

COUNCIL

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In the letter, Spriet wrote that Baker City's small businesses during the pandemic "have been forced to weather this monumental obstacle with very little assistance from the state or federal government."

Spriet wrote that city councilors feel that state restrictions "should be regularly updated with input from all Oregon residents across the state, using sound and repeatable scientific data, local medical capacity information, and a reasonable level of common sense based on the needs and desires of the local community."

Spriet also cited the state's 2020 goal to make Oregon "a more equitable place for every Oregon" in part by having state officials work closely with community leaders.

"We do not currently feel that this element of the framework is being realized," Spriet wrote. "Our commu-

nity is not currently being heard by our state leadership. We are asking for a seat at the table, a voice for our citizens, and an opportunity to provide input to restrictions that have a profound effect on our rural communities."

All council members will sign the letter before it is sent to Brown.

Lodging tax work group
In other business Tuesday, councilors voted unanimously to participate in a city-county work group that will review the lodging tax system.

County Commissioner Mark Bennett proposed the six-member group, half appointed by the county and half by the City Council, during a March 3 county meeting.

Mayor Kerry McQuisten said the work group will be looking at the entire lodging tax program, which currently uses taxes paid by guests at motels and other lodging establishments for tourism promotion and economic development.

McQuisten recently suggested the city withdraw from a 2006 agreement with the county under which the county administers the tax program.

Councilors voted 4-3 on Feb. 23 to remain in that agreement.

On Tuesday McQuisten asked councilors to email her if they're interested in serving on the work group.

Also on Tuesday's agenda:
• Councilors approved the 2021 capital projects plans for the city's water, wastewater and stormwater systems, as well as the pavement management plan.

According to a staff report submitted by Public Works Director Michelle Owen, this year's water plan focuses on continuing the long-term project to replace the city's main water supply line from the watershed to town.

For the pavement plan, the city plans to repave Washington Avenue from Clark to Birch street.

• Councilors approved the

online sale of surplus items from the city's public works department, with an amendment to remove from the surplus list fiberglass candy cane street decorations, and playground equipment.

Owen said Shelly Cutler, director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, has offered to buy the candy canes in the public works surplus.

"The idea was to sell the candy canes so that we could afford to purchase new items for Campbell Street," Owen said.

Councilor Joanna Dixon said she wanted to see if another park could use the playground equipment.

• The Council voted 4-3 to appoint Beverly Calder to the Public Works Advisory Committee. The other applicant was Gary Carter.

Councilors Shane Alderson, Lynette Perry, Heather Sells and Spriet voted for Calder.

Councilors Dixon, Johnny Waggoner Jr. and McQuisten voted for Carter.

Newberg man hurt in crash on Highway 7

By Chris Collins

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A Newberg man remains hospitalized and was listed in fair condition Wednesday, March 10, at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise where he is being treated for injuries he sustained in a March 5 crash on Highway 7 near Old Auburn Road, about 5 miles south of Baker City.

Jesse Manuel Galvan, 40, was flown by Life Flight helicopter to the Boise hospital after being extricated from his 1998 Subaru Legacy sedan by a Baker City ambulance crew, Oregon State Police Trooper Timothy Schuette stated in a report.

Speed and driver impairment are being investigated as factors in the crash, he said.

The two-vehicle crash happened about 4:30 p.m. March 5.

The second vehicle, driven by Gary Waldo Engle, 77, of Monument, was a

Ram 2500 pickup truck pulling a gooseneck stock trailer. Patricia Marlene Engle, 73, of Monument, was traveling with him. They were not hurt.

Schuette said Galvan was driving north, and as he negotiated a corner near Old Auburn Road, his vehicle left the lane of travel for an unknown reason and swerved back and forth between the two lanes.

Gary Engle said he saw the vehicle driving erratically as it came toward his pickup and he slowed and moved as far to the right as possible to avoid a crash.

Galvan's car hit the front of the pickup truck as it slid broadside in the opposite lane of travel, damaging the driver's side of the car.

Traffic on the two-lane highway was blocked for more than half an hour to allow for the crash investigation and to remove the vehicles from the scene, Schuette said.

North Powder halibut feed a drive-thru event April 17

NORTH POWDER — The annual halibut feed at North Powder, a fundraiser for volleyball and girls basketball teams at Powder Valley High School, is planned for Saturday, April 17, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The event will be a drive-thru, and tickets are limited to 600. Tickets go on sale March 18 and are \$25 each for a menu that includes halibut, baked potato, French bread, coleslaw and dessert.

To have your name added to a waiting list for tickets, call the high school at 541-898-2244, extension 8821. Specify the number of tickets sought and the half-hour time slot for picking up the meals.

Baker man arrested on multiple drug charges

By Chris Collins

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Baker City Police arrested a Baker City man Monday, March 8, on multiple crimes tied to distributing drugs in the community.

Loren Dean Alexander Prevo, 32, is being held at the Baker County Jail on charges of third-degree assault, criminal conspiracy, coercion, tampering with a witness, delivery and possession of methamphetamine, heroin and oxycodone and possession of a restricted weapon, Lt. Ty Duby stated in a press release. The weapon was a Taser, Duby said.

Members of the Baker County

Narcotics Enforcement Team, with help from the Baker City Police Department's K-9 Capa, executed a search warrant on Prevo and his vehicle at the corner of Fourth and Place streets.

Through the investigation and search, Duby said "a substantial amount of methamphetamine was located along with other items indicative of narcotics distribution."

In addition to the methamphetamine, police seized more than a user amount of heroin and numerous pills



Prevo

identified as oxycodone, a schedule II controlled substance, Duby said.

Police also had probable cause to arrest Prevo on the additional charges in connection with a February incident in which Prevo and others are accused of assaulting and injuring Sean Michael Dethloff, 23, and Markus Damian Dethloff, 21, both of Haines, according to court records. Markus Dethloff was taken to the hospital for treatment, the court records state.

The assault took place at the Knights Inn at 2205 Broadway St., Duby said.

Prevo has no fixed address but had been staying most recently at 1690

Indiana Ave., Duby said. The Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team executed a narcotics-related search warrant at that address on Sept. 15, 2020. During that search police found a quantity of methamphetamine, stolen property and firearms. Prevo was not at the house when the warrant was executed, Duby stated.

Prevo had earlier been staying at the Torrance Apartments at 1604 Fourth St. Community members had complained to police about possible drug trafficking at the Indiana Avenue and the Fourth Street properties where Prevo had been staying, Duby said.

During the investigation, officers found numerous tools that they believe were possibly stolen, Duby said. Police were unable to connect the stolen items to any recent burglaries or thefts for lack of identifying marks or serial numbers, Duby said.

Officers did find a yellow tape measure with the initials VS on it and a DeWalt 20-volt battery that has blue paint and the name Josh written on it, he said.

Duby reminded community residents that without serial numbers or other identifying markings, it is difficult for police to recover and return stolen items.

PRISON

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Sixty-two other counts against Cernazanu were dismissed, including more charges of second-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, first-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, first-degree invasion of personal privacy and using a child in sexually explicit conduct.

Cernazanu was ordered to complete three year's post-prison supervision upon release. Shirtcliff also ordered Cernazanu to complete sex offender treatment upon release and to register as a sex offender.

Baxter and Robert Moon, a Baker City attorney who was appointed to represent Cernazanu, each called witnesses to bolster their case. Baxter argued for the 15-year sentence, and Moon called for a shorter prison term.

An audience of about 30 people, including law enforcement and mental health professionals, and victims and their family members, were in the courtroom during the two-hour hearing.

Cernazanu was arrested April 24, 2020, at his Baker City home after an investigation by the state Department of Justice and the Oregon State Police (OSP). OSP had served search warrants at Cernazanu's home on Feb. 19, 2020, in which digital evidence, including computers and phones, were seized and later analyzed by the Department of Justice.

The investigation began when Google reported sexually explicit photos of a young person to the national center for Missing and Exploited Children. The allegations were next taken to the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, which identified Cernazanu as a suspect.

"This is a horrible amount of child pornography, which is a huge problem in our society."

— Judge Matt Shirtcliff, who sentenced David Cernazanu to a 15-year prison term

What they found was "an astronomical amount of child pornography," Baxter said during Tuesday's proceedings.

He argued that, through his crimes, Cernazanu had violated not only his victims, but also their parents and the community who had put their trust in him.

Baxter asked the judge to take into consideration that among the victims were eight local children, four of whom were in the courtroom Tuesday. Baxter said parents had trusted Cernazanu, who had worked in a position of authority as a guard at Powder River Correctional Facility since 2017 and had served as a reserve officer for the Baker City Police Department for a short time. The girls came to his home as friends of his daughter, who also was victimized, the district attorney said.

The victims have suffered depression, suicidal thoughts, anorexia and negative feelings of self-worth as a result of Cernazanu's crimes, Baxter said.

"He deserves to be punished," he said. "These girls deserve justice and Mr. Cernazanu needs to be held accountable for his actions."

Baxter said he submitted a confidential memorandum to the court listing the victims' names and further detailing the sexual nature of the videos Cernazanu had taken. The victims were filmed without their knowledge while sleeping at the Cernazanu

home and in various stages of undress in the bedroom and bathroom with cameras placed at strategic locations in the home.

Baxter stated that he accepted the plea agreement in the best interest of the eight teenage girls, ages 13 to 17 at the time, who were victimized by Cernazanu. Baxter said he has spoken to five of the girls.

"Talking with family members, I do believe their testimony would cause new trauma and open new wounds," Baxter said.

The district attorney said that without the plea agreement, Cernazanu, had he been convicted on all counts, would have faced a life sentence.

A jury trial had been scheduled to begin June 1, 2021.

Cernazanu's daughter spoke to her father during Tuesday's hearing.

"I forgive you and still love you so much," she said.

But in his treatment toward her and her friends, she reminded him of what he had always told her while she was growing up: "Actions speak louder than words."

She told him of the nightmares she lives with and the guilt she carries because of his actions.

"I blame myself for these other girls," she said.

She detailed the experiences she'll have without her father by her side, including her high school graduation.

She said she plans to go to college and to study to become a caseworker to help other kids in the future.

"I wish nothing but the best for you," she told her father. "I wish you had been in court so I could have hugged you goodbye."

Cernazanu participated in the hearing by video from the jail.

Thomas McLay, Powder

River superintendent, was one of the first to speak in support of the 15-year sentence. McLay said morale among staff at the minimum-security prison has been affected by Cernazanu's criminal behavior.

"We are sworn to uphold the law and protect the citizens of Oregon," McLay said of his employees.

Amy Ford, an OSP detective, also asked the judge to uphold the longer sentence.

"What is reported is typically the tip of the iceberg," she said.

Moon, the defense attorney who represented Cernazanu, argued for a five-year prison term that would have allowed his client to more quickly enroll in sex offender treatment, which is not available in prison, upon release. Moon pointed to mitigating factors supporting the lighter sentence, including Cernazanu's lack of any prior criminal history and his military service.

He also submitted a detailed memorandum to the court that described Cernazanu's early childhood sexual abuse, trauma experienced

in the military, his difficult divorce from the mother of his two children and other details of his life that led him to an addiction to child pornography.

Zola Pike of John Day, a DHS caseworker in Grant County when Cernazanu was a child, told the judge that Cernazanu's family's case of child sexual abuse and physical abuse and neglect was the worst she had seen in her 30 years of social work.

Cernazanu's adopted mother, Jeanette "Tootie" Cernazanu, of John Day, who with her husband, Jim, adopted the sibling family of four, described the difficulties Cernazanu has experienced throughout his life.

And Laura Zorich, a licensed clinical psychologist, who appeared by video, advocated for the shorter sentence in order to accommodate treatment for Cernazanu as soon as possible. Zorich said the earlier he can receive treatment, the less likely it would be that he would reoffend. She said she would expect the risk to be low, as it is for most child pornography offenders, at about 2.8%

within five years.

Cernazanu offered his own apology to his victims and their family members.

"I did not mean to hurt anyone," he said.

He pleaded with the judge for the more lenient sentence.

"Please allow me to be with my kids as they grow up," he said.

In announcing his decision, Judge Shirtcliff sympathized with the hardships Cernazanu has suffered in his life, noting the mitigating factors of Cernazanu's own abuse as a child and trauma he experienced in the military. But the judge said he had to look toward community safety in sentencing the defendant to the harsher prison term.

"This is a horrible amount of child pornography, which is a huge problem in our society," Shirtcliff said.

"The harm or loss is great," he said, pointing to the trauma the girls have suffered and Cernazanu's violation of the trust parents put in him when they allowed their daughters to visit his home.

"That will not be tolerated in this community," Shirtcliff said.

Are you Interested in Teaching Preschool?



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is hiring a part-time preschool teacher. Candidates with a background in early education and experience working with children are preferred. The position will pay \$20-\$25/hour, depending on experience. Classes run three hours per day Monday-Thursday with additional prep time. Interested candidates need to submit a letter of interest detailing their relevant background and experience along with two current

references to St. Stephens Preschool, P.O. Box 1146, Baker City, OR 97814 or email to: st-stephens@qwestoffice.net.

If you or someone you know might be interested in this opportunity you can also visit our YouTube channel to learn more by <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJ2rUNn94FA>.

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