



**Baker City  
Staff & Management  
Annual Report: 2007**

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## **1. Overview**

This report is intended to be a thorough, frank and factual public document that will address what the City staff has been doing and will be doing.

Baker has recently completed its third ten-year survey<sup>1</sup>. The survey showed that 97% of the people in Baker consider this a very desirable place to live. Only 2.6% consider Baker very undesirable. More importantly, 72% indicated that Baker has become more desirable over the past five years. Four out of five respondents feel that they are “better off” than they were ten years ago. Five out of six people feel that their lives will be “better off” ten years from now.

The efforts of the City, County, and various community organizations are clearly having a positive effect. This optimism has grown in spite of rather flat economic times; Baker still has not recovered the affluence known when our mills were operating two or three shifts. Even so, there are mixed signals about how much growth is really wanted by our citizens, as roughly one in four people want to see the pace of growth increased. Our citizens want to improve economically, but have concerns about the final product.

Still, the community has built momentum over the past decade. Imagine the enthusiasm if our economy grew at a faster pace without changing our character. The City’s main goal is to build on that momentum. And the City’s main contribution to that momentum will be from its Council and its employees.

Baker City’s largest investment and most important asset is its employees. Value for taxpayer dollars can only be gained through an effective, efficient staff and departments. Who we are, our talents, professionalism, credibility and productivity are the taxpayers’ investment in service and progress. This is where the most focus should be. Of the City Director Staff of eleven, five are new within the last year. Three new positions have been created: a Planning Director and two Economic Development Managers. The position of City Attorney was outsourced. The entire Building Department has been restructured, including enlarging the inspector’s position to full time. Several employees across the organization have been newly hired or have filled vacated positions.

All of these additions and changes have not significantly increased or encumbered the City’s Budget. In fact, the staffing changes have made the budget more effective, because it now better reflects the City’s current goals.

## **2. City Manager Approach, Progress and Targets**

City Management and Staff Prioritization. Much time has been spent working with each department on prioritizing and scheduling activities. Now with a full staff, this time needs to be doubled in the coming years. In League of Oregon Cities discussions, the City Manager is

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<sup>1</sup> The survey analysis is being completed by Orbis Group, but is not yet ready for publication. The results will be presented to the Council upon completion.

often seen as the CEO for the organization. In my opinion, CEO stands for Chief *Economic* Officer.

Communication and Credibility. City Hall's two biggest issues are not internal. Communication and Credibility are two very big topics that consume most of City management time. City Hall is a hardworking, ethical, and professional place with experts that know what they are talking about. Ethical conduct is mandatory; anything less is not tolerated. Nonetheless, we spend a great deal of time justifying what we are doing. This is a major target for improvement; this report is a part of that effort. A large portion of our time is spent defending basic decisions while the most complicated decisions are quickly resolved.

It is easy to complain about City Hall (it was one of the current City Manager's pastimes before taking this position). The heart of the problem is that the complaints get a disproportionate amount of attention. The survey results show that most people are happy with City government. However, sometimes the "noise on the street" makes it sound like we live in a disaster area. City Hall works for the betterment of all 10,000 citizens; services should not be custom designed for an individual family or small groups.

In Baker there sometimes seems to be confusion over the role and method of our local government. Staff seems to spend inordinate amounts of time justifying decisions to individuals, to the newspapers, and even to City Council. The Council's policy direction is our road map. Confusion and controversy over how we get there is the most time consuming event we encounter.

One of the Ford Family Foundation's Community Leadership Training basic tenants is that a lack of knowledge creates negativity. To avoid some of the negative attitude towards City Hall, we need to communicate "knowledge" to avoid reaction to Council policy changes and staff implementation of those changes. This report helps educate the citizens on all of the services we provide.

Snow removal is a simple case in point. It snows in Baker. This year, it snowed a lot. The Public Works snow removal program worked very well. One or two mail boxes were damaged, the berms were larger than usual, but weather is unpredictable and cares little for schedules, available equipment, or budgets. The City's plan – its budget – limits the amount of snow removal. Those crews removing the snow followed that plan. Most folks in Baker accept the inconvenience of heavy snowfalls and do not want to pay additional funds or reallocate existing funding to give the streets a summer shine in the middle of the winter. However, if most of the City's population has a different opinion and wants to change snow removal policy, then it is up to the City Council, the Budget Board or other committees who can affect the necessary policy changes and budget alterations to meet that demand. If the City's procedure is not described in the City Charter, then policies must be set by the Council. That is the way it works in a City democracy.

This Council, management and staff are not afraid to take on the controversial issues that need to be faced: System Development Charges, taxes or bonds to pay for road maintenance, increased utility rates to pay for water and sewer requirements, etc. These are difficult decisions that, though they make our citizens uncomfortable at times, must be made in order to ensure the survival of our community for decades to come.

We all get a voice; none but the majority is to rule. Rather than depending solely on letters to the editors or newspaper editorials, there have to be other sources for getting the facts out and getting the feedback in. One solution is to take the message public through service organizations (the Rotary, Real Estate Board, the Lions, etc.) and listen to the questions and criticisms from those groups. Improved interaction on the City Web site to allow emails to individual councilors or the Council group with one email address; an interactive “rumor mill” on the web site that might nip nascent rumors; radio station interviews; and discussions on the street (one reason why all employees need to be up-to-date on events within the City) will help with the message and create quality feedback.

During the past thirteen months, many articles in Baker City’s daily newspaper included factual inaccuracies. Other times headline articles exaggerated minor issues rather than more important policy. Both are good for the newspaper business, but are often at the expense of City Hall’s credibility and efficiency and thus at the expense of the City. One solution is to work with the newspapers to create a regular city column (“City Corner”) or even purchasing space in the papers.

Other communication methods currently in place include a formal complaint policy. If there is a complaint by a citizen about an employee, there is a formal process that starts with interviews of all involved. These are documented and the necessary action taken. Usually the process defends the City employee, but if necessary, it could cause a reprimand.

Publicly appointed committees like the current LAMP/Central Park Advisory Committee spend a lot of time listening to local input and making policy recommendations for Council consideration and approval. This helps prevent the undermining of projects by a few naysayers at end of the process.

The City needs to always speak with one voice, which does not limit communication, but rather makes any communication accurate and honest. Each employee has to know what issues are being faced so that comments and criticisms may be passed through the department.

Also, in the coming years, more direct communication should be made with Office of Rural Health; franchises like Charter, OTEC, and Qwest; grant organizations such as our Leo Adler Community Fund and The Ford Family Foundation; other city managers and staff; and our business owners (local and out-of-town). The City needs to regularly meet with and maintain relationships with organizations such as HBC, BCU, YMCA, St. Elizabeth Health Services, etc.

State agencies. Hours and hours are spent meeting with, talking to, or completing paperwork for the state agencies that control so much of the State’s (our) investment dollars. These are time consuming efforts; most agencies cannot be everywhere all the time, which means that we have to travel and attend meetings predominantly on the West Coast.

For instance, the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) controls both substantial funding resources and legal impacts on Baker’s future. Only 44% of the people surveyed agreed that Oregon land use laws adequately protect the natural resources

and allow for industrial development. This is a big assignment for Planning and for Community Development. Land use is both the accelerator and the braking system for development. The DLCDC sometimes appears to be applying both simultaneously. A concise and effective relationship with the folks at DLCDC is a requisite for Baker economic development.

The Economic Revitalization Team (ERT) is our gateway to the state agencies, ostensibly with the full clout of the Governor's Office. This group needs to hear us and see us regularly.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) may be available for economic development projects. Urban Renewal is a potential resource for portions of Broadway and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. These programs are available but require successful negotiation of a lengthy labyrinth of applications and prerequisites. Community Development and Planning will attempt to conclude many of these opportunities in the coming years.

Relationship with the County. Our relationship with Baker County is quite strong. We regularly meet with the Commissioners. We regularly meet and talk with County Chair Fred Warner. Now with a full staff, departments will be able to spend time with the "other government" staff. More efficiency may be available after careful analysis. Perhaps there are opportunities to bridge the gap in Planning and Public Works even more than we already do. As these services become more and more expensive, we have no choice but to cooperate and coordinate our efforts.

Eltrym Theatre. Settled in 2007.

Insurance. Last year, we streamlined procedures and took a more active control over the City's risk management by establishing a more direct relationship with underwriters (Airport, CCIS). As a result, we have seen substantial savings on premiums and fees.

Legal Department Reorganization. The full-time City Attorney position was eliminated by the City Manager. These services have been contracted with outside counsel, Attorney Dan Van Thiel.

System Development Charges. Any new charges, fees or bond measures are usually difficult topics in Baker. SDCs, however, are favored by two of three people surveyed. These fees will help to pay for increased demand on the City's infrastructure caused by new development.

Police Department Building. After two years of researching and planning, a building will be purchased to house the police facility.

Certification. Infrequently there are comments about "this is not a business and you cannot run it that way." City Hall is a business organization. Businesses are about economics, efficiency, customer service and a quality product. City management is about economics, efficiency, customer service, and a quality product.

Business is not so very different than municipal government. What differences there are can be learned through certification.

The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) is offering a certification program for City Managers based on courses, training and years in service. Baker's City Manager is working with the LOC to obtain certification within 18 more months.

Collective Bargaining Agreements. Negotiations are underway with all three of the City's unions: Police, Fire and SEIU.

Quarterly plans. City management will spend significant time each quarter with individual departments, starting with Finance, then Public Works, then Police, Fire, etc. The goal is to know and understand each employee, their functions, their budgets, and their issues.

Training for 2007-2008. Training is required by law in most cases, but should be viewed as an investment in quality, productivity, and safety for each employee. Training also reduces liability, especially for the Police, Fire, Human Resources and the various department supervisors. Employee liability is a big money maker for the legal industry to the point that government organizations cannot defend themselves. Much of the training is voluntary and includes nights and weekends away from home and family.

Training is important only if the City's investment is recouped through the longevity of employment, reduced risk, and better overall service. We need to ensure that the right employees are receiving the proper training where the need exists rather than go through sessions to meet regulations.

Planning. After some delays, the Planning Department with Don Chance and Jennifer Bachman now has the horse power to timely negotiate planning applications while addressing all of the other planning issues described throughout this document. (See [Role of Planning](#).)

Personnel policy. The City is in the process of modernizing the personnel manual to reflect ethics, fairness, efficiency, legality and economy.

Charter Franchise Agreement Negotiation. Staff will aggressively pursue service improvements for Economic Development and community service purposes. The Charter Communications franchise agreement expires in July of 2008.

Secondary Education. There is a growing need for more secondary education services in Baker. Not only will this keep our youth in the area, but it is a key success factor in our availability to enhance our workforce for both existing and new businesses.

Emergency Management Plan. The existing plan needs updating, and new participants need current training.

911 Contract. The Consolidated Dispatch Center works well for the City, though our current contract needs updating.

Codification. The City code needs to be updated to reflect new practices, as well as recent Federal, State and case laws decisions. The final product will be available on the City's web site in a searchable format.

Code enforcement. This continues to be the biggest general complaint. In the survey, when asked "Is the city spending enough time on code enforcement," only 42% answered "yes"; 28% said "not sure." The message is clear: improve the code, make it easier to understand, and publicize it to the community. Other ordinances – such as those dealing with derelict buildings, noise, etc. – need to be submitted to Council for approval.

Legislature relationships. Baker needs strong communication with our Legislature, as their decisions affect us every day. The City needs to get on Salem's radar. One way is to do this is to participate in lobbying for City interests through the League of Oregon Cities' Hometown Voices.

Airport. The Airport Commission has revitalized itself reflecting a new approach. Though the community survey results show that 76% are satisfied with airport services, it is sometimes seen as a "flyboys' club." This image is inaccurate. It is a gateway for visitors as well as a necessary infrastructure for business, industry and tourism. A new Master Plan is underway, and Senate Bill 680 addresses BKE as one of three influential airports in Oregon. Airport development will be one of the City's long-term targets, but establishing that direction needs to happen now. The City cannot start pouring money into the airport, but we can certainly be aware of and encourage every development opportunity.

### **3. Budget Progress, Targets & Methodology**

The City Manager's "biggest first day goals" were to develop Planning, Economic Development (ED) and Budgeting as a singularly driven unit by "bolting" the three together. "Planning" controls what we will look like; Economic Development creates the City's growth according to adopted Strategies (do we want to grow aggressively or slowly, light industry or tourism?); and Budgeting lives off of the city's economy, telling us which community services we can provide.

Value for money. Four to one, Baker citizens replied favorably that the City's "services received" were a good value for the "taxpayer dollars." This is the acid test for City services, but not for the budget process.

The Budget is the true plan; it dictates where time and money are being spent. By the time budget is approved, we are already committed and priorities are being acted out. We need to look further into the future with two, three and five-year plans, establishing those priorities in advance. A look at best, expected and worst case scenarios helps to build a bullet-proof set of priorities and budgets. The Budget Board, which includes the seven Councilors and seven appointed citizens, needs to know where we are going before we are already halfway down the road.

True policy flows from the budget process. The point is not to be pennywise about the budget but to make it *a better investment by reflecting the City's public policy.* If the City policy is stronger Economic Development, then more money should be invested in ED. If the policy is a

cleaner, more attractive town, spend money on code enforcement. The budget prioritizes the policy. The long-term priorities need to first appear in the long-term budget plan. Completing D Street was established as a policy priority years ago; that decision would have meant nothing if it had not appeared in the budget at the same time.

It is City Management's role to ensure that spending is in line with policy. The City budget process may start with the individual departments, but it has to be a centralized process. The budget is a comparison of investment opportunities: what may be good for one department may detract from another's needs. The question to ask is not, "why is this so much more than last year," but rather "why here and not elsewhere". It is this philosophy that staff must follow in order to better prepare the Budget Board over the long term.

Regardless of national inflation issues, we must weed out where possible inflationary expenses are built into our budget. Health insurance is one. Wages and benefits are another. If the budget gets caught in internal and external inflation, jobs will eventually be cut, reducing services and progress for the City.

We also need to test the budget's effectiveness in subjective ways. For example, response time for fire and ambulance is faster than state average, but the Fire Department budget is below the state average. It's working. These types of evaluations need to be conducted for all departments.

#### **4. Economic Development Progress, Targets and Methodology**

The current opinion survey indicates that a large majority of people support economic development efforts in many shapes and forms. These are powerful community mandates that match what the Council said at the beginning of last year. In contrast, the survey showed only 59% of the people were satisfied with the progress of economic development. We must make a serious effort to provide better service and products to the citizens.

Through the Economic Development Council (EDC), the management of countywide economic development (ED) has been designated to the City. With this comes a strong mandate from the community and from the EDC for increased accountability. The new organizational structure meets the City's goals of increased participation in economic development, while also meeting the EDC's request for accountability.

The basic ED goal is a mathematical one: we need a consistent influx of capital and a significant increase in discretionary income. More money coming into town from commerce and tourism means more income for our local retail and service businesses.

ED is split into two functions, both reporting to Jennifer Watkins as part of Community Development. Gene Stackle will fulfill the local business assistance function, serving business needs throughout Baker County. He will focus on developing what we already have in Baker: good businesses, local talent and local ambition.

Most respondents also agreed that for the city to be a healthy and sustainable community 20 years from now, we must plan to attract new residents and businesses. Business and investment attraction is managed by Jake Jacobs as a consultant. This role focuses on

bringing new businesses and investors to Baker by “selling” Baker’s fertile business attributes to outside interests.

Both functions will initially explore all venues of ED as identified in the Strategic Plan, then trim efforts to those venues that have the greatest chance of success. Again, the scope of work will include all seven towns and other unincorporated areas in Baker County.

The biggest hindrances to Baker’s ED are: low median incomes, lack of family wage housing, lack of a trained workforce, and competition from other cities.

## **5. Role of Planning**

93% of the people surveyed said that they strongly agree or agree that it is important that Baker’s historic assets are preserved and maintained. Again, three of four folks indicate that it is very important to protect farm, forest land, and open space around Baker. As well, 55% said that growth should be restricted in order to protect the present way of life in Baker City. The latter stat comes from a difficult question to ask and a difficult one to answer. Planning with the ED team will address the conundrum of how we grow while maintaining our quality of life. ED will bring the choices in types of growth; Planning will be the control to keep this place authentic. Both are tough jobs, but Planning will be the hardest. How do we utilize input from the community to design a future town that looks and acts like present day Baker but provides jobs and entertainment for our citizens as well as the opportunity to expand our local economy?

Municipal planning departments normally serve two broad functions. The first is current planning that involves the daily administration of planning related codes. The second function is advanced planning that focuses on longer range strategic issues such as community development, housing, urban design, and other quality-of-life issues related to the built and natural environment. For years the formal Baker City planning function has been primarily concerned with code enforcement activities with little investment in the advanced planning arena. That is now changing under the newly constituted Planning Department.

In 2008 the Planning Department will begin to build the foundation necessary to better serve the community both in current and advanced planning functions. We are beginning with the City’s Development Code. In 2007 the Department processed 23 Type II and Type III applications for subdivisions, variances and conditional use permits that required advanced review, public notice, and Planning Commission involvement. In addition, the Department processed 86 Type I applications, 71 code complaints, and conducted 195 building permit reviews for planning code compliance. The City’s current Development Code, adopted from an experimental first generation model code, is both overly complex and procedurally cumbersome. The Code is also riddled with a number of provisions that can render unreasonable results when applied in certain circumstances. To free-up Planning Department resources for advanced planning functions in the future and to better serve the public in permitting activities, revision of the current Development Code is the Department’s primary objective for 2008. Once completed, the Department will turn its attention in 2009 and future years to the development of a new Comprehensive Plan and a

broad variety of primarily non-regulatory tools to advance the public interest and serve the citizenry.

The City's Comprehensive Plan is now 20 years old and in need of significant review and revision. For a Comprehensive Plan to be meaningful it must reflect a strategic view of community values and a vision that is driven by public consensus. To undertake such work requires a solid foundation of background studies and hundreds of hours in direct and indirect community involvement. Grants have been applied for to aid in the building of this initial foundation – work that is anticipated to begin in late 2008 or 2009.

## **6. Progress and Targets by Department**

**Community Development:** Jennifer Watkins, Director (ten years with the city), now includes Assistant City Manager, Community Development Director and City Recorder in her title. She is assisted by Becky Fitzpatrick, who serves as Administrative Assistant. Jennifer now directs Economic Development as well. Community Development received a 71% satisfaction rating from the survey – this is probably more related to how many people define community development (see Communication above). This Department's highlighted Targets & Progress are:

### **Community Development Department Progress:**

1. Industrial Park:
  - a. Settlers Loop project
  - b. Rail Spur Development
  - c. Master Plan
  - d. Site Certification
  - e. Flood Plain mitigation underway
2. New Economic Development web site: [www.bakercountyedc.org](http://www.bakercountyedc.org)
3. Council Chamber Remodel
4. Enterprise Zone Re-certification
5. Projects that commenced in 2007:
  - a. LAMP/Central Park
  - b. D Street
  - c. Economic Development Strategic Plan Update
6. Grants
  - a. SHPO – Council Chambers
  - b. Leo Adler – Park fence, Band Shell Seed \$
  - c. Preserving Oregon – City Hall Windows

### **Community Development Targets:**

Short-Term (1-year)

1. Resort Street Project: Find matching funds for Bike/Ped and to complete the project (SI #1)
2. D Street Project fully funded and ready to begin construction in 2009 (SI #2)
3. LAMP/Central Park Project designed and adopted by City Council; property acquisition and environmental review nearing completion (SI #2)
4. Industrial Park Master Plan adopted; CLOMR report underway (SI #2)
5. Build consensus for Court Street Park Project; establish Citizen Advisory Committee to design (SI #2)
6. Economic Development fully staffed and working toward desired goals as set by the Strategic Plan (SI #5)
7. UGB Agreement with County Updated (SI #5)
8. Fully fund Periodic Review process through DLCD grants with small amounts of City funding if needed (SI #9)
9. Complete and have Council adopt new Design Review Guidelines (SI #11)
10. Band Shell Project/Committee functioning on their own (SI #11)
11. Complete update of ED Strategic Plan (SI #13)
12. Complete Cutters Edge Relocation from California

#### Long-Term (1-5 Years)

1. Look into ED Revolving Loan Fund through CDBG – is this possible (SI #1)
2. Urban Renewal District for Broadway/10<sup>th</sup> Street (SI #1)
3. Complete SDC Methodology Process and Implement Findings (SI #1)
4. Complete Rail Spur at Industrial Park (SI #2)
5. Complete LAMP/CP Project (SI #2)
6. Complete Resort Street Project (SI #2)
7. Complete Court Street Park (SI #2)
8. Establish Sidewalk Improvements Plan (through TSP) and work for grant funds (SI #2)
9. Work with Planning Director to complete Comprehensive Plan Revision (SI #9)
10. Find funding for Airport Improvements Projects as described in the newly adopted master plan (SI #14)

#### Long-Term Wish List

1. Establish endowment fund for LAMP maintenance (maybe Parks maintenance too)
2. I-84 Utilities: where can we go from here?
3. City entrance clean-up program
4. College campus in Baker City

#### **Assistant City Manager/City Recorder Targets:**

##### Short-Term (1-year)

1. Web Site (SI #3):
  - a. Update with current information
  - b. Add a rumor mill and online submittal feature

2. Improve Public/Press Relations & Community Image (SI #4)
  - a. Formulate plan to better communicate with employees, Council, public and media
3. Establish more relationships with State Officials, both regionally and statewide, through regular communication and face-to-face visits (SI #5)
4. Codification of City Ordinances (SI #6)
5. Records Retention (SI #6):
  - a. Establish electronic database of all records.
  - b. Ease staff's ability to search for documents for themselves or the public.
  - c. Contracts database updated with expiration/renewal dates
6. City Facility Improvements (SI #6):
  - a. Continue to work on window replacement program
  - b. Complete Council Chambers' windows by end of the year
7. Complete Council Election Process
8. Increase Boards & Commissions Training
9. Establish New Employee Coaching System for Department Heads

#### Long-Term (1-5 Years)

1. City Facility Improvements (SI #6):
  - a. ADA Accessibility
  - b. Reception Area
2. Records Retention (SI #6):
  - a. All current records purged and record destruction scheduled annually
  - b. Permanent Records Housed in One, Safe Area

#### Long-Term Wish List

1. All documents electronically stored to allow public and employee searching via a web site.

**Administration – Human Resources:** Debby Ray (two years) includes Manager of Human Resources, Assistant to the City Manager, and Insurance in her duties. Human Resource Management is extremely complex and legalistic, requiring not only detailed knowledge, but also finesse.

#### **Human Resource Manager Progress:**

1. Completed an updated Employee Handbook.
2. Worked with SEIU on a successful reclassification of our Planning Technician and the creation of three additional positions (one in the Building Department and two in Public Works).
3. Received the Silver award for 98% participation in open enrollment's wellness program and awarded \$810.00 in the form of a wellness grant. Received the gold safety award for an injury frequency rate of "0".
4. Completed the process of successfully hiring our Finance Director, Building Official, Administrative Assistant, and Planning Director.

5. Established stronger communication with employees by attending their department meetings.

### **Human Resource Manager Targets:**

#### Short term (1-year)

1. Finalize draft of Personnel Handbook to be approved by Council.
2. Create an employee wellness curriculum to help avoid Workers Comp claims and promote a healthier work place.
3. Establish a pre-employment testing program for new hires.
4. Set up training schedules for required employee training.
5. Create new salary schedule/merit raises for management and non-represented staff.

#### Long term (1-5 Years)

1. Reorganize all active personnel files concurrent with updating records retention.
2. Create a staff recognition program (other than employee of the month).
3. Create a procedure manual for H.R. functions.

**Building Department:** Gary Bood (ten months) serves as the Building Official, David Black (five months) as the Building Inspector, and Kendra Van Cleave (two years) as the Permit Clerk. We brought in a new electrical inspector (difficult to recruit), Rick Newman. After misappropriations were discovered to have occurred prior to 2003, the laborious process of identifying the problem was followed by completely rehiring the department staff as well as a general reorganization. None of the current employees were implicated in the misconduct.

An Enterprise Fund, the building department's budget has not suffered financial burdens as a result of this process. It continues to be self-sustainable. We have a respected Building Department and hear very few complaints from the public.

### **Building Department Progress:**

1. Rapport with contractors improved.
2. Plan reviews completed within 10 working days or sooner per BCD requirements.
3. Hired necessary personnel to keep processing applications, over-the-counter permits, plan reviews and inspections in a timely manner for both residential and commercial projects.
4. Improved the quality of construction inspections and the resulting final product, meeting or exceeding minimum codes.
5. Improved the number of permits and plan reviews in city and county by issuing stop work orders and requiring permits.

### **Building Department Targets:**

#### Short-Term (1-year)

1. Start the Quick Permits program with the help of BCD, which will include a need for training our staff in operating the program.
2. Train new employees to provide the best service to our customers.
3. Records retention: organize plan and permit records according to state statute requirements.
4. As all employees of the Building Department are new, we need to continue to build our team and formulate our future operational plan.

**Finance:** Jeanie Dexter, CPA (ten months), serves as our controller and will assume financial planning duties this year (see [Budget Progress, Targets & Methodology](#)).

#### **Finance Department Progress:**

1. Increased Direct Payment Membership by 2%
  - a. Created a new option to give customer's the ability to decide when to have payments withdrawn from their account (5th, 15th or the 25th).
  - b. Updated direct payment form, created a list of benefits and updated Baker City's web page. Researched online bill payment options to determine feasibility.
  - c. Encouraged staff to get more people signed up for direct payment. Worked on creating incentives.
2. Increased Office Efficiencies
  - a. Changed collection procedure for customers with accounts at Cam Credits to increase our collection percentage from 55% -65% to 100%.
  - b. Changed to laser checks for accounts payable and payroll.
  - c. Changing merchant credit card pricing structure to interchange cost plus with utility rates.
  - d. Changed payment arrangement for electrical inspector to avoid prepaying for work not yet completed.
  - e. Increased communication with staff by having weekly or biweekly staff meetings.
  - f. Worked with other department heads to review City contracts for proper billing or payment calculations and to evaluate performance (i.e. dispatch, school resource officer, Fire Med).
3. Increased Internal Controls
  - a. Implemented procedures which require all adjustments to customer's accounts (utility, LID, ambulance, etc.) to be reviewed and approved by Finance Director or Public Works Director.
  - b. Eliminated online bill payment option with our banks.
  - c. Reviewed and changed security settings for staff in the financial accounting system.

#### **Finance Department Targets:**

#### Short-Term (1-year)

1. Reorganize staff duties to match staff skills and cross train staff.
2. Improve monthly financial summary for Council.
3. Improve ambulance invoices.
4. Increase participation in direct payment program.
5. Improve collection rates for water/wastewater and ambulance service.
6. Document office policies and procedures.
7. Improve budget document and process.
8. Continue to enhance internal controls.
9. Redesign Equipment and Vehicle Fund.
10. Redesign or retire Payroll Service Fund.
11. Review General Fund indirect fee calculation.
12. Bring Finance Department's records retention up to date.
13. Develop monthly billing system for utility payments.

#### Long-Term (1-5 Years)

1. Improve accuracy of financial software especially for LIDs and Job Costing.
2. Improve utility billings, making them more informative for our customers.
3. Obtain or create a software model to use for long term projections.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Jim Price (11 Years) manages the most popular department in the city system, garnering 99% approval in the recent community survey. Our Fire Fighter/EMT/Volunteer Department now boasts a \$500,000 ladder truck and a suite of new breathing apparatus, the majority of the cost being paid by Federal grants.

#### **Fire Department Progress:**

1. Received new ladder truck and equipment and placed into service.
2. Trained and certified 17 personnel to NFPA/DPSST Aerial Apparatus Operator.
3. Wrote and received a grant for replacement of 19 SCBA and testing equipment.
4. Finalized interagency agreement for water tender for City and County use (currently stored at GBVRFPD until fire season).
5. Recruited and began training for six new part time (volunteer) firefighters to bolster call staff.

#### **Fire Department Targets:**

##### Short-Term (1-year)

1. Increase training program quality by incorporating more "hands-on" and local training in little used skills. This includes application to the AFG program for a fiscal year 2008 grant to fund a live fire training trailer (estimated cost of \$250,000, for which we estimate \$12,500 in City matching funds will be needed) and a full-time training and safety officer.
2. Complete update of departmental SOG manual to fully meet OSHA and NFPA requirements.

3. Upgrade departmental software for record keeping and report writing to provide for more efficient use of staff time.
4. Provide for adequate staffing. This includes the position of one Training and Safety Officer, deletion of two-man shifts, language changes in the current labor contract for the scheduling of vacation and improved recruitment and retention of part-time employees.

#### Long-Term (1-5 Years)

1. Stabilize funding for the fire department through a serial levy or creation of an ambulance taxing district (trade dedicated tax funds for a portion of ambulance revenues such as a tax rate of \$1.00/1000 AV and dropping ambulance rates to current Medicare schedule) and improved ambulance collections.
2. Finish equipment upgrades, such as a new thermal imaging camera and standardization of all our supply hose.
3. Completion of a standard of cover document that meets with NFPA 1710 and provides for greater discretionary liability for the department and City.
4. Staffing increases, including the position of division chief of training and safety.

**Planning:** Don Chance, PhD. now directs Baker's Planning Department. Planning will be the legal basis that defines how our citizens want Baker to look and function for decades to come. Land use planning received a 69% satisfaction rating. (See the Role of Planning.)

**Police:** Chief Wyn Lohner (9 years) oversees the most litigiously susceptible and personally dangerous department that protects one of the main reasons we live here: Baker is relatively free of crime. It is one of our strongest economic development attributes. Crime is a real threat and would quickly overwhelm Baker – as it has in many other rural towns – if it were not for our effective police presence. 93% of the survey respondents are satisfied with City police services. We doubt there are many towns in this country that are so comfortable with their investment in police protection.

#### **Police Department Progress:**

1. Feral Cat Trap-Neuter-Release program partnership with Mollie Atwater and Friends.
2. Completion and Implementation of new Policy Manual.
3. Drug Dog Detection Program Implementation.
4. One full-time officer position and one part-time evidence technician position filled nearly restoring staffing numbers to 2002 level.
5. Chaplaincy Program Implementation.

#### **Police Department Targets:**

### Short-Term Community Targets (1-year)

1. Increase Citizen Awareness:
  - a. Establish Neighborhood Watch or similar programs.
  - b. Continue community contacts/meetings.
  - c. Continue Record Courier Articles.
  - d. Complete City wide evacuation plan.
2. Reduce narcotics and related crimes.
  - a. Enhance organization of the Drug Task Force.
  - b. Enhance communication between patrol and the Drug Task Force.
  - c. Commit more resources to the Drug Task Force.
  - d. Continue to expand the Drug Dog program/uses.
3. Improve Quality of Life.
  - a. Reduce code violations.
  - b. Establish a more proactive reporting system for quality of life issues.

### Long-Term Community Targets (1-5 Years)

1. Prevent Gangs from residing in Baker City.
  - a. Continue gang research.
  - b. Educate the police officers.
  - c. Educate the Community.
  - d. Educate the school administration and students.
2. Reduce narcotics and related crime.
  - a. Hire an additional detective to commit to Drug Task Force.
  - b. Deploy a second Drug Dog.
  - c. Continue citizen awareness programs.
3. Improve Quality of Life.
  - a. Resolve all old/existing code violations.
  - b. Have a proactive, functional system in place to address code violations as they arise.

### Short-Term Department Targets (1-Year)

1. Move Police Station into adequate facility.
2. Develop plan for Tactical Team.
  - a. Determine organizational structure.
  - b. Identify funding availability.
  - c. Identify equipment needs and availability.
  - d. Identify training programs.
  - e. Identify and begin selection process.
  - f. Begin training.
3. Maintain Department-wide training capability.
  - a. Maintain training funds.
  - b. Maintain training programs.
4. Enhance Department-wide tactical capabilities/proficiencies.
  - a. Complete active shooter training.

- b. Improve tactical responses to high risk calls.
- c. Solidify tactical mindsets.
- d. Complete Powder River Correction Institution critical incident response plan.

Long-Term Department Targets (1-5 Years)

- 1. Tactical preparedness.
- 2. Be properly staffed.
  - a. Hire an additional Detective.
  - b. Hire an additional Patrol Officer.
  - c. Hire an additional CSO.
- 3. Have a well staffed Reserve Officer Program.
  - a. Establish a reserve officer training program.
  - b. Identify qualified candidates.
  - c. Identify funding for equipment needs.
- 4. Have a Mounted patrol Unit.
  - a. Examine existing programs.
  - b. Adopt Policy.
  - c. Identify officers and horses.
  - d. Identify equipment needs.
  - e. Identify funding needs and sources.

**Public Works:** Michelle Owen (5 years) directs the largest department in terms of cost, staffing and visibility. 82% of those surveyed are satisfied with the service provided by Public Works (surveys completed after the snowfall were no different than before!).

**Public Works Progress:**

- 1. “Settlers Loop” Industrial Road Construction.
- 2. Lagoon Headworks Improvements and Inlet Piping Upgrade.
- 3. Completed Water Management & Conservation Plan and submitted for Aquifer Storage and Recovery Permanent License.
- 4. Airport Improvement Project-new taxi way and hangars.
- 5. Began conversion to radio read water meters.

**Public Works Targets:**

Short-Term (1-year)

- 1. Renew **NPDES Wastewater Discharge Permit**-November 1, 2008 (SI#6)
  - a. Initial Application – Feb. 15
  - b. Draft Permit Negotiation-May-September
- 2. Gain an **Adopted Water Management & Conservation Plan**-Mar 15 (SI#6)
- 3. Acquire a **Permanent Permit for the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Well (SI#6)**
- 4. Complete and Implement the **2008 Pavement Management Plan (SI#2)**

- a. Patch & Prep-May-July
- b. Chip Seal
- c. Overlay
- d. Fog Seal
5. Complete and Implement the **2008 Capital Plan** (SI#2)
  - a. Wastewater
    - i. Install Grinder at Lagoon headworks-July.
    - ii. Line at least one section of wastewater line-Summer/Fall.
  - b. Water
    - i. Abandon and replace Reservoir Road water line.
    - ii. Install additional radio read meters-focus on one zone.
    - iii. Begin road work for mountain line project-September.
    - iv. Design additional portions of mountain line replacement.
6. Determine accurate **equipment replacement numbers** for Equipment Fund (SI#2).
7. Develop a **Park Plan** for Geiser Pollman Park (SI#2).
8. **Evaluate Contracts** (SI#11).
  - a. YMCA-Sam-O.
  - b. 7 Iron-Golf Course.
  - c. Baker Aircraft-FBO .
  - d. Classic Landscape, Parks and Cemetery.
9. **Improve Public image** with community involvement focus (SI#4)
10. Maintain water treatment and distribution systems (SI#6).
11. Maintain wastewater collection and treatment facilities (SI#6).
12. Maintain equipment (SI#6)
13. Operate safely with no workers compensation claims!

**Technical Services:** Gary Van Patten (30 years) manages Technical Services. Gary, Larry McBroom, Jay Fuzi, Joyce Bornstedt and Roy Hand provide design and surveying services for City infrastructure projects.

### **Technical Services Targets:**

Short-Term (1-year)

1. Update Technology
  - a. Convert to GPS field data collection.
  - b. Merge data base information with maps.
2. Complete Storm Water Master Plan data collection.
3. Update street light data base.
4. Organize Office Records
  - a. Scan maps.
  - b. Improve filing system
5. Complete Mountain Line Legal Description
  - a. Complete necessary field work.
  - b. Input data into office software.
  - c. Write description.

6. Training
  - a. Advance staff computer skills.

**The Balance of the Employees** (64 people averaging 10 years, some up to 35 years). Usually they are not seen or quoted in the paper. The complaint can be heard, sometimes, that City employees are over-paid and under-worked; both are unfair exaggerations (we are all taxpayers, too). To get the most from City employees' experience, training, and knowledge of the community, longevity and seniority is encouraged by remuneration and benefits.

Another City management target is to break down departmental cultural barriers, bringing each employee as close to the center as possible, while giving each employee more ownership in all City services. This helps to create pride, productivity and quality results. The bottom line is that through ownership we create knowledge. This is not theoretical; it is proven, modern management.

## **7. City Council Progress & Suggested Targets**

Council. Per the City Charter, City Council's priority is to make policy decisions. Looking back over the past year, what has the Council reviewed and completed?

### **City Council Progress:**

- Council Chambers to be proud of. Environment for efficiency.
- G Street Wastewater Line Local Improvement District.
- Sidewalk; set up sidewalk committee to make recommendations.
- Commission appointments: Airport, Budget, Design Review, Planning, Public Works Advisory, LAMP/Central Park, Sidewalk.
- Mollie Atwater, feral cats, dogs in the park.
- System Development Charges. Proceed.
- Rates for Building, Planning and other services.
- Public Works Capital Plans.
- Vacations of H Street, various alleys, etc.
- Police facility.
- Golf Course parking lot.
- Watershed Trespass Ordinance.
- Open Burning Policy.
- Red Cross Funding.
- 2007 – 2008 Budget Process.
- Various Bid Awards for Chip Seal, Ladder Truck, Fire Breathing Apparatus (etc.).
- Implementation of Work Sessions (six to date).
- Police dog
- Codification
- Master Plans (airport, storm water, industrial park, etc.).

### **City Council Targets:**

- Annexation – 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of Gyllenberg Property
- Interchange Management Plan
- Sign Ordinance
- Business License
- Derelict Buildings
- LAMP/Central Park
- Comprehensive Plan
- Tree Ordinance
- Budget

## **8. Conclusion**

The above is the City's operating procedures for at least the next 18 months. This report is a living document; it will change over time as additional points arise and as some are completed.

Baker City is a wonderful, little town in a great, big, beautiful place. We have a lot going for us, and we have a lot to do. The City plays a major role in providing services to the community and in accomplishing improvements in the city and countywide environment. The City through the years has been very successful. In fact, the most recent community survey says that 93% of Baker's citizens are satisfied with City services.

As City Manager, it is my role per the City's voter-approved "Constitution," the City Charter, to aggressively pursue the goals and policies from the City Council. In initial interviews more than 13 months ago, the Council clearly stated its main criteria: efficiency, economic value, and economic development.

Annual updates to this report will be submitted as addendums and modifications to this original. Input, suggestions and concerns will be considered on receipt. Please email your City Councilors or myself at [sbrocato@bakercity.com](mailto:sbrocato@bakercity.com) or through the City web site.