

Local

X-Drive returns to studio



Submitted Photo.

Above: X-Drive are Keith St. John, Baker City's own Jeremy Brunner, James Lomenzo, and Fred Fischer.

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Brunner describes the band's sound as "classic melodic hard rock in its finest purist form."

Said Brunner, "The first album has opened a lot of doors. Not long after the release of the album, I was contacted to write for a soundtrack to an upcoming movie. The director liked the 'Get Your Rock On' album. So that's my main

focus right now is getting those songs finished up."

Those songs will consist of four covers for the undisclosed movie.

After the songs are finished, the band will head into a public relations campaign that includes press releases, a music video and a photo shoot—all exciting.

Due to the current locations of the band members, Brunner said, "I will be working at The Mixhouse in Boise with Scott Pergan-

de who has done hundreds of gospel/religious CDs in Nashville. Keith will be working out of the studio in L.A."

Brunner added, "Scott is an excellent engineer and mixer."

"Get Your Rock On," which features 12 tracks and was released through Frontier Records, is available now at Amazon and iTunes. The producer on the album was the late, great Andy Johns (Led Zeppelin, The Rolling

Stones, Van Halen)—one of his last works. The album was mixed by Wyn Davis (Black Sabbath, Dio, Whitesnake, Dokken).

The album was released on Ward Records (Columbia) in Japan.

For more information, visit the band's Facebook page or go to www.x-drivemusic.com.

The band plans to perform in Baker City this year—so stay tuned!

Grazing loss report deadline is February 1

(Baker City, OR), Jan. 21, 2016 – Baker-Grant County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director Trent Luschen reminds livestock producers who suffered grazing losses that occurred throughout 2015 due to drought or wildfire that they have until Feb. 1, 2016, to report their losses and to enroll in the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately-owned or cash-leased land or fire on federally-managed land. Producers in Baker and Grant County are eligible to apply for 2015 LFP benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture. Livestock producers are encouraged to contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office with any questions regarding specific forage crops that are eligible.

"Prolonged drought and wildfire conditions have created a need for livestock disaster assistance programs in Baker and Grant County," said Luschen. "I encourage all affected livestock producers to contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office to schedule an appointment to enroll in the program before the Feb. 1 deadline."

Livestock producers must complete the LFP application and required supporting documentation no later than Feb. 1, 2016, for losses that occurred throughout 2015. Producers who already have appointments scheduled require no additional action to meet the deadline.

Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland.

For more information about LFP, contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office at 541-523-7121 x 2. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. Visit www.usda.gov/disaster to learn more about FSA disaster assistance programs.

BMTD completes fiber optic connection

Blue Mountain Translator District has completed its fiber optic connection and is now broadcasting additional channels for viewers in Baker Valley and Union County.

The District says it's very excited to be able to offer these additional viewing options and still at the cost of a \$100 annual membership fee.

Some viewers may have to re-scan their television sets or converter boxes, but some will see the new stations populate on their sets automatically.

Dependent upon the mountain you receive your signal from, you may receive from six up to eight new viewing options.

Questions or in need of more information, please contact the District or visit the website www.bmtd.org.

Two more intend to file for Commission seat

Last week, Baker County rancher Kody Justus filed to run for the open County Commission slot to be vacated by Tim Kerns at the end of the year.

Two additional Republican candidates, local CPA Bruce Nichols and retired Bureau of Land Management employee Dave Hunsaker have since picked up the preliminary paperwork to file as well.

Baker County Clerk Cindy Carpenter said, "They have both filed a prospective petition, which means they have been certified to collect signatures to be a candidate rather than pay the \$50."

Justus opted to simply pay the fee.

Carpenter added, "Both are Republican and need to collect 114 signatures. After the signatures are certified (and enough collected) then they will be candidates and be on the ballot."

At the time of print, neither Hunsaker nor Nichols had yet turned in their petition.

Scholarship open

Saint Alphonsus Auxiliary- Baker City is once again offering a \$1,500.00 scholarship. To be eligible you must be a graduate of a Baker County High School or a current resident of Baker County, who will be at least a sophomore in college by September, 2016.

The Scholarship will be awarded to a student who is enrolled in a health care profession. The application for the scholarship can be obtained from the Auxiliary Gift Shop in the front lobby of Saint Alphonsus Medical Center – Baker City or from a member of the Auxiliary Scholarship Committee, Peggy Payton, Chairman, 541-519-8118, Marilyn Bloom 541-523-2750 or Betty Rouse 541-523-5563. Applications must be returned to the committee by April 15th, 2016. The recipient will be notified by May 20th, 2016.

When Sumpter's snow plow breaks down

• SUMPTER CITY BURIED IN FLUFFY WHITE STUFF DURING HEAVY EQUIPMENT SNAG

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
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Snow removal efforts in Sumpter hit a snag when the City plow, a converted 1972 "deuce and a half" military transport vehicle, broke down the morning of Wednesday, January 20th.

The frame that holds the bracket for the plow attachment broke, necessitating having specially cut pieces of steel sent out for welding.

To add to the challenge, the City backhoe had blown a seal and also needed repairs. With the City plow out of commission, by that Friday afternoon Utility Manager Jeff McKinney said the upper half of town was completely inaccessible.

While waiting on the snowplow parts to come back, McKinney explained he would be taking the repaired backhoe out to make notches in the snow banks lining the streets to give the snow somewhere to go once the plow was running again. McKinney said, "We started out just as wide as we could, and the streets are already down to one and a half lanes." Part of the challenge is that the plow attachment is fixed in one position and the angle cannot be adjusted as on a regular snowplow.

The snowplow was fixed and running by Saturday, when the backhoe broke down, a hydraulic cylinder needing repairs.

City Recorder Julie McKinney said that unlike sewer and water, revenue to cover the expenses of street maintenance and upkeep does not come in directly from citizens. A share of revenue from gas taxes comes in from the State and this amount is based on city population. McKinney, with the assistance of Bookkeeper Kathi Vinson, confirmed that Sumpter receives from this source around \$11,000 annually that goes to the street budget.

McKinney said despite the inconvenience, community spirit was evident with lots of people out removing snow from roofs and driveways. Carey Clarke donated time and equipment to help get snow cleared from around City Hall on Wednesday, January 20th, after it piled off the roof.

When contacted on Tuesday, January 25th, Mayor Leland Myers said he had not been around the past few days, and wasn't able to comment much on the situation, but asked that folks just be patient and realize that bad situations will happen once in a while. He said that equipment breakdowns are inevitable, but the City works to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

Jeff McKinney said he has been out at midnight some nights keeping up with the snow removal, though he is quick to point



Submitted Photo.

Utility Manager Jeff McKinney digging out the parking lot at City Hall.



Submitted Photo.

The snow plow stopping to converse with the backhoe, which blew a seal and was out of commission.

out the benefit of snow to Sumpter and those who enjoy snowmobiling in the area. He also cited the abundance of community spirit with citizens taking extra care to watch out for

each other.

As far as catching up, Myers stated, "As long as it doesn't snow three feet overnight soon, we'll make it."