

Local

Kids enjoy Huntington egg hunt

By Eileen Driver

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Early in the morning of Saturday, April 3, the Easter Bunny arrived in Huntington and left hundreds of beautifully decorated Easter eggs hidden all over the lower field at Huntington Elementary School. On that cool but sunny morning at 10 a.m. all the children in town, from 0-10 years of age, gathered at the edge of the field, with their buckets and baskets in hand and stared in awe and wonder at the bounty before them.

At just the right moment they were let loose on that field and enthusiastically hunted down all the eggs that were hidden on the side of the hill, buried in large tufts of grass, cradled in small holes in the earth and hidden by rocks, while their parents, grandparents and friends watched and encouraged them from the sidelines.

Three lucky kids found Special Easter Eggs, which said "Grand Prize" on them. They each were allowed to trade those Grand Prize eggs for a large Easter Basket full of goodies.

The lucky hunters were Gage Roby, Emily Sullivan and Donivyn Boyd. All the children went home with their baskets and buckets full of Easter Eggs and bright, shiny smiles on their faces.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt is sponsored by the Huntington Sorority and organized by Mary McKinney Howard and Sterling McKinney with the help and assistance of many community members, and the generosity of the Huntington School District's loan of the field, for the benefit of the children of our community.



Children from all across Huntington turned out in force over the weekend to hunt down beautifully decorated Easter eggs hidden all over the lower field at Huntington Elementary School.

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OTEC celebrates linemen April 13

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, 2015, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative will honor the hard working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. The full text of the resolution, which the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board adopted unanimously, follows:

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

"We proudly recognize all of our linemen and tradesmen for the services they perform," said OTEC's Director of Engineering and Operations Ned Ratterman. "They work around the clock, all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities and protect the public's safety. Electric linemen and tradesmen do not often receive the recognition they deserve. They truly deserve this special day of appreciation." OTEC invites its members to take a moment to thank a lineman/tradesman in Baker County for the work they do and show support for the people who light our lives.

Baker County Linemen/Tradesmen: Tim Banister, Mark Dyer, Rich Eskew, Tony Hellbusch, Richard Jensen, Casey Mitchell, Mike Mitchell, Gene Nelson, Chris Peppers, Larry Robb, Myles Schwebke, Bud Scott, Mike Wilson, Rod Wolf.

Ways & Means to meet in La Grande

The Senate and Representatives from the Joint Ways and Means Committee will be touring Eastern Oregon.

There are two scheduled stops:

Friday ~ April 10, 2015, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Gilbert Center on EOU's Campus in La Grande.

Saturday ~ April 11, 2015, 12:30-2:30 p.m., SAGE Center (Port of Morrow).

Everyone is encouraged to take part in the hearing and testify on issues important to them. Guests will be able to meet face to face with the committee members. Please call if you have any questions: 503 986-1458.

MSHA classes, medallion raffle ahead for EOMA

By Todd Arriola

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Last Friday, April 3, 2015, the Eastern Oregon Mining Association (EOMA) held its monthly Board meeting at 6 p.m., and its general meeting at 6:40 p.m., in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall.

In attendance were President Ken Alexander, Vice President Ed Hardt, Executive Director Chuck Chase, Director of Governmental Affairs Terry Drever Gee, Mineral Policy Director Jan Alexander, Recording Secretary Carmelita Holland, and Treasurer Bobbie Danser, and Board of Directors members Wanda Ballard and Alice Knapp.

The attendees also included Baker County Commissioner Bill Harvey, Frank Vasconcelles, Charlie Cree, Charles and Eileen Stewart, Tork Ballard, Gary Holland and Judith Cox.

The Board meeting was called to order, shortly followed by a reading of the minutes by Holland from the Board meeting held on Friday, March 6, 2015. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes noted, and Hardt made a motion to accept the minutes, with a second from Jan Alexander. The motion carried.

Danser gave a Treasurer's report, which included the general account balance, deposits, checks and other withdrawals, bank statement balance, checkbook balance, bills, transfers, and other information.

Ken Alexander asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer's report, and there were none stated. Jan Alexander moved to accept the report, with a second from Gee, and the motion carried.

Danser gave a medallion report, and stated that there were 44 left for sale which were minted in 2012, 43 minted in 2013, 10 minted in 2014, and 43 minted in 2015. These are specially-minted, silver EOMA medallions.

Jan spoke about forming a committee to

address mining Reclamation Bonds with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), including initial payments and yearly fees, and Ken echoed that thought, saying the details need to be worked out. Attorney Charlie Vaughan of Baker City is assisting EOMA in this process.

Danser said that for the last two to three years, the majority of people registered for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) classes has been non-EOMA members, and she was concerned about the continued cost to the EOMA for presenting the training, including room rental and supplies. In March, she said, EOMA paid around \$228, and April's cost to the group is around \$215.

The group discussed whether attendees of the training should be required to become EOMA members, and whether donations at the training site could be suggested, but this conversation will be continued at a later date, since this year, these ideas most likely wouldn't be implemented.

Danser began a conversation about the number of EOMA monthly newsletters that are sent out, in electronic and print form, citing issues with the amount and whether certain members have computers, and Chase discussed problems with the mailing list. Ken stated this is an issue for the group to keep in mind for now, and to address it in the future, if the cost to EOMA becomes a significant concern.

At 6:32 p.m., the Board meeting was adjourned.

During a break between meetings, Ken mentioned the medallion raffle, which was to be held at the conclusion of the general meeting. This raffle was for a silver EOMA medallion, minted in 2012, and tickets were sold for six for \$5.00. Chase informed the attendees also at this time of a petition sign-up sheet, titled "Vote no on Baker County Initiative 1-63."

At 6:40 p.m., the general meeting was called to order, and Holland read the minutes from the March 6, 2015 general meeting. She listed the elected officers for 2015, and Hardt noted the absence of his name and position, Vice President, on the list and in the monthly newsletter. Hardt moved that the report be accepted as amended, with a second from Gee. The motion carried.

Ken mentioned briefly the MSHA classes, to be held April 15-17 at the Extension Building, located at 2600 East Street, beginning at 8 a.m. each day.

Jan gave an update regarding the Granite Creek Watershed Mining Projects Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Noting the short period in which to provide comments on the DEIS, the deadline of which was originally stated as April 6, 2015, she said that the large document covers only 28 Plans of Operation, a total of 104 acres analyzed for disturbance in a 94,480 acre watershed.

In addition, she said the United States Forest Service (USFS) has made a decision not to approve one of the 28 operations, leaving only 27, with many of them affecting only one acre over ten years.

Knapp also mentioned the difficulty in using the index, and Jan commented that the document was poorly constructed. These were among other issues and concerns pointed out by Jan and others, with the emphasis that comments on the DEIS are very important. Chase and Hardt voiced their opinions that lawsuits would most likely be part of the process.

Commissioner Harvey drafted a request addressed to Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya, for an extension of time to review and comment on the DEIS, on March 31, 2015, which was approved to be sent by the Board of Commissioners on April 1, 2015, at the regular session.

Ken spoke with optimism and sup-

port for House Resolution (HR) 1555, the Forest Access in Rural Communities Act of 2015, introduced by 2nd District Representative Greg Walden in late March 23, 2015, a bill which would require the USFS and BLM to obtain the consent of locally affected communities before implementing any travel management plans affecting access to National Forest System (NSF) lands.

During the meeting, Jenny Long of Long's WaterWorks on 10th Street stopped by to say hello to the group and drop off some business cards.

Chase spoke about the discussion he had with Representative Cliff Bentz about mining issues during the town hall meeting held in Haines on Friday, March 27, 2015. Chase said that Bentz mentioned efforts are being made to gain more support for access and use of mining resources.

Vasconcelles, a visitor from Walla Walla, Washington, discussed issues with his mining claim on the North Fork of the John Day River, including conflicts with permits and restricted salmon habitat areas, and dredging operations. He showed a map to the Board, showing restricted waterways related to salmon habitat, and stated he's having some issues working with the USFS and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and that enlisting EOMA's help may be a possibility.

The general meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m., followed by the raffle drawing for the EOMA silver medallion. Alice Knapp took home the medallion, a \$50 value, for the first time after many tries, she said.

The next Board and general meetings are scheduled to be held on Friday, May 1, 2015, at 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. respectively, in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall.