

Boise real estate firms opens office in Baker City

By LISA BRITTON
For EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — An Idaho real estate firm is expanding to serve Eastern Oregon.

Keller Williams Realty Boise is basing its new office, Keller Williams Four Rivers, in Baker City to cover Baker, Union, Wallowa, Grant, Morrow, Umatilla and Wheeler counties.

“We’re super excited about this expansion,” said Stacie States, co-owner and president of Keller Williams.

The Four Rivers branch will have five agents, including Jeff Anderson, who grew up in Baker City. Mary Smith is the designated broker.

“We couldn’t be more excited to launch our new Oregon brokerage,” Smith said.

The office will be virtually based, meaning the agents will work out of their own spaces.

“At this point we don’t have plans for a brick and mortar,” States said.

A company press release stated Keller Williams “expects to see continued rapid growth as they support top agents and teams, as well as expand their luxury, commercial, and farm and ranch divisions.”

States said the real estate market is booming more than she’s seen in her 16 years in the business.

“It’s the wildest ride we’ve ever seen,” she said. “And I don’t see an end in sight.”

In line with the virtual approach to the Oregon expansion, States said Keller Williams focuses on technology and training. She described it as a “coaching, education and tech company” that is involved in real estate.

“Everyone can plug in — wherever they are,” States said of the training.

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Giving a lift to business ventures

Eastern Oregon nonprofit partners on angel investing workshop

By PHIL WRIGHT
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A local nonprofit is looking to find some wings to help entrepreneurial enterprises get off the ground in Eastern Oregon.

Eastern Oregon Ventures has teamed up with Oregon Technology Business Center in Beaverton to host a free virtual workshop on angel investing. Wilson Zehr, business faculty at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, owns and operates EO, which has funded

the activities of the EOU Entrepreneurship Club and Pub Talk. Angel investing, he said, is another way to support the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“The majority of the research shows that it is difficult for new ventures to thrive in isolation,” Zehr said. “We need investors, entrepreneurs, advisers, skilled employees, service providers, heroes and a number of other elements.”

Oregon Technology Business Center has been offering a successful program like this in Beaverton for many years, Zehr said, and it is similar to successful pro-

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Angus bulls mill around the feedlot Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, after Botts Angus Ranch’s first bull sale at its new facility just outside of Enterprise.

LOTS A BULL AT BOTTTS ANGUS RANCH

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — There was plenty of bull just west of Enterprise, last week, as Beau Botts held his first bull auction at his new auction warehouse at the family ranch.

Botts and wife, Kristen, hosted what they plan as an annual event Thursday, Feb. 25, after constructing the new facility over the past year. They have previously worked with a feedlot in Pilot Rock

where they used to haul their bulls for sale. He said they wintered and finished their bulls there in previous years.

“We’ve been involved as partners in Rollin’ Rock Genetic Partners in Pilot Rock for the past eight years and we decided to go off on our own,” Botts said. “We built a new facility here in the past year and it’s our first sale here this year. We’ll be back every year.”

Of the 90 Angus bulls listed in the buyers’ brochure, 74 were sold,

Botts said. About 150 buyers came from Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Wyoming and other states.

“We had buyers from all over the country,” he said.

The buyers were greeted with lunch and snacks prior to the 1 p.m. sale, presided over by auctioneer Joe Goggins. Prospective buyers were able to view the bulls from early morning. Those purchased

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Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Buyers mill around in the new auction facility at Botts Angus Ranch after its first sale there Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021. Botts plans an annual sale of registered Angus just outside of Enterprise each year.

Hammond Ranches loses grazing permit

New administration rescinds rights for Eastern Oregon operation

By MAXINE BERSTEIN
The Oregonian/OregonLive

WASHINGTON — A senior adviser to the U.S. Department of Interior on Friday, Feb. 26, rescinded the January decision by former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to grant Hammond Ranches Inc. a 10-year grazing permit and directed the Bureau of Land Management to further consider the matter.

The maneuver came as Congress was moving to confirm President Joe Biden’s pick of Deb Haaland as the new Interior secretary and followed a day after four environmental advocacy groups filed a federal lawsuit to

block the grazing permit for the Hammonds.

It also came just days before the cattle were expected to be turned out on the more than 26,000 acres of public lands neighboring Malheur National Wildlife Refuge about 45 to 70 miles south of Burns.

The action marked the latest twist in a years-long saga surrounding the grazing rights of Dwight Hammond Jr. and son Steven Hammond after they were convicted of setting fire to public lands and served prison time.

The new memo from the Interior secretary’s office found that the Trump administration hadn’t allowed for sufficient time to

receive and consider public challenges to the permit.

A proposal to grant the permit was dated Dec. 31 but the public wasn’t immediately alerted to it until days later “resulting in confusion” about how the department would calculate an authorized 15-day protest period, according to the memo from the Interior secretary’s office.

Friday’s memo was signed by Laura Daniel-Davis, a senior adviser to the secretary exercising delegated authority of the assistant secretary of land and minerals management.

“Because the protest period had not properly concluded” before the final Jan. 19 decision was issued, “I am rescinding the

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