

BMCC board approves budget, faculty layoffs

Five full-time faculty members to be let go

By **JOHN TILLMAN**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education has approved the administration's retrenchment plan, laying off five full-time faculty members.

The board voted on the plan Monday, June 6, in a special meeting.

The college laid off the instructors in business, criminal justice, English, music, and chemistry, according to Blue Mountain Faculty Association President Sascha McKeon.

The board also passed adjustments to its current budget and changes to the proposed 2022-23 budget, then adopted the new

budget. Board member Kim Puzey, of Hermiston, voted against adoption. All other agenda items passed unanimously.

Six board members attended in person and Bill Markgraf, of Baker City, remotely.

The board had met in executive session at 5 p.m. to conduct deliberations with the college's labor negotiations team.

Faculty union negotiators, administration met June 3

BMCC administration met with the faculty union team for a final time June 3 to negotiate layoffs in the new budget.

"The meeting was short and not unexpected," BMCC President Mark Browning said. "The union did not bring any new ideas. They just wanted to know who is on the layoff list."

But it's not the role of the union to notify employees, he said, but

rather the college's because it's the employer.

Layoff notices went out June 7, Browning noted.

"We need to move forward,"

Browning concluded, "and address student needs. It's time to wrap this up."

McKeon regarded the meeting as an implementation session.

"We came to the table for a polite conversation on options to save jobs," she said. "The administration didn't act on them back when there was time."

Puzey calls for selling college property, more

Board Chair Don Rice asked for comments from fellow board members. Chris Brown, of Hepner, responded to comments from some speakers.

"This proposed budget was not drafted in isolation," he said.

"The budget committee met

three times, rather than the usual once, and with citizen and faculty involvement. It was forthright fact-seeking. I believe that our students are our greatest resource."

Puzey noted actual cuts don't have to go through until 120 days after notifications. He suggested selling or leasing buildings and seeking scholarships from business partners, county governments and the ports of Umatilla and Morrow. He also urged faculty members to leverage the channels to the community that they've developed to help increase enrollment.

"I'm hopeful it's not over yet," he said.

Kent Madison, of Echo, stressed the importance of outreach to high school juniors and seniors, who might not even know that their parents' taxes support the college.

"BMCC is not for profit," he said. "The layoffs aren't to provide

dividends to shareholders. We just don't have the money. Enrollment has dropped 65% in 10 years."

Vice Chair Jane Hill, of Pendleton, also held out hope that more money could be found and enrollment increased before classes start in September.

"Every faculty member is important," she said. "I hope we can all come to the same table."

Hill noted that adjustments up to 10% can be made to an adopted budget. She asked Browning if the faculty cuts would fit under that share. He said they would.

"At least having the names will help with our grievance cases," McKeon said in the hall outside the conference room after the meeting.

She lamented the revised fall schedule and need to notify students who signed up for classes, which now may have to be canceled.

Police seize fentanyl, other drugs and weapons

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Oregon State Police found 40 grams of fentanyl powder and almost 16,000 fentanyl pills in the car driven by a Washington man arrested Wednesday, June 1, in Baker City.

Police also found almost 3 pounds of methamphetamine, 2 pounds of marijuana, 21.8 grams of cocaine and "evidence of manufacturing and distribution of controlled substances," according to an OSP press release.

The driver, Darren Glenn Yeater, 32, of Richland, Washington, remains in the Baker County Jail on arrest warrants from Ada County, Idaho, and from Benton County, Washington.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is much more powerful than heroin or morphine. Police say fentanyl is largely responsible for a rise in overdose deaths nation-



Oregon State Police/Contributed Photo

Oregon State Police found fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine and other drugs during a Thursday, June 2, 2022, warrant search of a car driven by Darren Glenn Yeater, 32, of Richland, Washington. He was arrested June 1 in Baker City.

wide over the past few years.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be a lethal dose for most people.

The 40.2 grams of fentanyl powder that police found in Yeater's car equates to 40,200 milligrams, or approximately 20,100 lethal doses.

The OSP press release did not say how many milligrams

each of the fentanyl pills contains.

Baker City Police Chief Ty Duby on June 8 said the seizure of drugs from Yeater's car is an indication of a significant operation, particularly the quantities of fentanyl.

"It's all over the country, and that's what people are overdosing on," Duby said.

He said police try to focus on people who are responsible for supplying large

amounts of drugs to Baker County.

The incident started about 12:48 a.m. on June 1 when an OSP trooper stopped a vehicle that supposedly had been involved in a crash near the Campbell Street interchange on Interstate 84.

According to OSP there was no crash.

Yeater didn't have a driver's license, and according to OSP he gave false information to the trooper.

Once the trooper identified Yeater, he was arrested on the Idaho and Washington warrants.

The Idaho warrant is for possession, introduction or removal of certain items into or from correctional facilities.

Yeater's charges from Washington are failure to appear and second-degree escape.

Duby said the trooper also called Sgt. Wayne Chastain, the Baker City officer who works with Capa, the department's drug-detecting dog.

Capa alerted to controlled substances in Yeater's car, which was towed and stored while police applied for a search warrant.

That warrant was approved and the search conducted on June 2, Capt. Stephanie Bigman, a spokesperson for OSP, wrote in a June 8 email to the Baker City Herald.

According to Oregon court records, no additional charges have been filed against Yeater.

Duby said it's possible the drug charges will be filed in federal court.

The Baker County District Attorney's office confirmed that there had been discussions about which court system charges against Yeater would be filed in.

Bigman wrote in the email that "at this time no other information will be released due to continuing investigation."

Duby said Baker City Police had received informa-

tion within the past month or so that Yeater might be involved in distributing drugs locally.

In addition to the fentanyl, meth, cocaine and marijuana, police found 21 dosage units of suboxone.

Duby said suboxone is a prescription opioid used to treat narcotic dependence.

He said police often find that people who use drugs such as fentanyl and heroin will have suboxone, which can help ease symptoms of withdrawal for people who don't have access to the drugs.

Besides the drugs, police seized six guns from Yeater's car:

- 9 mm pistol
- .223 rifle
- .17 rifle
- .38 Special pistol
- .22 pistol
- .45 pistol

Police also seized ammunition and magazines, along with "evidence of identity theft," according to the OSP press release.

Longtime CUTIR leader to be honored

Antone Minthorn to have board room named after him by Ecotrust

By **WIL PHINNEY**
For the Confederated Umatilla Journal

MISSION — Ecotrust will name the board room in their Redd East offices after Antone Minthorn, a longtime leader on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

As part of its June 23 Indigenous Leadership Awards, Ecotrust will honor Minthorn with the naming of the "Big Dawn" Board Room. Big Dawn is the Cayuse/Nez Perce translation of Minthorn's Indian name.

The event, open to the public, will begin with a reception at 6 p.m. followed an hour later with the Leadership Awards ceremony.

The awards will be presented in the Main Hall of Redd East, located at 831 SE Salmon Street in Portland.

This year's awards recognize the outstanding work of Indigenous leaders from Alaska and Oregon. They are Julie Kiska (Chugach Eskimo), Paul Lumley (Yakama), Spring Alaska Schreiner (Chugach Alaska Corporation and the Valdez Native Tribe), and Michelle Week (Sinixt).

Minthorn served in several capacities in addition to his 16 years as an elected leader of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

He has been a board member for Ecotrust for more than 20 years.

Spencer Beebe, founder of Ecotrust in 1991 and Salmon Nation in 2019, recruited Minthorn as a



Confederated Umatilla Journal/Contributed Photo

Antone Minthorn, left, stands at Pendleton Airport Tuesday, May 26, 2022, with Spencer Beebe in front of the airplane they flew to San Francisco. Ecotrust, started by Beebe in 1991, will honor Minthorn at its 2022 Indigenous Leadership Awards June 23 in Portland.

MORE INFORMATION

Antone Minthorn's list of other board memberships is more than impressive and includes:

- Northwest Area Foundation
- Indian Country Conservancy
- Trust for Public Lands
- Portland State University Institute for Tribal Government
- Oregon Trail Coordinating Council
- American Leadership Forum
- Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts
- Celilo Wyam village redevelopment project
- Oregon Historical Society
- Washington Historical Society
- Confluence Project
- Rural Development Initiatives, Inc.
- Columbia River Gorge Commission
- Pottlatch Fund
- American Legion George St. Denis Post 140
- Salmon Nation Trust

board member in 2002. Beebe said Minthorn brings a tribal perspective to Ecotrust's mission of taking care of the planet for future generations.

"Antone always reminded us of the power of the Treaty and the Tribes," Beebe said. "He said we could litigate or legislate, but also negotiate. He told us Tribes haven't always recognized the power they have with their Indigenous rights. Antone would say, 'You've got to use that to restore your lands and build your own communities.'"

Minthorn has had many major accomplishments over the years, but he considers his most important

contribution the restoration of water and salmon, after an absence of 70 years, to the Umatilla River.

The years-long Umatilla Basin Project required "win-win" collaboration and cooperation, as well as negotiation, between Indians, irrigators, and government.

He was a key player in the adoption of a major salmon policy for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) to stop salmon extinction in the Columbia River Basin.

As evidence of this achievement, CRITFC honored Antone with a Lifetime Achievement Award.



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