

# Membership elects Baum, Miller, Chase to OTEC board

Two Union County positions, one Baker County position were up for election

The Observer

BAKER CITY — Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative has announced the results of its May board of directors election.

David Baum, a La Grande attorney and a part-

time farmer, won the election for Position 8, a Union County seat, defeating Dennis Myhrum of Cove. Baum received 2,452 votes to Myhrum's 1,243 votes. Baum has served on OTEC's board since 2005 when he was appointed to a



Baum



Miller



Chase

position on it. Cory Miller, of La Grande, a certified arborist with Miller's Tree Service, won the race for Position 7,

also a Union County berth. Miller held off Steve Lyon, of Cove. Miller won with 2,078 votes, while Lyon received 1,690 voters. Miller replaces Greg Howard on the board. Howard did not seek reelection to the board. Charlene Chase, a retired

educator, was reelected to Position 9, with 3,315 votes to win an uncontested race. Chase has served on OTEC's board of directors since 2013. Position 9 is a Baker County seat. Baum, Miller and Chase were all elected to three-year terms and will be up for reelection in 2025, according to the OTEC website. Their new

terms started earlier this month. The OTEC Board of Directors has nine members that represent the cooperative's service territory in Baker, Grant, Union and Harney counties. The election results were announced during OTEC's Annual Meeting of the Membership on Saturday, May 21, in Baker City.



Photos by Dick Mason/The Observer

Kyle Kahut, above, a volunteer, and David Matott, below left, commander of La Grande's American Legion Post 43, assemble flags on Friday, May 27, 2022, in preparation for the Memorial Day Avenue of Flags at Grandview Cemetery. Bottom right, at Grandview on May 28, Lowell Knopp, left, a volunteer, and John Craig, a member of American Legion Post 43, install one of the more than 100 flags that flew throughout Memorial Day weekend in honor of fallen veterans.

## FLAGS

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The flags were illuminated May 28-29 by portable lights provided free of charge by Eastern Oregon Rental and Sales.

A federal resolution, which the American Legion wrote and Congress adopted, requires illumination to identify American flags on display after dark, according to John Craig, finance officer of American Legion Post 43.

The Avenue of Flags weekend concluded on Memorial Day, May 30, with a memorial service that started at 11 a.m. and featured the singing of the National Anthem by the La Grande High School A Cappella Choir, songs played by LHS band members, the presentation of the colors by Boy Scout Troop 514 and an address by Roger Cochran, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, La Grande.

Cochran has been giving presentations at the Avenue of Flags for almost 25 years. Cochran again read from a collection of his 18 favorites quotations about patriotism, all listed in the Avenue of Flags program, including



one by Joseph Campbell — "A hero is someone who have given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" — and one from an anonymous source, "Home of the free, because of the brave."

### Growing popularity

Loveland noted that the Avenue of Flags has become so popular that families will come for the Memorial Day service even if the fallen veterans in their families are not buried at Grandview Cemetery.

"They realize that this ceremony is saluting all veterans," Loveland said.

Lou Gerber, of La Grande, a member of American Legion Post 43, said the

continuing popularity of the Avenue of Flags is in part due to it being an event that veterans and the community put on as one.

"Everyone works together," he said. "We support each other."

Lowell Knopp, a volunteer from La Grande, credits the longevity of the Avenue of Flags to a community that is dedicated to serving veterans. He foresees it continuing for many years.

"I have never thought of it ending," said Knopp, whose son, Justin, is in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Many of the flags on display have the names of fallen veterans sewn into them.

"All of the flags are per-

sonal for somebody," said David Matott, commander of American Legion Post 43.

Bob Kennon, second vice president of American Legion Post 43, agrees and noted that the Avenue of Flags helps keep alive the memories of fallen veterans.

### LHS athletes do the heavy lifting

The large flags displayed at Grandview Cemetery were assembled the afternoon of Friday, May 27, at American Legion Post 43 and were attached to posts before being taken to the cemetery on the morning of May 28. Each flag pole was supported by heavy rebar, put in by La Grande High School athletes, including



many football players.

Matott said the help was greatly appreciated.

"If we had put in the rebar, many of us would have needed CPR," he said.

Members of the La Grande Lions Club assisted American Legion Post 43 in preparation for the Avenue

of Flags by placing small flags next to the headstones of the many veterans buried at Grandview Cemetery on Thursday, May 26.

According to Brent Lewis, a member of the La Grande Lions, "We wanted to participate in a civic service to honor our veterans."

## RANCHES

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agriculture, giving them something in common.

"Beyond having a wonderful time with ranchers from Lane County, we had relevant discussions on issues of the day," Nash said.

### Top issues

Chief among those issues, according to Nash and others who attended, were wolf depredation on livestock and wildlife, drought, federal forest issues, grazing allotments and general predator discussions.

Ron Weiss, president of the Lane County group, was impressed with the tour.

"That was probably one of the best put-together



Todd Nash/Contributed Photo

Dennis Sheehy, Oregon Cattlemen's Association Wildlife Committee chairman, discusses the local elk herds during a ranch tour of Wallowa County local stockgrowers hosted Saturday, May 21, 2022, for their counterparts from Lane County.

ranch tours I've been to in the past 25 years," he said in a telephone interview May 26.

Weiss said the issues that struck him the most were

those surrounding wolves and the ongoing drought.

"We feel you're getting run over the coals by the wolf predation situation. ... You guys are really getting

(it) and we've got your back as an association," he said.

Lane County, he noted, is well west of the north-south dividing line that separates federally protected wolves from those in the east that can be shot if caught harassing cattle. He said there are wolves in his area, but they're not yet going after cattle.

"Right now, the wolves in Lane County are diminishing our elk herds," he said. "They haven't gotten to our cattle yet, but it's just a matter of time."

Weiss also was impressed with how Wallowa County ranchers are dealing with the drought and "keeping fat cattle" in its midst.

"We were impressed with how you guys run your ranches, especially under the

drought conditions," he said.

Kevin McCadden, one of the vice presidents of the Wallowa County Stockgrowers, showed the group his ranch on Alder Slope where he raises breeding stock, Gelbvieh-Angus cross Balancer bulls.

According to the Gelbvieh website, Gelbvieh and Balancer cattle are well known throughout the beef industry for their maternal strengths and superior growth.

### Fostering unity

In addition to telling about his own operation, McCadden was eager to hear from the Lane County ranchers.

"It was interesting to listen to them and hear about their ranches where it's pretty flat country," he

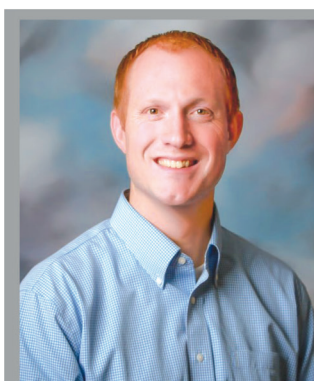
said. "We have different challenges."

McCadden said he believes the greatest benefit to the ranch tour was to foster unity with producers from across the state and better understand the challenges each faces.

"Now we have a better understanding in what's going on in everybody's operation, not just our neck of the woods," he said. "As we become more aware of what everyone's up against, we can become a more unified organization."

Neither stockgrowers group has yet decided if there will be a reciprocal visit from Wallowa County to Lane County. But the possibility is open.

"We can do that," Weiss said of hosting Wallowa County in the future.



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