

Local

Promise student honored, mock trial team goes to State

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Last Thursday the Baker 5J School Board met for their regular monthly meeting.

After calling the meeting to order, Jordan Remien was recognized as the Baker Middle School "Promise of Baker" student for the month.

Mr. Carmiencke, Baker Middle School Principal, awarded Remien and spoke as to his character saying, "He is a fun-loving kid. He is always full of energy, even at 7:30 in the morning. He is an amazing leader, a solid student and an outstanding musician.

"We had a Veterans Day assembly and Jordan sang the National Anthem, just beautiful, on his own.

"We also invited the band and the choir to perform for this but neither the band or choir teacher were there so Jordan directed both of them. While Jordan might not be the best student at Baker Middle School, there is no one at Baker Middle School that reflects a really important and valuable trait, which is excellence, like him. He embodies excellence in his leadership and his vocal abilities, which are just outstanding."

Remien was chosen by taped audition for an all-state boys' honor choir. He performs many solos for the choir, performed in a solo contest as EOU recently where he scored 95/100.

Middle school choir director, DeeAnn Sands said, "He is more talented and mature than my other kids. Don't tell them that." She laughed and added, "But if you asked any one of them about Jordan they would say, 'He's my best friend.' He does not set himself above them. He can act like a five-year-old with the rest of them, but he can also stand up and lead them, get them to work. His talent, he was born with but his leadership and work ethic are incredible."

After the presentation the board moved on with their agenda first approving the evenings agenda and next approving the minutes from the February 18, 2016 meeting.

Chairman Kevin Cassidy addressed the next item on the agenda letting board members know there was information in packets they had received pertaining to the school district's enrollment reports and principals' reports.

He noted that the principals were all in attendance if there were any questions for them. He stated that the Baker County Library would be "stepping up and sponsoring the Oregon State Spelling Bee."

Assistant Superintendent Betty Palmer explained, "The spelling bee is something we have done, in the spring for the last couple of years. The kids participate in it voluntarily. Teachers give a list of words to study. The top kids participate in competitions locally, then regionally, statewide and finally nationally, should they get that far."

Chairman Cassidy then called on Bryson Smith to give a report on Baker



Baker High School's mock trial team prosecution.

High School.

Smith's address informed the board that "BHS wrestlers were GOL champions with 13 of the 14 wrestlers on the team qualifying for state. As a team they placed 7th overall and five of the 13 qualifiers placed individually. The Girls Basketball Team placed 2nd at district playoffs, with five making the all-league team. The Boys' Basketball Team were league champions and district champions. All five of the team starters were named to an all-league team. Coach Brent Gyllenberg was named Coach of the year."

He added, "In swimming Jared Miller is a state champion in the 100 backstroke and eight others placed at state.

"Cheerleading, first time ever competing at state and they placed 4th."

He went on to inform the board of the FFA district leadership competitions that produced six qualifying for state and noted that Kountney Lehmen had been elected as the northeast Oregon district secretary.

He also noted that FBLA placed in 24 separate competitions and will be competing in 37 different competitions at the state level.

He then told the Board, "The Mock Trial team won districts and will travel to the state competition this weekend." (The team did well, but did not advance from Portland to Nationals.)

He said that the skills USA team competed at the annual high school industrial skills competition at Linn Benton Community College where Dusty Gyllenberg placed 1st in Welding Technology and Casey Poe took 2nd in Computer Aided Drafting.

He noted that in the first semester BHS saw 33 students with a 4.0 GPA and 133 students made honor roll. Attendance is at a three-year high of 91%. There are 247 total enrollments that are currently receiving dual credits, meaning they are also receiving in addition to high school credits college credits.

Smith said "I will graduate with close to 40 college credits. It's awesome that our high school gives the students the opportunity to take dual credit courses. It saves a lot of money down the road but it also prepares you."

Cassidy asked, "So, Bryson, how does that look going into college for you, as an example for us to understand."



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Jordan Remien receives his Promise of Baker award.

He answered, "My credits will transfer straight across so I'll go into college with my freshman year done."

Cassidy nodded and said, "Thanks, that's great." Cassidy moved forward asking for board updates.

Board member Andrew Bryan spoke up stating that he felt a discussion revolving around Baker Technical Institute (BTI) and all the things happening and future prospects needed, but it should be scheduled ahead of time and as the only item for discussion as he felt there was much to talk about.

Chairman Cassidy advised the Board that he had met recently with a small group at Governor Kate Brown's home.

He felt encouraged by the conversations he heard there about getting our youth career ready as well as college ready, an important piece BTI plays a role in.

He indicated Governor Brown had asked him questions about the funding behind BTI and he indicated that he may be part of one of her CTE

Committee members in the near future as well. Doug Dalton recognized Behlen Manufacturing as an outstanding business partner with Baker School District.

Kathy Gover-Shaw accepted the award on behalf of the company.

Dalton stated that more than once Behlen has gone above and beyond to help the school's out whether it be providing a trough to catch water, and then telling them to just keep it rather than picking it up later, when an unexpected leak was discovered to donating metal to the welding program to hiring students that participated in that program he noted that they are just an outstanding community partner.

Dalton quickly went through updates needing

to be made to some of the district buildings including serious issues with the boiler system at the High School that is being replaced. He specifically mentioned when portions of the school were rebuilt after fire destroyed the majority of the building in 1988 some of the systems were pieced together to make the system whole potentially creating a very large problem.

Dalton suggested having a company inspect all of the existing duct work and having a recommendation made before any final decisions are made in the project.

He said those decisions would need to be made quickly and most likely before the next School Board meeting. A concerned citizen also addressed the board saying he did not feel the majority of parents understood what the change in the calendar they were considering meant.

That most parents did not realize the board was considering extending the school week by adding Fridays back onto the calendar.

He felt a more straightforward and frank conversation rather than just calling it by the general topic "calendar" was in order so parents were not surprised.

The Board quickly moved through the adoption by unanimous vote of items that included certifying the new hire of Dan Van Winkle to head the summer academy, final readings of policies such as use of tobacco products, drugs and alcohol, harassment and cyberbullying.

The topic of a math curriculum adoption was mentioned as a future agenda item and it was mentioned that there was still time for parents to get into classrooms to observe instruction of math curriculums and voice their opinions before the meeting adjourned.

Rock slide closes road by Hells Canyon



Submitted Photo.

Flaggers will direct traffic for several days until this rock slide is cleared.

A rock slide on the road between Oxbow and Hells Canyon Dam has narrowed traffic to one lane and may cause brief traffic delays until the area is cleared, scheduled Thursday (yesterday) afternoon.

Flaggers will direct traffic on both sides of the slide, which is located 13 miles north of the Oxbow Bridge on the Idaho side of the Snake River. Drivers should use extra caution and be prepared to stop.

The slide occurred Saturday, March 12. Crews have been working since then to safely remove the debris. They expect the road to be completely cleared this week.

Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis Final EIS and draft Decision released by USFS / WWNF

The Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests will release the Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) on March 16, 2016. The release of the FEIS and draft ROD will be followed by a 45-day pre-decisional objection period.

"The release of the FEIS and draft ROD is a significant step towards approving 28 mining Plans of Operations in the Granite Creek Watershed," said Jeff Tomac, Whitman District Ranger for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

The 94,480 acre Granite Creek Watershed is located in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and is primarily within the administrative boundaries of the Whitman Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (40,624 acres), and the North Fork John Day Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest (49,539 acres) in Baker and Grant Counties. Project activities will affect about 105 acres of this 94,480-acre watershed.

"The FEIS and draft ROD were developed through an iterative process with the miners, an interdisciplinary team of natural resource specialists, treaty Tribes, and state and federal regulatory agencies with whom the Forest Service is required to consult. Ranger Tomac and I selected Alternative 3 in our decision which best allows the miners legal access to their mineral estate while minimizing impacts to surface resources, including water quality and threatened fish species", said Ian Reid, North Fork John Day District Ranger for the Umatilla National Forest.

After the final ROD is signed and issued, reclamation bonds and any 401 certifications and valid water rights determined necessary as a result of this analysis will be required before the Plans of Operations are approved and mining activities commence.

The FEIS and draft ROD are subject to a 45-day pre-decisional administrative review process, commonly referred to as an objection process. The objection process allows those individuals or organizations that provided specific written comments during the scoping or comment period to object to specific aspects of the proposal in the FEIS and the draft ROD. Minimum requirements of an objection are described at 36 CFR 218.8(d).

An electronic copy of the Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis FEIS and draft ROD is available online at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=2209>. Hard copies or CDs of the document can be obtained by contacting Chris Helberg at (541) 427-5351, chelberg@fs.fed.us.

For more information about the Granite Creek Watershed Mining Analysis FEIS and draft ROD, please contact Sophia Millar, Environmental Coordinator, Wallowa Mountains Office, 201 East Second Street / PO Box 905, Joseph, OR 97846, (541) 263-1735, or smillar@fs.fed.us.