

Local

North Powder FFA's debut BBQ

By Todd Arriola

Todd@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Last Friday, February 20, the North Powder High School Chapter of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) hosted its first barbecue dinner fundraiser at the Baker County Fairgrounds, from 5-7 p.m.

The dinner was sold as a dine-in or carry-out meal, at \$10 a plate, and included sirloin tip roast, baked potato, green beans, French bread, dessert, and bottled water.

Randy Newman, a retired Baker High School teacher who taught there for 27 years, is the North Powder Agricultural Science Teacher, and was the driving force behind the event, along with FFA member volunteers, and adults in the community.

Newman and the crew began preparing the meals hours earlier, while some FFA members sold tickets at the District 7-1A Basketball Tournament, at Baker High School. Some of the members participated in the tournament, but were present later on to assist with the fundraiser.

The preparation of the meals included cooking around 200 pounds of meat mostly to medium rare, after being soaked overnight in seasoning, outside on two large metal grills, which were built



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

L-R: Lane Loennit, Garrett Shreve, and Randy Newman.

by members of the Baker High School FFA, while Newman was a teacher there, he said.

Newman and FFA members and seniors Garrett Shreve and Lane Loennit tended to the roasts on the grills, while other volunteers inside prepped the other components of the meals, including 400 baked potatoes, 40 loaves of French bread, and 24 gallons of green beans. Preparations all began at

noon that day.

The funds raised from the barbecue will be used for future events and competitions, which includes the FFA State Convention, in Silverton in March, Newman said. He said the North Powder FFA has a greenhouse, also a fundraiser, which operates from spring until the end of the school year. He also said that, with potential grants and/or future fundraising events, it's possible

that a shop could be built near the school in North Powder, providing more learning opportunities for students.

Newman said that overall, the fundraiser was a success—especially for its first time.

The FFA sold 200 tickets and brought in a little over \$2,000.

Newman is confident these numbers will increase as the event takes hold in future years.

5J superintendent finalist

Continued from Page 1

Cassidy continued, "But what they aren't seeing is what the Superintendent has to do for that salary: They have to run a business entity with 450 employees and a 28-million-dollar budget, as well as meet all State and Federally required educational standards."

Cassidy said the search committee began with 15 candidates.

The Candidates.

Betty Palmer: Palmer is currently Principal at Baker Intermediary, and teaches 5th grade and the Gifted & Talented class. She has had her Administrator's license for the past ten years, has taught in Milton-Freewater, La Grande, and Baker City. She has been back in Baker City for the past 15 years. Palmer is familiar with the culture of eastern Oregon, of "people reaching out and helping people," as she says.

She speaks of how hard teachers and administrators have worked together to move forward over the years.

"I've got skin in this game!" she says. She wants to see stability and collaboration, and, as she points out, "Everyone new comes in with great ideas, but I know what we have all been working so hard to achieve. I want to see the happy ending."

Robert Vian: Vian has been an educator for the past 20 years in both Oregon and Idaho. He has been Superintendent of Schools in Orofino Idaho for the past two and a half years.

He and his wife love the area and the people in Orofino, but all their grandchildren live in Boise—five and a half hours away.

As Vian said, they both have "always thought Baker was beautiful" when they have driven through, and the opportunity to be so close to their grandkids

was too good to miss.

When asked his goals for the direction he would like to lead Baker schools, Vian said, "What I can bring is focus. To be successful, we need to concentrate on two or three things at a time. To me, most important here are buildings—we have so many sitting empty—and vocational / technical training. Not every kid wants or needs to go to college, but they all need a career."

Mark Whitley: Whitley has been Principal of John Day High for 12 years and then, as he tells it, "The School Board must have liked what I was doing because they made me School Superintendent!" He has held that position for the past five years.

He has a strong grasp of the realities of life in rural eastern Oregon, the hardships faced and the strengths built.

He and his wife have strong ties to John Day, but a move to Baker would not

strain those too greatly, he says. "It's only 80 miles!"

The idea of "taking on a larger district and the professional challenges involved, the opportunities for personal growth, working with key leaders in the community, new projects right out of the box. I'd like to be a part of that!" he said.

He reiterated several times that he and his family love John Day. "This is just the kind of opportunity you have to explore," he said. "We would still be close to our old community, but could expand our commitment to support eastern Oregon to the best of our abilities."

Editor's Note: The 5J School Board was scheduled to meet yesterday (Thursday evening) and announce the new Superintendent; however, this newspaper's print deadline fell just before that meeting. Look for more coverage next week.

Grazing fees to increase

The 2015 federal grazing fee, which is determined annually through a Congressionally-mandated formula, will increase by \$0.34/head month March 1.

The fee applies to more than 8,000 permits administered by the U.S. Forest Service and nearly 18,000 grazing permits and leases administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The 2015 fee will be \$1.69 per head month (HM) for lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and per animal unit month (AUM) for the Bureau of Land Management.

An HM or AUM, which are treated as equivalent measures for fee purposes,

is the occupancy and use of public lands to include but not limited to one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month.

The figure is calculated according to three main factors – the average annual change in beef prices, leasing rates for grazing on private land in 11 western states, and the cost of livestock production.

The formula was established by Congress in the 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act and has continued under a presidential Executive Order issued in 1986.

Under that order, the grazing fee cannot fall below \$1.35 per AUM, and

any increase or decrease cannot exceed 25 percent of the previous year's level.

The formula is based on a 1966 base value of \$1.23 per HM/AUM for livestock grazing on public lands managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in western states and data collected annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistical Service.

The fee applies to 16 western states, which include Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and

Wyoming. Permit holders and lessees may contact their local Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management office for additional information.

The Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, manages approximately 193 million acres of Federal lands in 44 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages approximately 245 million surface acres. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska.

BHS students learn about organ donation



Kailyn McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Stacy and Lindsay Bingham on stage at BHS.

By Sunny Werner

Sunny@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Representatives from DMV offices in the region, Donate Life NW, and Baker County's own "Sweetest Hearts," the Bingham Family—represented by Lindsay and her mother Stacy—were on stage to tell high school students about organ donation.

The occasion was the "Traveling Quilt" celebration, which was organized to commemorate 40 years of collaboration between the Department of Motor Vehicles in Oregon and Donate Life NW.

Families who have been affected by the programme are welcome to donate a square to the quilt. This particular quilt is continuing its trip to Bend, south to Klamath Falls, then to Medford and will end up hanging at the State office of the DM in Salem.

Oregon is rated fifth nationwide in registrations for organ donorship. So far, 58,000 Oregonians have received the gift of life, sight, or tissue.

As Lindsay Bingham said, "I got my heart two years ago on Valentine's Day. You never know who's heart you might get."

Stacy and her husband Jason are no strangers to organ donation. Three of their children have suffered or are suffering from heart failure. Right now, Lindsay's sister, Sierra, is hoping to get back on the transplant list.

Aimee Adelman, Program Coordinator for Donate Life NW, and herself a double transplant recipient, talks about working with the donor and the recipient families.

"It is amazing," said Adelman, "how the family feeling grows so strong between the recipient and the donor families."

The pamphlet from Donate Life NW includes this information: One person can save up to eight lives as an organ donor and restore sight and mobility to another 50 people as an eye and tissue donor.

Those interested can contact DonateLifeNW.ORG, or sign up at the local DMV.

Visit heartforbinghams.org or go to Facebook and look up "Hearts for Bingham" to learn more about their family and history of organ transplants.

SWCD offers youth range camp sponsorship

The Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts recognize and understand the important role our youth play in conservation. Much of the youth in Baker County are growing up on farms or ranches, and will, if not already, make important decisions regarding healthy land management.

The Baker County SWCDs have pledged to sponsor local students to attend the High Desert Youth Range Camp, June 17-20, 2015. The camp, which takes place at the Northern Great Basin Experimental Range near Burns, will provide students with valuable rangeland and management knowledge. Students who attend the camp will learn about rangeland ecosystems, plant, weed and wildlife species, new mapping technologies, how to design a ranch management plan, and much more! Campers not only learn valuable skill sets for a future in rangeland health and agriculture, but they also earn college credits by attending the camp.

During the 2014/2015 SWCD Annual Dinner and Awards Banquet that took place in January, attendees bid on silent auction items that were donated by Baker County residents and SWCD Directors. The proceeds from the silent auction will sponsor two students to attend the High Desert Youth Range Camp. The SWCDs are asking interested students to submit an essay explaining why they would like to attend the camp, and what their future education/career plans include. Students will be selected for sponsorship based on their essays.

Oregon high school students (grades 9-12) are eligible for the Youth Range Camp. Sponsorship essays and camp applications will be due to the Baker County SWCDs by April 13th, 2015, so do not delay! To receive a camp application and apply for sponsorship, or for more information, please call the SWCD office at 541-523-7121, or stop by at 3990 Midway Drive in Baker City.