

Community

RESTORE

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"It's lottery money that pays for it, it's a volunteer tax," Phillips said. "Those that wish to play the lottery, that's where the money is going."

Phillips used the grant to buy the steel beams, which cost \$20,000.

"It started out at \$10,000 and by the time the tariffs and all of the political maneuvering was being made, I ended up paying twice as much," she said.

Other projects in restoring the building's 5,000-square-foot second floor include getting water connected to the bathrooms and kitchen.

"That is not tied in with what the grant and contractors are doing," Phillips said.

She anticipates work will start next spring on installing four skylights. The original skylights were removed when a new roof was installed in the past.

"The rest of it is getting all the mechanical stuff and then painting and patching," Phillips said. "Lots of patching."

The second floor, which once served as the Baker Elks Lodge, has several rooms, a small kitchen area, and a viewing platform overlooking what used to be a dance floor.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

The 50-foot-long beam is carefully maneuvered into the ballroom of the Haskell building Wednesday morning by Justin Gyllenberg, at window, and a crew inside. Brent Gyllenberg is at the controls of the crane.

LOCAL BRIEFING

BHS Vespers concerts set for Sunday

The performing arts students at Baker High School will present Vespers concerts for the holiday season on Sunday, Dec. 8 in the BHS auditorium, 2500 E St. The two performances will be at 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. (the program is the same for both times — a second concert was added several years ago due to large attendance). Admission is free.

The concerts will feature presentations from the vocal and instrumental music programs as well as a performance of "A Christmas Carol" from the theater students.

Advent service Dec. 8 at Lutheran Church

The community is invited to join members of the First Lutheran Church congregation for their 48th annual Advent Scripture and Song Service on Sunday, Dec. 8. The service will begin at 11 a.m. at the church at Third Street and Valley Avenue in Baker City. The Advent and Christmas season will be celebrated with candle lighting and Scripture readings along with choir anthems and carol singing, Choir Director Julie Jeffs stated in a press release.

Bluegrass group to perform at St. Stephens

The Episcopossoms, a local, bluegrass-themed group will play the hymns for morning prayer service at 9 a.m. at St. Stephens Episcopal Church this Sunday, Dec. 8.

The group is made up of churchgoers who have been learning to play different instruments. The Episcopossoms have been asked to play at the annual conference for the Eastern Oregon Diocese for the past two years. All are welcome to attend.

St. Stephens is at 2177 First St. in Baker City.

Ladies Golf & Bridge Christmas party set

The Baker Ladies Golf and Bridge Association will have its annual Christmas Party on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at Quail Ridge Golf Course, 2801 Indiana Avenue. The party will start at 11:30 a.m., and there might be bridge games afterward.

This will be a potluck, so please bring a salad or dessert. There will also be a gift exchange, so please bring a gift worth less than \$15. More information is available by calling Nancy at 541-519-6774.

MURDERS

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Buzz said he and his father peered into the house but saw nothing unusual.

They walked to a small shed nearby. Buzz said he went to the rear of the structure and looked through a gap in the weathered boards of the dilapidated building.

He saw two bodies.

Buzz yelled for his father.

They ran to their vehicle and used the CB radio — no cellphones during the Ford administration — to call the Sheriff's Office.

Buzz said he and his father spent most of the rest of the day stationed at the start of the road leading to the

farm, making sure only official vehicles could enter.

He recalls that they were relieved around dusk by another pair of Posse members.

Buzz said Posse members participated in the subsequent search for the .22 caliber revolver that police believed Hull had used to shoot Darlene Hull and her daughter.

He said searchers eventually found the gun in one of the quarry ponds east of Interstate 84.

Buzz said he and his father testified during Hull's trial.

Buzz said that although he knew who Donald Hull was in 1976, he wasn't acquainted with the man.

Buzz said he was surprised to learn this week that Hull had died in prison.

"I figured he had died by now," Buzz said during an interview at his Baker City home on Thursday afternoon.

According to stories from the Baker Democrat Herald (now the Baker City Herald), Dr. John Higgins, the Baker County medical examiner, determined that both victims had been shot once in the head. A small-caliber bullet was recovered from each of the bodies.

A witness at Donald Hull's trial testified about seeing him on the morning of the murders in Washington Gulch, about 5 miles west of Baker City, beating on a young girl and chasing her in a blue pickup truck, according to the transcript of an Oregon Court of Appeals decision from May 8, 1978, in which the Court rejected Hull's appeal of his murder convictions.



The front page of the Aug. 17, 1976, issue of the Democrat Herald (now Baker City Herald) included a photo of the abandoned farm building near Baker City where Buzz and Frank Colton found the bodies of murder victims Darlene Hull and Tamera Shove on Aug. 14, 1976. Donald Douglas Hull was convicted of the murders.

TOWER

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In an email to the Herald this morning, Heidi Flato, public relations manager for Verizon Consumer Group, wrote that "We are disappointed by the Planning Department's decision to deny our conditional use permit application in Baker City. We're evaluating our next steps."

During Wednesday's meeting commissioner Larisa Bogardus first made a motion to approve the 70-foot tower, with an added 5 feet for green, tree-like "branches" that would be added to try to camouflage the single pole tower.

Commissioner Tim Collins seconded the motion, but it failed by a 5-2 vote.

Commissioners Marvin Cassidy, Shelly Cutler, Ken Rockwell, Alan Blair and Aaron Still voted against the motion to give Verizon a

conditional use permit.

The city's zoning rules would allow the company to install a tower up to 50-foot tall on the industrial property just north of D Street.

But in its application, Verizon contends that its engineers determined a 70-foot tower was the minimum height required to meet the company's needs for improving cell coverage and allowing for future capacity.

After the 5-2 vote against the motion to approve the permit, commissioners deliberated further.

Rockwell, the Commission's vice chair, read a statement at the start of the meeting.

Rockwell noted the testimony from local residents, as well as a petition opposing Verizon's application and signed by 142 people.

"I believe nobody from the community testified they wanted the 70-foot cell tower

and the lone supporter was the applicant," Rockwell said.

"What I was trying to indicate is that it's not so much that we're opposed to the cell tower itself, it's the height and location that are a problem," he said.

In his written statement, Rockwell noted that the negative impacts of the proposed tower can't be mitigated by applying aspects of the city's zoning rules.

"I believe the only way to partially mitigate the aesthetic and visibility concerns at this location is for the tower to be limited in height to what is permitted outright, 50 feet," he said.

Collins, however, a retired longtime attorney for the city, said he's concerned that the Commission's rejection of the applications suggests that "decisions are made on who shows up, not what's best for the community."

He pointed out there are around 6,000 adults in Baker City, and that a relatively small percentage actually expressed their opinion to the Commission about the proposed cell tower.

"I think it's our decision to make based on the criteria and the law as it stands," Collins said.

He said he would rather have a 70-foot tower that is designed to resemble a tree than a 50-foot, undisguised pole.

Bogardus noted that Verizon in 2015 applied for conditional use permits to build two 100-foot towers.

The Planning Commission rejected both applications. "They've come back and said 'we still feel like there's a need for that, for this location,'" which tells me that they really see that need," Bogardus said.

She also said she believes

Verizon showed good faith by offering to camouflage the tower, though the city doesn't require that.

Bogardus recalled living in an area where large wildfires and cell system failures made it impossible for people to call for help or to check on loved ones.

"I don't want to see that happen here, I don't want to see that happen anywhere," Bogardus said.

"And because of those things, in accordance with the code, I feel like this is reasonable, and appropriate, and worthwhile," she said.

Board Chairman Alan Blair said his chief concern about Verizon's proposal is that the 2.12-acre parcel, although zoned industrial, is in an area dominated by residential neighborhoods.

"In my opinion, this little industrial zone area is surrounded on three sides by

residential, one side by commercial, and it's not very big," Blair said. "If you go to the center of the zone property, you still don't, in my opinion, have an adequate buffer to the edge of the residential zones."

Cutler, who is executive director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, gave her perspective in working to attract residents, and businesses, to Baker City.

"None of my marketing materials ever say, move to Baker County because we are at the top of our telecommunications game," Cutler said.

She said they see thousands of tourists annually, none of them saying they were disappointed in the cell service.

Cutler said she is not opposed to cell towers in general. But she doesn't want towers to block visitors' views of the Elkhorn Mountains.

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