

JUNE

■ High Temperature: 88, the 12th

• Low Temperature: 32, the 22nd

• Total Precipitation: .71 (avg.: 1.29)

SWAT Team Called In Wednesday Afternoon To Arrest Robbery Suspect

Standoff Ends Safely



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

SWAT members arrested Brent Alexander Breshears, 28, at approximately 3 p.m. Wednesday.

By Chris Collins
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JUNE 28 — Baker City Police had hoped to make a routine arrest before dawn Wednesday when they approached an apartment house where a man they held an arrest warrant for had reportedly been staying.

Instead, Baker City Police Sgt. Wayne Chastain said he received a call from the night-shift officers at about 3 a.m. telling him they had

confirmed that the subject of the warrant, Brent Alexander Breshears, 28, was in an apartment at 1701 Fourth St., but they were not allowed inside to arrest him.

The actual tenant at the apartment, Tamara Fine, 46, refused to let the officers enter without a search warrant.

“So they backed out of the



Breshears

establishment, set up a perimeter and started making phone calls,” Chastain said.

During the night, Fine left the apartment through a window and police let her go.

“She wasn’t the primary focus,” Chastain said.

In the meantime, Breshears had barricaded himself inside Fine’s basement apartment in the fourplex building and refused to communicate with police.

Motels reopen

■ Super 8 and Motel 6 had been closed since Monday due to fire safety code violations

By Jayson Jacoby
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The two motels in Baker City closed Monday due to fire safety code violations reopened Thursday after fixing the problems, Baker City Fire Chief John Clark said.

Clark closed the Super 8 motel and Motel 6 on Monday after inspecting the buildings and finding multiple violations, including the disabling of the alarm system at Motel 6 and

the partial dismantling of the sprinkler system at the Super 8.

A complainant, whom Clark has declined to name, reported the violations to the Fire Department Monday morning.

Clark said this morning that the family that owns both motels brought in two contractors this week, one of which worked about 16 hours on Thursday, to fix the problems.

He allowed both motels to reopen Thursday evening.

E.O. Media Group plans to buy Herald

By Kathleen McLaughlin
WesCom News Service

JUNE 5 — Two Oregon media companies want to buy most of Western Communications’ community newspapers for a combined price of more than \$1.1 million, according to motions filed Tuesday in bankruptcy court.

The East Oregonian Company, known as EO Media Group, would pay \$775,000 for The Observer in La Grande and the Baker City Herald.

Country Media Inc., which owns newspapers on the Oregon Coast and in Montana and North Dakota, would pay \$350,000 for the Del Norte Triplicate in Crescent City, California, and the Curry Coastal Pilot in Brookings.

The proposed buyers have requested hearings on June 27 in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Portland, according to motions filed Tuesday. Closings would occur days after the court orders the sales.

Competing bids may be submitted no later than June 21.

“Both of them are really good fits,” Western Communications Chairwoman Betsy McCool said of the proposed buyers. “I wish them all luck. I’m hoping they’ll serve their community and employees well. I have no doubt that they will.”

Saddled with debt from its Bend headquarters building, Western Communications filed in January for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Police chief leaving

■ Dustin Newman returning to Polk County Sheriff’s Office

JUNE 17 — Baker City Police Chief Dustin Newman will be returning to the Polk County Sheriff’s Office in Western Oregon where he worked for 14 years before moving to Baker City in 2014.

Newman has been Baker City’s police chief for the past year. His last day will be July 8, Baker City Manager Fred

Warner Jr. said this morning.

Warner said he planned to meet with Newman, 43, this morning to discuss the police department’s staffing.

Warner appointed Newman as interim chief on May 11, 2018,



Newman

and removed the interim title about a month later.

Warner said the police department is fully staffed, although Newman, who served as lieutenant before being appointed as chief, has not replaced his former position. When Newman started as chief he had to fill three vacancies.

County officials: Smith issue is money, not work

By Jayson Jacoby
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JUNE 12 — Baker County Commission Chairman Bill Harvey and Commissioner Bruce Nichols say their decision to not extend the county’s contract with economic developer Greg Smith is based on declining revenue, not on Smith’s performance as the county’s contractor over the past several years.

Both commissioners also said they were not concerned about potential conflicts of interests based on Smith’s contracts as an economic developer with adjacent counties, or his service as a state legislator.

The Baker County Economic Development Council, which advises Harvey, Nichols

and the third commissioner, Mark Bennett, voted Thursday not to renew Smith’s \$96,000-per-year contract when the new fiscal year starts July 1.

The reason, both Harvey and Nichols said on Monday, is that revenue from a tax collected from guests at motels and other lodging establishments has dropped substantially over the past fiscal year.

That lodging tax revenue is the source of the money for Smith’s contract.

The contract, which took effect July 1, 2018, was slated to continue through June 30, 2022. The contract includes a clause allowing either party to cancel the agreement with 60 days written notice. That clause also allows the county

to end the deal if “funding from federal, state or other sources is not obtained and continued at levels sufficient to allow for the purchase of the indicated quantity of services.”

Addison settles lawsuit for \$155K

By Chris Collins
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JUNE 14 — Baker City’s insurance company will pay former local journalist Brian Addison \$155,000 to settle a lawsuit he filed against the city and its former police chief in 2015.

The settlement was finalized Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Pendleton. The lawsuit, which had been scheduled to go to trial in August, was dismissed with prejudice, which means the matter cannot be brought before the court again.

The city and Addison will be responsible for their own costs and attorney fees, the stipulated agreement states.

In signing the agreement, City Manager Fred Warner Jr., former police chief Wyn Lohner and Addison agreed to release all parties from any further liability in the matter.

Addison did not reply to a request for a comment in time for this story.

Addison, who formerly worked as a reporter for The Record-Courier newspaper, alleged in the lawsuit that the City and Lohner had retaliated against him after he wrote an editorial criticizing the police department. The editorial was published in 2008 in The Record-Courier, a longtime weekly newspaper that has since ceased operation.

Addison’s lawsuit sought monetary damages to be determined at trial on claims that the City and Lohner retaliated against his freedom of speech rights by harassing him for what he had written in the editorial.

Addison stated his belief that the police department’s use of its drug-detecting dog during the Class 1A state basketball tournament at Baker High School was a violation of constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure.

In his lawsuit, Addison claimed that the City and Lohner interfered with his job opportunities, defamed him and deprived him of due process because of what he had written.



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