JUBILEE

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The tale in total was one that spoke of a community eager to enjoy one of the traditions they lost to 2020 and the pandemic.

This year's Miners Jubilee was a huge success, said Shelly Cutler, executive director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, which puts on the event.

That success was especially sweet after a year when Cutler had the unenviable task of announcing that Miners Jubilee 2020 was canceled.

"I knew it was going to be huge cause we can all finally gather again, but I had no idea it was going to be that big," Cutler said on Monday morning, July 19. "I couldn't have been happier."

This year's Jubilee brought "record-breaking crowds" and far surpassed attendance from the previous four events, Cutler said.

She said three food vendors at the park sold out of everything and had to restock rapidly to feed the hungry hordes. First-time vendors were shocked at how much they sold, Cutler said, and they told her they plan to return in 2022.

There is room for improvement, Cutler said. Visitors complained about the lack of parking and restrooms, although the same number of resources sufficed in previous years. This year, however, proved to be a whole different beast.

Saturday's parade, which was almost canceled due to a lack of entries, ended up with 48, many of which had multiple vehicles. Copious quantities of candy were tossed and, almost as quickly, claimed.

"I can't tell you how grateful and how thankful I am to our community for coming out," Cutler said. "Without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do."

Baker County Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

Geiser-Pollman Park was bustling during Miners Jubilee.

JAIL

Continued from Page A1

Among the precautions that remain in effect are that masks are required in the jail, and corrections officers wear masks when they interact with inmates.

One of the challenges with the building during the pandemic is that its ventilation system is relatively antiquated.

"All air is shared," Ash said in March 2020, just after he instituted changes in its operation due to the pandemic.

The building is not just a jail — it also houses the sheriff's office and the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center.

The jail's quarantine process continues, with inmates being placed in a separate holding cell when they arrive.

"We have four quarantine pens, four separate isolation areas where we can quarantine somebody and lock them down," Ash said. "Right now I have four people in those holding cells, and so that is what really restricts the number of what we can bring into the jail."

The jail has a capacity of 45 inmates.

During the height of the pandemic the jail on occasion had fewer than 10 inmates, but Ash said that number has been rising. On Monday, July 19, there were 23 inmates.

"We are trying to follow the guidelines, trying to house as many inmates as we can," Ash said. "There was a time at the jail where we had under ten inmates, we've been trying to bump that number. We work with our partners as much as we can — with the police department, the state police — we talk to them all the time. They understand, they've been to the jail. They understand what the restrictions are in regards to spacing."

People charged with "person crimes" such as domestic violence, generally are taken to the jail.

Those accused of property crimes, such as vandalism, often are cited and released instead of being jailed, at least briefly, as they might have been prior to the pandemic.

"We've held some lesser statute crimes but it was all about the population and the spacing of the jail," Ash said.

Although the jail has just the four quarantine cells, Ash said that in some instances — when someone is charged with a felony, as an example — jail staff have used other parts of the building for temporary quarantines to ensure the suspect is incarcerated.

"I have two hallways, and I have the intake cell, we have had to use those," Ash said.

The jail staff have to consider legal as well as health implications, the sheriff said.

"Inmates and their attorneys can sue us if they get sick, or if we have an illness come in and we are operating outside of the guidelines, that sets us up for a lawsuit, and that part of the management of the jail, that is something that we want to avoid at all costs, and we want to keep people healthy" Ash said.

In one case an inmate was admitted, after which jail staff learned he had tested positive for COVID-19, Ash said.

They immediately quarantined that inmate.

"Luckily our protocols were in place, and that person was quarantined and nobody else got sick," Ash said.

The sheriff concedes the situation during the pandemic has not been ideal.

"It's not what works for everyone, but our hands are tied simply that we are in a 30-year-old facility and we simply don't have the space to put them and follow the guidelines," Ash said. "It's between a rock and a hard place."

Wildfires affecting tribal lands

By Gillian Flaccus and Nathan Howard
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Karuk tribal citizen Troy Hockaday Sr. watched helplessly last fall as a raging wildfire leveled the homes of five of his family members, swallowed acres of forest where his people hunt deer, elk and black bear, and killed a longtime friend.

Now, less than a year later, the tribal councilman is watching in horror as flames encroach on the parched lands of other Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest that already are struggling to preserve traditional hunting and fishing practices amid historic drought. At least two tribes have declared states of emergency amid the devastation.

After last year's Slater Fire near Happy Camp, California, "We got spread out all over the place," said Hockaday, who said about 200 homes, including many belonging to Karuk citizens, were burned. "Some people have already sold their property and given up. But the tribe as a whole, we're trying to build ourselves back and be strong."

"It's hard to watch the devastation of what a fire can do nowadays. It's just crazy — and we just started July," he added.

Blazes in Oregon, California, and Washington state were among nearly 70 active wildfires that have destroyed homes and burned through about 1,562 square miles in a dozen mostly Western states, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

Extremely dry conditions and heat waves tied to climate change have swept the region, making wildfires harder to fight. Climate change has made the American West warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

The Northwest Interagency Coordination Center moved the Pacific Northwest region up to the highest alert level Wednesday, July 14 — rare for this time of year — as dry, gusty winds were expected in parts of Oregon and new fires popped up.

The largest fire in the U.S., the Bootleg fire, was burning in southern Oregon, to the northeast of the wildfire that ravaged Hockaday's tribal community less than a year ago.

See **Blazes** */ Page A5*

Campaign to recall Findley can circulate petitions

By Gary A. Warner
Oregon Capital Bureau

A recall effort against Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, has been officially approved to begin circulating petitions, the Secretary of State said Thursday, July 15.

The Findley recall was approved to circulate petitions on July 7.

Proponents now have until 5 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 13 to submit least 8,289 valid signatures.

"Each petition signer must be an active registered voter in Senate District 30 at the time of signing the petition," said Carla Axtman, communications director for Secretary of State Shemia Fagan.

Findley

Findley's Senate District 30 is the largest in the senate, covering all of Baker, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Malheur and Wheeler counties and parts of Deschutes, Lake and Wasco counties.

The Secretary of State's website shows that a "Findley Failed" political action committee was created on July 1.

Patrick A. Kopke-Hales of Mount Vernon is listed as the chief petitioner. HollyJo A. Beers of Pendleton is listed as the treasurer.

As of Friday — 15 days since it was created — the committee showed no financial contributions or spending.

Findley was among six Republican senators who have been sharply criticized by some conservative activists for voting against Senate Bill 554, a gun control bill, rather than walking out to prevent the legislation from moving forward.

The final version of the SB 554 barred concealed weapons from the state Capitol and the passenger terminal at Portland International Airport. An amendment by the House added new rules for gun storage and locks in homes.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, told the East Oregonian newspaper that prior to the vote, the Republican caucus had been lobbied by the Oregon Firearms Federation, which advertises itself as the state's "no compromise" gun rights group, to walk out on the session. A Republican walkout would have prevented a quorum in the Senate, stopping all legislation.

The decision of whether or not Republicans should walk out over the gun bill split the caucus.

Sen. Fred Girod, R-Stayton, said he would go to the Senate floor to argue against the bill and vote, even though it would mean a quorum would be present and the bill would likely pass with Democrats in support.

Republicans should not bring the session to a halt with more than three months to go and crucial legislation still pending, Girod argued. He also expressed concern that Republican single interest groups were beginning to expect a walkout against bills they opposed.

In the end, six Republican senators — Girod, Findley, Bill Hansell of Athena, Tim Knopp of Bend, Bill Kennemer of Canby and Dick Anderson of Lincoln City — went to the floor to vote against the bill.

But the move was far from unanimous. Republican senators who chose to be absent without Senate permission included:

- Dallas Heard of Roseburg, who is also the chair of the Oregon Republican Party.
- Dennis Linthicum of Klamath Falls, who is also the treasurer of the Oregon Republican Party.
- Kim Thatcher of Keizer, who was also the unsuccessful GOP nominee for Secretary of State in 2020.
- Art Robinson of Cave Junction, a freshman, who would eventually leave the Republican caucus to join Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas as senators elected as Republicans but announcing later they were independent.

Other senators received permission in advance to be excused, removing them from the center of the quorum issue.

Though Findley and the other GOP lawmakers spoke out forcefully against the bill, their presence in the chamber allowed for a quorum of senators to do business.

SB 554 passed 16-7, with Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose also opposing the bill. It was sent to the House, where House Minority Leader Christine Drazan, R-Canby, announced ahead of time that there would not be a walkout. The bill, with some Democratic amendments, passed 34-24.

Gov. Kate Brown signed the bill, which will go into effect on Sept. 27. Backers of a proposed referendum to overturn the bill must submit 74,680 valid signatures to the Secretary of State by Sept. 24. The law would then be put on hold until voters could decide the issue in the November 2022 general election.

After refusing to walk out, there were angry denouncements of the Republicans who went to the floor instead of walking out.

The Senate Republican Caucus also reported death threats against some of the GOP senators to the Oregon State Police for investigation. No actions has been publicly announced on the threats.

A recall was filed against Girod, but the July 6 deadline to file petitions passed with no documents submitted. That action is now dead.

The Findley recall is in an earlier phase, with the circulation of petitions approved on July 7, the day after the demise of the Girod recall drive.

Kopke-Hales wrote in his June 14 comments on the petition that Findley's failure to walk out was "against the values and principles of the constituents he represents."

Findley told the Blue Mountain Eagle in June that going to the floor of the Senate was doing the job voters sent him to Salem to do: represent constituents' positions and values through the legislative process.

"I chose to stand and fight and put stuff on the record," he said, "and by staying in the session, I was able to work hard for the constituents. And that's what I'm supposed to do."

The petition also criticized Findley for co-authoring Senate Bill 865 with Hansell which would have barred senators from simultaneously holding public office and being an officer in a major political party.

The bill was seen as a slam on Heard and Linthicum for walking out. But Hansell and Findley said its purpose was to assure that actions and votes by lawmakers in the Senate not be confused with officially sanctioned state party positions.

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