

Local

Hunt of a Lifetime

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McEnroe, a local building contractor and Hunt of a Lifetime representative for northeast Oregon, said he has volunteered for the organization for 12 years, as part of the all-volunteer group conducting the actual hunts. There were donations from corporate sponsorships, and some fundraisers in Oregon in the past, but "...nothing of this magnitude," he said.

McEnroe said that he was chatting with Smith one day, and Smith, who's a real estate broker for Sunfire Real Estate, suggested holding the fundraiser. "I called Danny (Benson, the Oregon Ambassador for the Oregon Chapter)...and, he said, 'Sure, knock yourself out.' And, he was thinking, 75, 100 people tops..." Within 30 days, McEnroe said, over 100 tickets were sold (at \$25 each, for the dinner), and in the next 30 days, the tally was 300 tickets. "There might have been more than 500 people here," he said. The final tally, according to Smith, was over 430 dinner tickets sold, and over 500 plates.

Laurene Parry served as the decorator for the event. Toby Gangler and Steven Talbot from Switch Back Outdoors were there doing the videos of the event.

Hunt of a Lifetime, a non-profit organization, was created by Tina Pattison, with a mission to grant hunting and fishing dreams for children, age 21 and under, who have been diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. Tina's son, Matthew, had been diagnosed with cancer, and, having hunted together with his father since he was a boy (he was over 18), he dreamed of being able to hunt moose with him.

Tina contacted a wish-granting organization, and told the person who answered the call about Matthew's wish, but she was told that the organization no longer fulfilled hunting requests, and that, since Matthew was over 18, he no longer was eligible for a wish of any kind.

Heartbroken but undaunted, Tina made calls to various outfitters, and she finally was contacted by Clayton Grosso, an outfitter in Nordegg, a tiny village located in Alberta, Canada. Grosso and his wife, Hilda (who had lost her right arm to cancer several years before), deeply affected by Matthew's story, assured Tina that everything would be done to provide a hunt for Matthew, at no cost to the family.

The Grossos, and the citizens of the town of Nordegg had come together, and gone above and beyond what Tina could have hoped for, including providing a free helicopter ride into the mountains, free housing, and free food.

On the first day of the hunt, Matthew dropped a huge bull moose, with two shots, and his dad, Chet, was there to see Matthew's dream fulfilled.

Six months later, on April 28, 1999, Matthew passed away, and Tina decided to start the Hunt of a Lifetime Foundation, to give terminally ill children



Submitted Photo.

This recent hunt on Dailey Creek Ranch / Idaho Power was the Hunt of a Lifetime for one young man.

the chance to embark on an outdoor hunting or fishing adventure.

McEnroe spoke about the auctions, held in Lefty's Loft, which included 19 firearms, sporting equipment, and other items, nearly all donated (a few items were purchased, he said). The event also included raffles. The catered dinner included tri-tip steak (about 230 pounds total, all donated), baked potato, salad, roll, and dessert. Specially-made drink glasses could be purchased for \$20, with unlimited beverages. With the average hunt costing around \$5,000 to \$7,000, the funds raised from the event will provide more opportunities in the near future.

Between five and seven hunts (completely paid for—food, travel, etc.) are conducted each year, and five State-wide game tags are granted, good from September 1, through November 30, he said, mostly for deer, and elk (he conducts most of the elk hunts in Oregon, he said). There's one hunt currently tentatively scheduled, which McEnroe hopes to begin shortly after September 1, due to the child's illness progression.

Most of the hunts, lasting up to four or five days, which were for elk, using a rifle, have included children from back East, and McEnroe said there was even one request for a buffalo hunt, conducted successfully. Other game included antelope, and pheasants. "I've met some incredible kids, and some amazing parents," he said. "Not one kid has ever complained..." about being tired, not wanting to continue the hunt, etc., he said, and his opinion is that the minor inconveniences most of us experience, and complain about, pale in comparison to what challenges these kids have to face, day to day.

He said, "Without them (private ranches, which provide hunting access, sometimes exclusively to the organization), we'd be in trouble."

These ranches are mostly in Baker, and Union counties, he said. He mentioned Tom Lager, owner of Timber Tiger Lodge, who's been a key

member of the volunteer hunt effort, and McEnroe had much to say about the volunteer effort in general, showing enthusiastic praise for the core group of 20 to 25 people who prepped Lefty's, in order to make the event happen. "That's phenomenal," he said.

McEnroe thought about other venues, but Lefty's, with space available on two floors, plus the parking lot behind the building, and its fresh, bright, inviting environment, made the most sense. In order to accommodate the crowd, the adjoining space next door, home of the former Clothes Outlet, was opened up. Johnny and the Lawbreakers provided entertainment for attendees, and the music and dancing continued on until after midnight, he said. He received glowing reports from locals, many of which stated that the event was the best one they'd ever attended, and, "They remember the experience," he said.

McEnroe's brother, Mark DeLong, co-owner of Coverworks, said, "There are people that, you aren't going to drag them to town, and they came," speaking about the diverse group of individuals from across the State, who showed tremendous local support, by donating to the cause.

Smith said, "This was the biggest fundraiser for Hunt of a Lifetime in Oregon. It took hundreds of hands to make this work, from all over, especially here. We started about four months ago. It took a lot of work, but we had a lot of people who helped...I pitched the idea to Clay...made some calls to people I know, formed a committee (there was a core group of about 20 people), and went from there...It was a very successful event..." She said that the committee had to create the format for the fundraiser from the ground up, since there wasn't a ready guide on that process.

Smith said the auction items included a hand-made quilt, by Mary Jo Grove, which was auctioned, sold, and then re-auctioned, bringing in \$4,750, which Hunt of a Lifetime will donate to

Colby and Erin Thompson, of North Powder, whose daughter, Chelsie, had lost part of her left leg, due to a lawnmowing accident, earlier this month.

Smith said that it was very important for the committee, when planning started, to support a local business, and, though donations came in from all over the State, all of the auction items which were purchased, were bought locally.

The beef was donated by Jim and Cindy Wright, owners of CJ's Country Store, in North Powder, and the rest of the meal was catered by Robin Mawhinney.

The dessert (which McEnroe heard was "unbelievable") was donated by Jackie Wirth, who owns Jackie's Savory Sweets, Smith said.

Digital designing was donated by Aspen Digital, all material was printed through Hudson Printing, and Elkhorn Media Group was a big sponsor, running advertisements, and promoting the event, she said.

She had high praise for all of the volunteer effort, noting major sponsors and donations, "...on top of countless people, who gave up their evenings, and weekends. Lefty's did a great job. It wouldn't have run as smoothly that night, without the great help from Lefty's."

Speaking about the Hunt of a Lifetime Foundation, Smith said, "It's an amazing program. It's an absolutely amazing organization."

McEnroe said there are tentative plans to hold the fundraiser in Hermiston next year, with the possibility of Baker City as the venue after that, maybe every other year. Speaking about the whole Hunt of a Lifetime volunteer experience, he said, "It's never about us. I don't need a pat on the back...It's what we do, and, why wouldn't you do it? Give a little bit back from time to time, when you can..."

Those who want to donate to the western Oregon chapter (funds stay in eastern Oregon) can contact Christina Smith at 541.519.1866 or Clay McEnroe at 541.403.1313.

City Council discusses lagoon storage, train quiet zone

• APPROVED BUDGET ALTERED TO INCLUDE NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPER POSITION

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Members of the Baker City Council gathered Tuesday for an over two-hour meeting. Councilor Rosemary Abel was absent and no citizen participation occurred.

Appointment.

Ann Mehaffy was appointed to the Historic District Design Review Commission. Two positions had been open, and now one vacancy remains.

Wastewater Disposal.

Public Works Director Michelle Owen introduced Keven Shreeve and James Bledsoe of Shreeve and Associates out of Kuna, Idaho. The firm was retained to conduct research and present options on the City's wastewater disposal options. According to Shreeve, the City might continue disposing treated wastewater effluent into the Powder River with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, or expand land application by pumping effluent as irrigation water onto agricultural land. The City might also pursue a wetland situation similar to Ladd Marsh. Only in the case of land application would a NPDES permit not be required.

Discharge to groundwater or an irrigation canal were very briefly touched upon.

The City currently has an NPDES permit, which can be modified and negotiated with regulatory agencies upon renewal.

At present, the City's lagoon system is adequate for storage, but sludge buildup continues to put long-term viability of that system in question.

Franchise Agreements.

Council unanimously approved two separate franchise agreements, one with Oregon Telephone Company to operate within Baker City, which will result in about \$2,000 per year in revenues to the City, the second with Charter Communications worth \$25,000. Both are 10-year agreements, according to City Manager Fred Warner, Jr.

The ordinances adopting these agreements will be read again by title only at the next meeting.

Railroad Quiet Zone.

City Engineer Doug Schwinn presented a staff report following his May 25 meeting with representatives from Union Pacific and the Oregon Department of Transportation regarding what it would take to implement a quiet zone through Baker City in which train whistles would be silenced.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, at least two of the five affected railroad crossings in the City would have to be upgraded and maintained by the City. Initial costs simply to upgrade would range between \$100,000 and \$500,000 depending on the estimate.

Councilor Langrell expressed that at this time he didn't see implementing a quiet zone as a cost-effective use of money, and stated he hadn't heard from anyone who really had a significant problem with the train whistles to begin with.

Schwinn expressed safety concerns with only two of the five crossings potentially upgraded—meaning the trains would then silently approach the first crossing at Pocahontas Road, which wouldn't have the updated safety features. Councilor Sandy Lewis echoed his concerns.

Implementing protection at all crossings could cost the City into the millions of dollars. Discussion was tabled.

Election Changes.

Council discussed the idea of two potential changes to the candidate process for running for City Council. At present, one may file to run for City Council by circulating a petition to gather the amount of signatures equal to 1% of the votes cast within the Baker City limit in the last gubernatorial election.

Councilor Daniel Lowe suggested looking into allowing candidates to simply pay a fee to file as an option to the signature gathering. City Recorder Julie Smith said 13 cities around Oregon now have the two options.

In addition, Councilors are limited to two consecutive terms. Lowe asked if the term limit might be expanded for a Councilor who is appointed to serve out the term of a departing member, if the term is six months or less.

Lowe hopes if implemented, the changes might encourage more interest in running for Council.

Langrell voiced strong opposition to both ideas, feeling the first change would encourage candidates who aren't serious and the second would upset the public, which is in favor of the existing term limits. Other Council members were ambivalent. The discussion was postponed until future meetings after more time was allowed to hear from the public and give the ideas some thought.

Interfund Loan.

A \$39,000 interfund loan was approved to move funds from the Equipment and Vehicle budget to the Sam-O Swim Center Maintenance fund to cover heater repairs.

Budget.

Councilors voted to adopt the new budget with changes that included adding one full-time Community Developer position. One-quarter of that position will exist under administration, three-quarters under Economic Development. The position adds \$33,000 to the general fund past the amount already found within the budget. The position is expected to provide a number of liaison and grant-writing services within the City Limits.