

Community



Jon Hanley/Submitted photo

One panel of Jon Hanley's mural at Old Pine Market in Halfway depicts how horses have been used in agriculture in the Pine Valley of eastern Baker County.

MURAL

Continued from Page 1A

Hanley drew 10 different scenes that incorporate the local scenery and various uses of horses, from providing transportation for the Native Americans to logging, agriculture, mining, rodeo and more.

"We could have incorporated 40 more horse scenes," he said.

The mural is about 30 feet long, with each era blending into the next.

"I wanted to do something that tells a story and how integral horses were to daily life," he said. "I've never done anything quite like it. I hope people love it as much as I loved doing it."

His second mural at the market will be in the entryway and depict how the building and town looked in 1906.

Decades as a cartoonist

Hanley lives in Pocatello, Idaho, but grew up in La Grande.

That was where, at age 15, he began his journey as a political cartoonist.

He first drew cartoons for the weekly Eastern Oregon Review, then freelanced for The Observer during high school, from 1976 to 1979.

"That was my foray into professional illustrating," he said.

He became a full-time cartoonist while attending Portland Community College.

He's drawn cartoons of every president from Nixon to now.

"It's delightful," Hanley said. "I'm bipartisan in my



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Jon Hanley, who has made a career as a political cartoonist, is creating several murals in Halfway as well as making a cartoon-style map of the area from Hells Canyon to Sparta.

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— Jon Hanley

cartooning. I won all my cartooning awards doing (Ronald) Reagan and (Mikhail) Gorbachev."

From his time at college, he developed a certain approach to political cartoons.

"We were conscientious that the editorial cartoons made an impact, made a difference. I've always done that," he said. "It's been a good career. I've enjoyed it."

Other artistic ventures

Along with the cartoons, Hanley's work includes murals and set painting for live theater.

Another venture includes cartoon-style maps of towns. So far he's mapped 92 places and this year he's focusing on Halfway.

The map will cover about 30 miles from Hells Canyon to Sparta.

"It will incorporate the history of the area, and be filled with trivia," he said.

The map measures 11 inches by 7 inches, and will be folded into a brochure size. Although one side is a highly stylized depiction of businesses and landmarks, the opposite side has a more traditional map of the area.

"It makes a souvenir for years to come," Hanley said.

This is the first map project where he's spent extensive time in the area, which has helped him collect history of the area.

"I've met all the old-timers — we can sit down and talk about history," he said. "Pine Valley has been really hospitable. Everyone has been so sweet."

It was time to map Halfway, he said, because he's already completed similar projects across Eastern Oregon including Baker City, La Grande, Joseph, Weiser, and Ontario.

Although he has a few trips planned back to Pocatello, he will stay with family in Halfway this summer until the map is finished.

He's also scheduled to paint a mural in La Grande.

Police warn of pills, drugs laced with fentanyl

Three fatal drug overdoses in Baker City in the past six months were tied to counterfeit opioid pills laced with fentanyl, a powerful painkiller, local officials said in a press release on Monday, May 3.

The joint release was from the Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team and New Directions Northwest Mental Health and Crisis Response Partners.

The fentanyl-laced pills are sometimes called "blues" or M30's," according to the press release.

"While we recognize there are a variety of reasons for drug use we want to remind the public that we will actively pursue and prosecute individuals and/or organizations that continue to distribute dangerous narcotics to community members," said Lt. Ty DUBY of the Baker City Police. "We also want to remind folks that one can be held criminally liable for a death if they were the supplier of that substance.

"Our team currently sees methamphetamine and heroin, laced with fentanyl, as the number one drug problem in the Baker City area," DUBY said. "We do see pill use in the form of Oxycodone pills. We also have seen locally the blue pills that are most likely manufactured in Mexico made to look like oxy 30's and they also have some fentanyl mixed in."

Although Baker City Police officers and Baker City Fire Department paramedics carry Narcan, which can prevent overdoses by blocking the toxic effects of opioids, during the past year one person who was saved by Narcan was found dead two days later from another overdose, according to the press release.

"We want individuals who use heroin or oxy 30 pills to know what's truly in it," DUBY said. "Information on the street and lab tests are showing that more often than not the heroin also contains a certain amount of fentanyl. In the last six months Baker City Police have responded to three known overdose deaths involving suspected heroin containing fentanyl. We are seeing certain individuals repeatedly overdosing."

According to the press release, fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that's up to 50 times more potent than heroin. Even amounts as small as two milligrams — the size of two grains of table salt — is a fatal dose for most people.

New Directions Northwest CEO Shari Selander said members of its Mobile Crisis Response Team, which works with emergency responders during overdoses and other crisis events, have seen an increase during the pandemic in people feeling hopeless.

"Yet, rather than seeking help, which is available, some are self-medicating, and unfortunately, checking out," Selander said. "We need to end this. We need to get people the help they need, when they need it. Either through crisis response, in the moment of an event, along with the use of Naloxone (Narcan), or medical detox and crisis stabilization, or through prevention, with mental health services, and/or group therapy."

Selander said a communitywide effort is needed to spread the word about the dangers of pills and drugs containing fentanyl.

New Directions Northwest has naloxone/Narcan kits available for free. Selander urges anyone who needs help with drug addiction to call New Directions at 541-523-7400. A 24-hour crisis hotline is also available by calling 541-519-7126. If an overdose is suspected, 911 should be called immediately to obtain medical assistance.

"There is no shame in seeking help, we have professionals within our community that can make a difference, we want to save lives, and everyone matters," Selander said. "We are fortunate to live in a community that cares and supports each other, so make a call when red flags are raised."

Signs and symptoms of an overdose

You can identify an opioid overdose by a combination of three symptoms known as the opioid triad. The triad consists of:

- Pinpoint pupils
 - Unconsciousness
 - Respiratory depression
- Additional signs and symptoms:
- Unresponsiveness
 - Awake, but unable to talk
 - Body is very limp

See **Fentanyl**/Page 5A

MAYOR

Continued from Page 1A

McQuisten, who was elected to the City Council in November 2020, took office in January 2021 and was elected mayor by a vote of the council.

She drafted Resolution 3881 in consultation with City Manager Jon Cannon and the city's attorney.

"I want this to pass so that we can stand together with you guys and make a very loud statement that will hopefully spread across the state," McQuisten said during the March 23 council meeting. "If we can get the media and other cities and other counties to listen to this and do something similar, that's our only shot as far as I can see of getting the state and Salem to listen to us."

The resolution blames Brown's executive orders during the pandemic for pushing "businesses to the brink of permanent closure, creating a fiscal emergency and a devastated local economy."

The resolution also contends that the governor's orders, including

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— Kerry McQuisten, Baker City mayor

face mask mandates, "are actively creating division and unrest with the increased potential of physical violence within our community as those of one opinion are encouraged by it to impose their opinions over the free will of those of another in a physical way ..."

McQuisten said she's hearing from people across Oregon, including other mayors and elected officials, that Baker City is being seen as an epicenter of freedom.

On Monday, May 3, Stan Pulliam, mayor of Sandy, Oregon, announced that a lawsuit would be filed in federal court on behalf of several businesses and individuals, the Heart of Main Street and Oregon Moms Union, challenging Brown's authority to issue executive orders

related to the pandemic.

She said she has lost count of how many people she has spoken with about the resolution.

"Between the messages, the calls, and the emails, I am just about physically unable to respond to them all at this point," McQuisten said. "It has been overwhelming. I have heard from people, citizens, county commissioners, other mayors, it's been all over the state. And it's not just on the east side of the state, it's primarily on the west side I'm hearing from people."

McQuisten said response to the resolution was relatively slow for the first few weeks after councilors approved it.

But on April 28, PJ Media published an online story about the

resolution, including comments from McQuisten.

The momentum grew rapidly after that, she said.

"There were posts on some very large online groups such as Timber in Unity with 65,000 members, Open Oregon posted it, and from there it just went crazy," McQuisten said.

McQuisten was interviewed on the Lars Larson radio program on Thursday, April 29.

She said The Blaze, an online media source started by conservative commentator Glenn Beck, also published a story last week about Baker City's resolution, and that accelerated national interest in the topic.

"From the Blaze article, that's where Fox host Pete Hegseth — he's going to be moving from Fox and Friends to hosting Fox News Prime-time this whole coming week — and Pete actually saw the Blaze article and it had a link to my mayor's Facebook Page," McQuisten said. "So, he checked all of that out and then he asked the Fox booking manager if he could get in touch with me if I would like to interview with him."

Although the city's resolution acknowledges that the city can neither legally ignore state mandates nor protect from state sanctions any businesses that flout the rules, McQuisten said she hopes the recent attention to the resolution will lead to changes in state restrictions.

"That was the intent of the resolution," she said. "The first purpose was to give our citizens a voice. And the second purpose was to hopefully trigger a snowball effect across the state because right now we're not being heard. If you ask a question of the governor that doesn't fit in with the lockdown, it's ignored. I mean, flat out ignored. Correspondence that people are sending, ignored. Requests for data are ignored. We just had a historic letter signed by 27 of our 36 counties, 80 county commissioners, and instead of listening to that feedback from all of these counties, she said 'no, you're wrong and I'm right' and we weren't even considered. So hopefully this resolution continues to put the pressure on so she has to hear us."