

Local

5J: Two teachers honored

• NEW QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER IN THE WORKS, NEW LOCK SYSTEM IN PLACE AT BROOKLYN

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The District board members met Thursday, September 15. At their meeting, teachers Sharon Defrees and Annetta Evans received recognition for the Oregon EdTech Professional Development Cadre. Assistant Superintendent Betty Palmer presented Defrees and Evans with frame certificates.

"They are being recognized at a state level for their involvement," explained Palmer. "And I want to add this piece: Both Sharon and Annetta and more on the Cadre, who have not been recognized at this time but will be later, but these people have been leaders in our district for many years, and in just one area is technology and many others across the board. They have helped put on workshops, they have in their buildings helped other teachers bring on technology, they have over and over again demonstrated technological applications for staff, the have encouraged and prodded us forward in our movement in integrating technology into education."

Attending the meeting was Kara Bennett, the Baker High School ASB President. Bennett explained that the high school media requested that a student of the week be submitted to be featured for the half time show during the Friday football game.

Bennett also reported in the high school attendance, all 9-12 are in the high 90s, but after discussing possible withdrawals and absences with Mr. Mitchell, Bennett explained the numbers should be higher next month.

For parental opportunities, Bennett explained they will have an open house Wednesday, October 5 at 5:30.

"We hope during we'll

have local support service organizations with booths up for our families to look at," Bennett said. For student activities they had a year book study party and it was successful with students.

"Our leadership article this year is to focus on school spirit, student recognition, and service to others. And a message from FFA; they're going to a National Conference October 16 to the 23 and several of our students are participating," explained Bennett. "For our sports we are doing really good. Our Volleyball team is 5 to 1 as of September 9. Football is 1 to 0, Girls Soccer is 1 to 0, and Boys Soccer is 0 to 4 but they are playing a lot better than last year, and Cross Country has had two meets this far and is competing well. Also a message from Cross Country; we have 18 students, which is more than double from last year, and 13 are new."

During the meeting, Jessica Dalton reported on the Food/Non Food bids. Dalton received bids from Food Services of America, FSA, and others for Milk Bids and Produce Bids. She is planning to go back to FSA's services for the Food/Non Food bids.

Superintendent Mark Witty presented the Superintendent Report, beginning with an Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) Regional Meeting in La Grande, October 3. There will be a dinner at 6 p.m. and the meeting will be at 6:30 p.m.

Witty explained they received the applications for the ODE Technical Assistance Program and they will learn at the end of this month if they receive them.

Witty also reported that Brooklyn has a new locking system. The system was suggested by Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner. During the day, those wishing to enter the building can push a white button by the front door to be buzzed in by office staff inside.

Witty reported that they are working on developing a newsletter that will go out quarterly. He is working with a local person to get the newsletter up and going. It will have



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

Annetta Evans (left) and Sharon Defrees after receiving recognition from Assistant Superintendent Betty Palmer.

things such as shout outs for people who have done something great. There will be areas to spotlight students, interest stories, and highlights for staff. The distribution of the newsletter will be 6,450, and it will go to every box in the district including businesses.

Witty explained they recognize that businesses support the community and school district and to communicate with them. Witty wants to get the newsletter out at the end of the month. Witty explained when they receive an update on the lead in school water they will send out an update, wanting to keep people informed.

"Doug and his crew have just worked overtime to get this thing done and Dan and just a number of all his maintenance crew have been working really hard to stay on top of this piece," said Witty.

Assistant Superintendent Betty Palmer reported they did training and met with the bus transportation team and discussed what they're committed to the district is and what they want to see from the district. Palmer reported they launched their new staff orientation and they have 15 certified staff members that will be taking a series of eight training sessions and working with technology.

Palmer explained working with kindergarten students to help them have a successful and positive year, and they are working on a program to help them. CGO/Business Manager Doug Dalton reported on the construction projects.

"We are on schedule at this point," said Dalton. "If you remember in the BTI wing those are all separate gas powered furnaces, that's all brand new. They have been commissioned and they'll be tested today and tomorrow and on the weekend, so on Monday we should have live heat coming in from that wing from those gas furnaces."

Dalton explained that on September 23, everything will be substantially completed and installed, the boiler will be completed. They will be finalizing controls for the boiler from September 23 to the final week in September.

On October 1 the commissioning team will come in from Portland and commission everything. Dalton says they are hoping to be live for regular heat October 10.

He reported they just signed the final agreement the DHS has selected BTI to partner with them on workforce training crew preparations.

Dalton explained they will be offering a course where students will learn to weld and come out with an American Welding Society qualification and it will begin in February.

They will be doing another Women's Welding and they are working to do one specifically for La Grande as well.

Board Chair Kevin Cassidy was nominated for the OSBA Board of Directors. Cassidy went through a process to be a member of the Board and he wants to continue his work with OSBA.

Coffee Corral, Little Pig robbed

At 10:55 p.m. on September 20, 2016 a guard at the Powder River Correctional Facility called Baker County 911 Dispatch to report suspicious activity involving two males (no further description) alongside The Little Pig restaurant, 3685 10th Street.

The subjects were observed near the rear door of the closed business. Officers responded and determined that no one was at the location but that it appeared the business had been broken into. The owner was contacted and it was determined that approximately \$150 worth of merchandise had been stolen.

At about 2:00 a.m. Officer Rand Weaver conducted a routine business check at the Coffee Corral, 1705 Campbell. He noted that business appeared to have been broken into. The owner responded and it appears that nine bags containing an unknown amount of employee tips had been stolen.

If citizens observe persons loitering on the property of closed businesses, particularly during hours of darkness, they are encouraged to call Baker County 911 Dispatch at 523-6415 to report suspicious activity.

County Commissioners

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A County Road Department purchase request, for two snow plows, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Smith discussed the request with the Board, prior to approval. According to the request, the Road Department's snow plow fleet needs updating, three 1970 Marmon Herrington snow plows will be scrapped this year, and two surplus Autocar snow plows were available from the General Services Administration (GSA), for \$8,500 each.

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) For Law Enforcement Services, between the City of Huntington, and Baker County, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. According to the agreement, the period covered is from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017, and Baker County will provide law enforcement services within the city limits of Huntington, for which the City of Huntington will pay \$54,000 in December 2016, the full payment.

Jodi Tool and Frank Thomas, from Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. provided the Board with a van pool update. Tool and Thomas said that the pilot program, which would assist employers and employees in Union and Baker counties with transportation issues, by providing a van pool system, has ceased to operate for now, because of problems with funding and resources. Tool said she doesn't consider it to be a failure, but rather, a learning experience, and the program could once again be implemented, given more time, and resolution of the issues. She said that one of the benefits of the venture is the national exposure the project received, through the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

A letter, addressed from the Board, to the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA), and detailing the County's rejection of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR) as presented, was approved to be sent, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

An Eagle Valley Rural Fire Protection District (EVRFPD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application was approved to be submitted to the Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA), with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns. Funding for the project, a new fire department facility, is totaled at \$1,443,548, which includes IFA funding of \$1,342,748, and non-IFA (EVRFPD) funding of \$100,800.

The Board discussed the Sumpter Dredge tails mining topic (discussed during previous meetings and sessions), which included a proposal letter from interested party, Yellow Eagle Mining, LLC, of Elko, Nevada. During a discussion about potential royalties paid to the County, local miner Ed Hardt said that the County must come up with a plan to receive those, if the project is pursued, without asking for too much of a percentage. The discussion, to be continued, also included concerns about up-front costs, legal fees, and a demonstration of commitment from interested parties.

The Board discussed its concerns regarding an invoice, billed from Union County, to Baker County, in the amount of \$15,800, for EOCA dues for fiscal year 2016-2017, and \$4,645, for EOCA debt retirement. The concerns included Bennett's, about the lack of County funds available to pay for outside lobbying, which he expressed previously. Harvey said he would discuss the issue with the EOCA during its meeting, this Friday.

Baker City fined by DEQ

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has issued a \$6,800 penalty to the City of Baker City for exceeding the biochemical oxygen demand limits of its wastewater discharge permit.

The city has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit to discharge from its wastewater treatment plant. That

permit requires the city to adequately treat wastewater prior to discharging it. That includes limiting weekly average concentrations of biochemical oxygen demand to 65 milligrams per liter.

Biochemical oxygen demand is a measure of the wastewater's capacity to decrease dissolved oxygen in the waterway.

The city discharged wastewater to the Powder River with weekly average biochemical oxygen demands of 68 milligrams per liter, 80 milligrams per liter and 85 milligrams per liter over three weeks in October, 2015.

The city also exceeded the allowable monthly average for biochemical oxygen demand during that

time frame.

DEQ issued the penalty because limits on biochemical oxygen demand are necessary to protect fish and other aquatic life.

The city has appealed the penalty.

View the notice of civil penalty: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/nr/091616bakerE.pdf>

Juveniles arrested in vehicle theft case

On the morning of Thursday, September 15, 2016, Baker City Police Officers were contacted by Meridian Idaho Police Officers who advised that two run-a-way juveniles, driving a stolen taxi cab, may be headed to Baker City.

The vehicle was described as a red colored 2008 Ford Fusion taxi cab and an Idaho license plate number was provided to our officers.

In addition, photographs of the two fifteen year old males were sent to Baker City Police Officers.

Sergeant Mike Regan, Officer Coleton Smith, and School Resource Officer Lance Woodward began searching parking lots in the business district along Campbell St.

At about 12:17 p.m. Baker County Consolidated 9-1-1 dispatch received a telephone call from a

resident on B Street adjacent to Albertsons Market reporting a suspicious red taxi cab parked in front of the location.

Officers responded and recognized the vehicle as the reported stolen from Meridian.

They began a search of the area and saw one of the subjects, whom they recognized from the photographs, walking in front of Albertsons. That subject

was detained and arrested.

The second 15 year-old was standing close by and upon seeing the officers fled on foot.

That subject was later found in the area by Sergeant Regan and was also taken into custody.

Both subjects were taken to the Baker County Juvenile Department pending their release to Meridian Idaho authorities.

Police investigate possible sex abuse

On the evening of September 19, 2016 Baker City Officers responded to a report of a possible sexual abuse occurring at a residence in the city.

The extremely young age of the alleged victim (pre-school aged according to other sources) will require, if possible, a forensic interview involving DHS and other specialists.

Because of the nature of the allegations no further information will be released at this time. Any further information will, if appropriate, be released by the Office of the District Attorney.