyon project, said that the opening of both lanes had been delayed by freezing weather. Remily explained that this has impacted the process of painting stripes on this portion of the freeway.

"Striping paint doesn't dry very quickly when it's cold," Remily said in an ODOT news release.

Although both eastbound lanes from milepost 271 to 273 are now open, there may be some short closures of lanes over the next week to accommodate workers cleaning the roadway drainage system in preparation for winter, Remily said on Friday.



Dick Mason/The (La Grande) Observer

A portion of Brush Creek's new channel in Ladd Canyon. The channel was created so that a portion of the creek could be diverted to allow work on the Oregon Department of Transportation's Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project to be done.

A reduced construction zone speed limit of 50 miles per hour remains in effect in the area despite the complete opening of both lanes, Remily said. He said that the reduced speed limit will be lifted later.

One lane of traffic is still closed in the westbound lanes of Ladd Canyon from milepost 271 to 273 because of work being done to install a channel for Brush Creek. The new channel is needed to make way for the addition of a third eastbound I-84 lane in 2020 that will run from the west entrance of Ladd Canyon east for 1.5 miles.

Brush Creek has been an obstacle for ODOT because a portion of it ran along the area where the new lane will be built. ODOT is thus taking steps to move the lower part

of Brush Creek's channel to the north side of I-84's two eastbound lanes.

Remily said that one westbound lane between mileposts 271 and 273 will remain closed through Nov. 27 to allow for last-minute modifications to the new Brush Creek channel.

Major portions of phase I of the Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project included the removal of the eastbound lane bridge near the entrance into Ladd Canyon and the replacement of it with a concrete box culvert. The culvert is large enough to accommodate log trucks and semi trucks.

Replacing the bridge with a culvert is a big plus because the bridge tended to get icy, Remily said. Now the road-

way where the bridge once was will be no more icy than the stretches of freeway running on either side of it.

"It will no longer be icy there and not anywhere else," Remily said on Friday.

Bridges usually freeze first in cold conditions because they are sandwiched between cold air, Remily said. The adjacent roadway by contrast freezes later since only its top surface is exposed to frigid air and its bottom is insulated by soil. The new culvert will not get as icy as quickly because it has ground insulation.

Phase II of the Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project, which will involve installation of the third eastbound lane between mileposts 271 and 273, is set to begin in April 2020.

The expanded space the new lane will provide should reduce the number of times Ladd Canyon has to be closed due to trucks blocking lanes.

In a previous Observer interview, ODOT spokesman Tom Strandberg explained that if a truck crashes in the future three-lane roadway, traffic will be able to move around it while it is being cleared. Truck drivers will be allowed to use only the inner and middle lanes while automobile drivers will be permitted to drive in all three, Strandberg said. The three-lane stretch will be similar to a westbound one near Spring Creek on I-84, which has been in place since 2015.

SUMPTER

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Two of Sumpter's three other city employees — City Recorder Julie McKinney and Public Works Director Jeff McKinney, who is her husband — have been on leave since June 14.

Each of the three employees has asked that the hearing take place

during a meeting open to the public, rather than during an executive session from which the public can be excluded, Sumpter Mayor Greg Lucas said.

The three employees will have separate hearings of up to 30 minutes, without the two others present, Lucas said.

Woolf's hearing will start at 2 p.m. at Sumpter City Hall, 240 Mill St., followed separate hearings for the McKinneys.

Lucas said he didn't know which McKinney would have the first hearing.

The City Council will not take public comments during the hearings, Lucas said.

Whether the Council will decide on any action regarding the employees' status during Thursday's meeting depends on what happens during the hearings, Lucas said.

HEART TO HEART

Family thankful for caregivers after mother diagnosed with Alzheimer's

Today roughly three-fourths of all deaths in the U.S. are at ages 65 and older. Chronic diseases, like heart disease and cancer, have replaced acute infections of the previous century, pneumonia, flu, and tuberculosis for example, as the major causes of death. In 2017 Alzheimer's was the fifth-leading cause of death in people over 65 and the only top-10 cause of death in the U.S. with no known cure. In 2010 it claimed more than 500,000 lives, more than 1,369 people a day. New studies today rank it as the third-leading cause of death of the elderly and approximately 5.7 million people in the U.S. currently have Alzheimer's. Worse yet, the number of Americans with Alzheimer's is projected to triple to 16 million by 2050.

It is safe to say that most of us know of someone who is or has suffered from this disease.

A major concern for those of us that have had to personally cope with this debilitating disease with a family member, is finding a residential care facility and staff that you can place your trust in to nurture and care for your loved one when you no longer can. When our mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's almost nine years ago, we were blessed to find such a place at Ashley Manor Care here in Baker City. The facility was home-like and the caregivers exceedingly accommodating, keeping us constantly updated about our mother's health and care, inviting us to join in their residential activities and holiday festivities, and attending to her many needs. Over the years the Ashley Manor staff became part of our family and as mom's health declined and her disease progressed, they were ever patient and vigilant about taking care of her every need as well as our family as they traveled to be with her. As the end of her life approached, Heart 'N Home Hospice staff provided

the best possible support and care for mom and our entire family. Our family would like to extend our deepest heartfelt appreciation to Ashley Manor and Heart 'N Home Hospice caregivers for being so caring, respectful, and supportive and making mom comfortable in her final hours of life. We are so fortunate to have you in this community.

The Betty Johnson family
Baker City

Kiwanis thank everyone for making Main Street trick-or-treat event a success

The annual Kiwanis Main Street trick-or-treat event was a great success. The club thanks all the retailers and community groups for their generous participation. The display of creativity by our partners was outstanding and only outdone by the two-hour parade of amazing costumes worn by young and old alike. We want to give a special thanks to the Baker City Public Works department for

distributing the traffic barricades and signs and the Baker Police Department for their presence. Together we made the Main Street Trick-or-Treat event a safe and fun experience for everyone.

Debbie Poe, president
David Cowan, secretary
Kiwanis Club, Baker City

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LOCAL BRIEFING

Childhood education film airs Thursday

The Baker Early Learning Collaborative is sponsoring the viewing of a documentary film, "No Small Matter," Thursday at Churchill School, 3451 Broadway St.

The doors will open for the free viewing at 5:30 p.m. and the film will begin at 6 p.m. Child care will be available at the site.

This documentary film brings attention to the subject of early childhood education through true stories and struggles, a press release stated.

Baker Early Learning Collaborative is made up of more than 15 community partners involved in helping improve opportunities for families with young children. Susan Townsend, a member of the collaborative, brings personal experience to this issue.

Her perspective on early learning stems from the time she spent as principal of an Early Childhood Education Center in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

To learn more about the film, go to www.nosmallmatter.com

The conversation about early learning will continue at a parent advisory meeting scheduled at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at the Baker School District Office, 2090 Fourth St.

Ring Praise concert Nov. 9 at Presbyterian

A concert including bronze handbells and piano is set for Saturday, Nov. 9 at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1995 Fourth St. in Baker City.

The Ring Praise concert is woven with hymn history and scripture.

Phyllis Tincher, handbell soloist, and Sean Rogers, pianist, will perform a variety of songs focusing on praising God. Through hymns, contemporary praise songs and reflective pieces, they tell the saving story of Jesus Christ. In addition to accompanying, Sean will also play a few piano solos. Phyllis rings 3 octaves of Schulmerich handbells and mixes in 2 octaves of handchimes. During the concert the audience will have an opportunity to ring handchimes as everyone sings. No music experience is needed.

There is no charge for the concert. It is sponsored by a grant from the Presbytery of Eastern Oregon. More information on Ring Praise Music Ministry, a nonprofit, is available at RingPraiseMinistry.org.

Harney Co. man running for state House

Mark Owens, a Harney County Commissioner, is running for the Republican nomination to Oregon House District 60. That's the seat held by Lynn Findley, R-Vale, who announced last week he will give up the seat to run for the Oregon Senate seat held by Republican Cliff Bentz, who is running for Congress.

Historical Society's fall program Nov. 13

A history of the cattle industry in Baker County is the topic of the fall program of the Baker County Historical Society, set for Wednesday, Nov. 13 at the Geiser Grand Hotel. The evening starts with a social hour and no-host bar at 5 p.m. Salad will be served at 6 p.m., with the main course at 6:30 p.m. Main course choices include prime rib, teriyaki chicken or a vegan plate. Dinner is \$20 per person.

To make a reservation for dinner call Jessie Ritch, treasurer of the Historical Society, at 541-523-5993, or Jean Simpson at 541-519-8253 by Nov. 9. Guests with reservations can pay by check at the door.

Jack Jacobsen will serve as moderator for the program, and local rancher Mac Kerns will give the introduction. John Rademacher of the BLM will talk about the history of the Taylor Grazing Act and the formation of the agency. Veterinarian Matt Kerns will talk about vaccinations, her health and improvements in cattle husbandry.

Valerie Oman will discuss the history of branding, and brands in Baker County. Jessie Ritch will talk about the arrival of cattle in Oregon and in Baker County, and the economic benefits of ranching to the county.

Soroptimist Christmas Party set Nov. 22

The annual Soroptimist Club of Baker County Christmas Party, with the theme "Life's A Beach," is set for Friday, Nov. 22 at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St.

Doors open at 4:30 p.m. with a prime rib dinner starting at 6 p.m. There will be live and silent auctions, along with a raffle of a standup paddleboard. The fundraising event makes possible the club's scholarships, InnovateHER grant and a variety of other projects.

Tickets are \$30 and are available at Gregg Hinrichsen State Farm, 1722 Campbell St., The Grove Team, 845 Campbell St., or from any Soroptimist member.

Beach attire is encouraged.

4-H Christmas Bazaar set for Dec. 6 & 7

The 4-H Christmas bazaar is set for Friday, Dec. 6, from noon to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the OSU Extension Service, 2600 East St. To reserve a table, call 541-523-6418.