

## Fire Risk

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“We want local input into the development of these maps,” Findley said on Thursday, Aug. 4. “They need to talk with planners (and) local fire agencies and people have to receive credit for the work they’ve already done for the hardening of their facilities.”

Concern about the fire risk map, which was among the requirements in Senate Bill 762, which the Oregon Legislature passed in 2021, flared recently after the Forestry Department mailed letters to owners of about 80,000 tax lots that are within the WUI and have a wildfire risk rating of high or extreme.

Those property owners could potentially be required to take steps to reduce the fire risk on their property. They could also be subject to more restrictive building codes.

But the risk map designations have had other effects unrelated to the state law and associated regulations.

Kevin Cassidy, who lives along Rock Creek west of Haines, can attest to that.

Cassidy said the company that he provided his insurance for about 20 years recently notified him that his policy was canceled because his property had been deemed at high risk for wildfire.

Cassidy said he was stunned.

He said he has thinned the forest on his land and taken other steps to reduce the wildfire risk, and that he supports the intent of Senate

Bill 762.

Cassidy also said his property is bordered on three sides by irrigated land, which he believes greatly reduces the threat of fire.

Senate Bill 762 requires the risk level for tax lots be based on the local weather, climate, topography and vegetation, the latter criterion determined by aerial data.

Cassidy said no one from the state has ever visited his property to assess the wildfire risk.

Although Cassidy received a letter in late July from the Forestry Department notifying him that his property was within the WUI and designated as high risk, he didn’t realize that designation could affect his insurance, much less almost immediately.

Cassidy said the connection became clear last weekend during a phone conversation with a friend who lives in Union County and whose property has the same designation as Cassidy’s.

Cassidy said he understood then that the letter from the state, and the wildfire risk map, had led to his policy, which was up for renewal, not being extended.

Cassidy said he found a new insurance provider. But his policy costs twice as much as the previous one — \$2,400 per year.

Although Findley and Owens both voted for Senate Bill 762, Findley said he and other supporters believed the state would assign fire risk ratings only to tax lots within the wildland-urban interface, not for all 1.8 million tax lots in Oregon.

acre property could be used to help meet those needs.

Money for the annual lease payments will come from the county’s 7% tax that guests at motels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rental homes and other lodging facilities pay.

The lodging tax budget has a \$400,000 reserve for economic development projects.

The county’s lodging tax revenue has risen substantially over the past two years after dipping to its lowest level in several years during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

In April 2020, when many businesses were closed, lodging tax revenue was \$8,360, the lowest monthly total in more than 15 years.

The total tax collections for the 2019-20 fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2020, was \$408,776. That was the lowest annual total since 2013-14, when revenue was \$404,462.

Lodging tax collections rose during the 2020-21 fiscal year to \$537,860 — a nearly 32% increase.

Revenue continued to rise during the fiscal year that ended June 30, and that year’s revenue likely will be the highest since at least 2003-4. For the first eight months of that fiscal year, revenue was up by 58% compared with the previous year — \$508,337 compared with \$320,871.

### Other business

- Also on Wednesday, commissioners unanimously approved the second reading of Ordinance 2022-04, an ordinance declaring a ban on psilocybin product manufacturers and psilocybin service center operators within unincorporated Baker County.

County voters will have the final say, in the Nov. 8 election, whether to ban businesses related to psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in “magic mushrooms.”

Baker City will have the same measure on the Nov. 8 ballot.

County Counsel Kim Mosier said she included a yes or no statement in the ballot title for the county’s measure after seeing the potential for confusion.

“Approval of this measure creates a ban and just to make it really clear that folks need to vote ‘yes’ if they want to approve a ban on psilocybin,” said Mosier.

- unanimously approved the renewal of the professional services agreement with Corey Ham for jail medical services.

- unanimously approved the purchase of a Toyota RAV4 for the Baker County Sheriff’s Office for \$31,498.65.

- unanimously approved the renewal of the professional services agreement with Monte Anderson P.A. for mid-level services at the School Based Health Center.

## Cafe

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“I sure hope people love them.”

Hailing from Klamath

Falls originally, Macey brought her sense of Cascades green along with her family.



Blankenship

Macey is Jubilee’s co-owner along with her husband, Derek, an optometrist at the Baker Vision Clinic.

“I’ve been staying at home raising our two boys for the past two years, but I always wanted to open a small business,” Macey said.

During a recent interview she was preparing for the grand opening, training employees and arranging the space for all potential company.

The plant side of Macey’s store will offer botanical services and will feature plant fertilizers, mite treatments and repotting.

If you’ve got a sick plant, she said, “bring it in, we’ll take a look at it.”

The cafe side will have a range of favorites — cold brew, drop coffee, French press, teas, lemonades, small confections and even flavored sweet creamer specials. While the plants are sourced from nurseries in the Pacific Northwest, she says they’ll be making their signature creamers in-house.

“We started looking into



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

The lounge of Baker’s new plant cafe, Jubilee Plants and Gathering, on Aug. 1, 2022. The business had its grand opening on Saturday, Aug. 6.

small business options, something in the wheelhouse of our abilities and interests,” Macey said.

“This spring, probably April, we really hit the gas and went for it.”

Jubilee Plants and Gathering is opening during Shrine weekend, and Macey said she hopes they’ll have a surplus of visitors in town for the football game, parade, demolition derby and other events.

“I’m getting a feel of what it’ll be like to partner with people in the community, just to make this a place where everyone feels welcome,” Macey said.

“This is a really creative

space.”

She’s excited about bonding with people in the area especially, and has plans to make use of the building, which formerly housed Sweet Wife Baking, in several ways, musing that she’s considered a sliding ladder so she can add shelves of plants even further up the walls.

“In the fall we’re going to start offering monthly classes,” she said, hoping to host plant basics courses, small musical acts, local artists and eventually upgrade the kitchen as she gains regular customers.

“We had the idea that it would do good, I didn’t ex-

pect this much enthusiasm from the beginning,” Macey said.

Even before the business opened, she said her small previews were receiving lots of positive feedback as she put in the finishing touches with the help of friends.

“I love watching things grow — kids, plants, community. I wanted to make a space where all these things can grow,” she said.

Her store hours will be Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit her site at jubileplantsandgathering.com or facebook.com/jubileplantsandgathering for details on the grand opening.

## Deal

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The county will make annual payments of \$72,500 over five years that will go toward the \$1.45 million total price. After five years, the county could exercise its option to buy the property by paying the balance of \$1,087,500. There will be no interest charged, so the full amount of the lease payments will reduce the purchase balance.

Commission Chairman Bill Harvey said the county will not use general fund dollars for the lease payments. The county will use lodging tax revenue for the lease payments, Commissioner Bruce Nichols said.

Harvey said Wednesday that the county will apply for grants to cover the \$1,087,500 purchase cost.

Commissioners haven’t decided how they’ll use the property.

Tyler Brown, a member of the Baker County Economic Development Council, which recommended the county acquire the property, said in early June that council members had discussed multiple possible uses for parts of the property, including an indoor sports facility that could potentially ease the pressure on Baker High School’s gym during the Class 1A state basketball tournaments and host other, new sports tournaments, as well as additional parking.

Nichols said on Friday morning, Aug. 5, that he voted for the lease-purchase agreement although he has concerns about the county’s ability to raise the slightly more than a million dollars needed to exercise the purchase option.

“We better go after those grants quickly,” Nichols said.

He said the county could potentially exercise its purchase option any time after two years and before the five-year lease period ends, but that would require an even larger one-time cash payment.

Nichols said the deal should give the county an advantage in applying for grants, since the lease-purchase contract guarantees the county the right to buy the property.

“We have that land tied up for five years,” he said. “We’re in good shape there.”

Nichols, who said in early June that acquiring the property is “an excellent opportunity” for the county, said he believes one of the better uses for the parcel is a new location for the Baker County Fairgrounds.

Commissioners said the county will conduct an economic development needs assessment for the community and ways in which the 70-

## Teamwork

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The Baker County Sheriff’s Office issued a Level 2 notice for several homes, asking residents to be ready to evacuate if needed.

There were no evacuations.

Lowry, Phillips and Harper all lauded the rapid response from firefighters from more than half a dozen agencies, including volunteer fire and rangeland protection districts, the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service.

“I’m very thankful for all the resources that showed up,” Lowry said.

Phillips agreed. “A lot of good people came to help,” he said. “We’re fortunate to have all these people and resources available to handle these fires.”

Harper, who said he quickly ordered aircraft when he realized that the wind-driven fire could threaten homes, said the arrival of six single-engine air tankers, and one helicopter, were vital to the quick control of the blaze.

“Without (the aircraft) it could have been double, triple in size,” he said.

Harper said he assigned fire trucks to protect homes as well as the Keating School if necessary.

## West Nile

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With much less water around, which mosquitoes need for rearing their eggs, populations were unusually low in the county last year, he said.

This year is more typical, Hutchinson said.

The infected mosquitoes are the culex tarsalis species, a permanent water mosquito that is by far the most common carrier of West Nile virus locally.

Hutchinson said culex tarsalis and a related species that’s also a common vector for the virus, culex pipiens, are more common in the county later in the summer.

The floodwater mosquitoes that predominate during spring and earlier summer rarely are infected with the virus, he said.

In 2021 the first confirmed infection in Baker County was in mosquitoes trapped on July 19, also in the Keating Valley.

Overall in 2021 the virus was detected in 19 mosquito pools, one person and one horse in Baker County, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

The person recovered, as most people do who contract the virus.

Over the past several years, the Keating Valley area, including where the infected mosquitoes were trapped in 2021 and 2022, has been a “hot spot for our West Nile activity,” Hutchinson said last year.

Most people infected with West Nile virus will show little or no signs of disease. About one in five people who are infected develop a fever with other

symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with febrile illness due to West Nile virus recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months. It is important that you contact your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms.

The incubation period is usually two to 14 days. Rarely, infected individuals may develop neuro-invasive disease (infection of the brain or spinal cord) that can be severe or may cause death. This is especially of concern to people 50 and older, people with immune-compromising conditions, and people with diabetes or high blood pressure.

Hutchinson and Dr. Emilio DeBess, of the OHA, recommend residents take the following steps to protect against mosquito bites:

- Eliminate sources of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes, including watering troughs, bird baths, ornamental ponds, buckets, wading and swimming pools not in use, and old tires.
- When engaged in outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, protect yourself by using mosquito repellants containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus or Picardin, and follow the directions on the container.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.
- Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

## Gerald “Jerry” Goodwin

July 10, 1935 - July 30, 2022

Gerald “Jerry” Burke Goodwin, 87, of Baker City, Oregon, passed away on the evening of Saturday, July 30, 2022. He will be interred at Mount Hope Cemetery in Baker City, Oregon.

Gerald was born on July 10, 1935, to Arthur and Leila (Harder) Goodwin in Walla Walla, WA. He spent his early years growing up in Toppenish, WA, and Milton Freewater, OR; at 16 years old, he moved to Baker and attended Baker High School, where he met his future wife, Donna Marlene Kennedy. After dating for four years, they married on July 8, 1956, and made their home in Baker for the next 66 years.

Jerry worked at Chevrolet garage for two years after high school; after Jerry and Donna were married, Jerry was pursued by Harold Clark of Clark Auto Electric to take a position working for Harold; 16 years later, on July 1, 1972, Jerry and Donna decided to purchase Clark Auto Electric, and they spent the next 50 years owning and operating the shop. Jerry never really retired.

Jerry was the father of three girls, Marie, Linda, and Gail; he also had four grandsons. He became a Mason in Baker Lodge #47 in 1956, and before his passing, he was recognized as the oldest member of the Masons.

The Boston Red Sox was the diehard team he stuck with through thick and thin. A very kind and caring man, Jerry was always there to help; he was quiet and always made you wonder what he was thinking, yet he was very quick-witted. Jerry and Donna were truly inseparable, whether at the shop or out on Sunday drives. Any free time that Jerry had was spent with his family and Donna. He was the kind of man who loved to work; he also liked to sleep and read when he had the time.

He is survived by his wife, Donna, daughter, Marie and her husband, Kevin, and their two sons, Parker and Dalton; his daughter, Gail, her husband Ken, their two sons, Austin and Derek, and his son-in-law, David Dumas.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Leila Goodwin, his sister, Betty Stere, and his middle daughter, Linda Goodwin Dumas.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Baker Masonic Lodge #47 through Gray’s West & Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

To leave an online condolence for the family of Jerry, please go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com).

