

Baker City Herald

February 11, 2020

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Baker's Bailey Cole has qualified for the state wrestling meet Feb. 28-29

IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Home & Living • Sports

\$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Allen Schmidt of Baker City.

State, 3A

PENDLETON — Patty Haid can pinpoint the exact moment her front deck washed away.

The Riverview Mobile Home Estates resident had a security camera attached on her home, and it was recording Thursday night when the deck started drifting away.

By that time, Haid and her husband had already evacuated, ferrying suitcases above their heads as the floodwaters rose to their waist.

State, 3A

SALEM — So many people flocked to the Oregon State Capitol to testify Saturday at a public hearing on a climate change bill that the allotted time for each to speak was reduced to 90 seconds.

As a large screen in Hearing Room C showed the seconds ticking off, loggers expressed concern that the bill would lead to increased costs and the demise of their business.

BRIEFING

Fair Board meeting on Wednesday

The Baker County Fair Board will meet Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 6 p.m. at the Fairgrounds small meeting room, 2600 East St.

WEATHER

Today

40 / 30



Mostly sunny

Wednesday

44 / 26



Mostly cloudy

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

The space below is for a postage label for issues that are mailed.

Baker County Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance

Gun Confusion

■ County Commissioner Mark Bennett says mistake led to episode in which GOP officials feared voter-approved measure would be diluted



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Ray Illingsworth, owner of Trader Ray's in Baker City, handles guns and ammunition at his store on Broadway Street.

By Jayson Jacoby
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What Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett describes as the result of a “clerical error” has led local Republican Party officials to question whether commissioners were on the verge of approving an ordinance that the GOP officials contend would “dilute” the “Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance” that county voters overwhelmingly approved in November 2018.

Both Bennett and Bill Harvey, chairman of the three-member board of commissioners, said on Monday that that’s not the case.

“There wasn’t any intention for us to rewrite it,” Bennett said of the 2018 ordinance, which county voters approved 5,432 to 2,736. “That’s what the people passed. I can’t apologize enough for the mistake. We did it in good faith.”

Harvey said commissioners won’t be considering a new ordinance related to preserving Second Amendment rights.

A proposed new ordinance posted to the county’s website, www.bakercounty.org, last week was deleted from the website on Monday.

That’s a good thing, according to Suzan Ellis Jones, chair of the Baker County Republican Party and one of the three chief petitioners for the 2018 voter-approved ordinance.

But Jones said Monday that she’s concerned that Bennett

“There wasn’t any intention for us to rewrite it. That’s what the people passed. I can’t apologize enough for the mistake.”

— **Mark Bennett, Baker County commissioner, who says a proposal for commissioners to approve a new Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance resulted from a mistake, and the idea has been withdrawn**



and Harvey didn’t contact either her or the two other petitioners — Jake Brown, the Republican Party county vice chair, or Tom Van Diepen, a Republican precinct committee member — before posting on the county’s website a draft of a proposed new ordinance.

That document, titled “Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance” as was the 2018 voter-approved measure, was posted recently on the county’s website, www.bakercounty.org.

The ordinance stated that commissioners would consider, and potentially adopt, the document on Feb. 19, following a public hearing.

Both Bennett and Harvey said that won’t happen.

Bennett said the situation started a couple of weeks ago when he and Harvey were discussing Second Amendment issues, including gun-related bills under consideration in the Oregon Legislature during its 35-day session that started in Salem on Feb. 3.

Bennett said that after asking the county staff for a copy of the 2018 ordinance, he re-

ceived an incomplete version of the document.

(Harvey said he didn’t see a copy of the 2018 ordinance at all.)

Bennett said he didn’t immediately recognize the error.

The result, he said, was that Harvey scrambled to draft another ordinance that included more comprehensive protections of citizens’ Second Amendment rights.

The goal, Bennett said, wasn’t to replace or supersede the ordinance that county voters passed in November 2018.

Rather, he said he was concerned that the voter-approved ordinance wasn’t as robust in protecting county residents’ Second Amendment rights as it could be.

Harvey agreed.

“We were just trying to make sure we were doing the will of the voters,” he said.

Bennett said he later realized that his concern wasn’t valid, but was based on reading the incomplete version of the 2018 ordinance that he reviewed.

See **Ordinance**/Page 2A

Second robbery suspect arrested

By Chris Collins
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Baker City Police have arrested a second man on allegations that he helped rob two men of cash and a cellphone while assaulting one of them during an altercation at Cedar and H streets last summer.

Zachary Aron Carter, 22, of 1036 Tamar St., is charged with six counts of second-degree robbery and one count each of third-degree assault and second- and third-degree theft, District Attorney Greg Baxter said Monday.

Carter is accused of participating in the robbery with Colvin William Cutshall III, 30, of 2160 Wabash St.

Carter was arrested on a Baker County grand jury indictment at 9:40 p.m. Saturday at Campbell and East streets. He was arraigned Monday in Baker County Circuit Court, Baxter said. Bail is \$50,000.

See **Robbery**/Page 2A



Carter

YMCA seeks new director

By Samantha O’Conner
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The Baker County YMCA is looking for a interim director and a new CEO after Luke Gibson resigned Jan. 15, two weeks short of a year since he started in the job.

Lindy Petrik, YMCA board president, will work as a point person until an interim director can be appointed.

Petrik had served as the interim CEO for four months prior to Gibson taking the role.

She said that once the interim position has been filled, the YMCA will begin searching for a new CEO.

See **YMCA**/Page 2A



Gibson

City Council to discuss property

The Baker City Council tonight will discuss the possibility of partitioning a lot the city owns near the Powder River for a potential future sale.

The city owns the 40-foot by 100-foot parcel at 1756 Valley Ave. It’s between two existing homes, and connects to Central Park.

According to a staff report to city councilors, the city has kept the property because it could serve as access to Central Park, which is just west of the Powder River between Washington and Valley avenues.

But the city now hopes to purchase property adjacent to Resort Street and use that both for access as well as parking for Central Park.

If the city partitions the lot from Central Park it could potentially sell the property. That could require approval from city voters, as the city charter voters to authorize the sale of real property with a market value of more than \$5,000. Voters will, however, have a chance to eliminate that requirement in May 2020 election.

The Council will meet tonight at 7 o’clock at City Hall, 1655 First St.



TODAY
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THURSDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE