

# Business & Ag

## Button retires after 27 years at Step Forward, Inc.

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After working for Step Forward Activities for 27 years, Gene Button is retiring from his position as Executive Director.

Button is an Army veteran who served from 1969-1971 during the Vietnam War. He was in charge of the development of a military police training school for the 6th Army in Fort Lewis Washington. He received the Army Commendation Medal for creating the school.

While he was in the Army at Fort Lewis, he met a captain who connected him with the police department at Washington State.

He worked for the Washington State University police department for eight years, then worked in North Bend, and finally worked in La Grande for eight years before retiring as a patrol officer after 22 years in law enforcement.

While in La Grande, his wife Linda Button worked at New Day Enterprises, a non-profit organization that also serves adults with disabilities.

He volunteered at New Day during his off hours for a year. After retiring from the police department, he had to decide where he wanted to go and what career path to take.

The director at New Day Enterprises helped him submit an application at Step Forward Activities for the position of Executive Director and he was hired for his leadership and management experience. Step Forward was poorly financed when he began working with them.

"When I started in January in 1990, it was to build Step Forward basically from the ground up," explained Button. "And so



Samantha O'Conner / The Baker County Press

Step Forward's Executive Director, Gene Button, is retiring after 27 years employed there.

that's what we did. I had a very dedicated board of directors who didn't micro-manage me. They let me, basically, run full-steam ahead under their guidance and a lot of really positive things came out of that. And to the credit of the board of directors, which is pretty much the same today as it was twenty six years ago, credit for a lot of Step Forward's success is directly attributable to the board of directors because they let the company grow, they let the staff develop, and it worked really well."

Button explained that during his time with Step Forward Activities, they gained several contracts that helped the company grow. Their first contract they made was to sell the plastic bags highway trash is put in. Button explained that it was his staff that researched and made the contract happen for Step

Forward and it allowed them to generate revenues for them to pay staff and expand their business models.

"As with any business, the secret to true success in a business is not necessarily the leadership," said Button. "I mean, leadership is important because it provides the direction and the vision, if you will, for the entire company. But the true success of that company is accomplished by its staff. And one of the really great—probably the greatest—attribute that Step Forward has is its staff. Our managers and our live staff are just, quite seriously, the best in the state of Oregon and I've been to most of them. It's also quite a testament to Eastern Oregon because we do a lot of stuff here that they—Salem, the metropolitan area, and businesses and stuff like that—say 'Well, you can't

do that out of Eastern Oregon,' and it's a testament to Eastern Oregonians and their drive and their commitment to the fact that every time you say that, it's totally cool because that's when we go out and do it."

Step Forward Activities has since acquired several other contracts such as the state contract for animal waste collection bags that are on the Leo Adler pathway, city parks, and rest stops. They also have the state contract for soap and hand lotion that was recently made. Step Forward Activities also bought a vending company and they now do vending strictly in the Baker County area. They have also been able to build four new group homes, two in John Day, Oregon and two in Baker City.

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## Sumpter Nugget expansions

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She said the economy is going to die if something doesn't happen. The Longs would also like to give those who live in the county and use medical marijuana an opportunity to get their product closer to home.

The Longs plan to keep the Sumpter Nugget name for the marijuana store, explaining they thought it appropriate for the type of business.

They will call their café the Huckleberry Junction. Long said her daughter kept bringing her ideas, lamenting that Sumpter Junction was already taken. They liked the train theme idea, and they love huckleberries and believe

it represents the area. The café will serve huckleberry products, including huckleberry shakes.

The restaurant equipment is outdated, so Long said they will start out offering simple fare like soup, sandwiches, coffee, and soft-serve ice cream. If they make enough profit, they will work on getting the grill, hood, and fire suppression updated so they can offer more.

The main door of the building will open onto the lobby, which will house an ATM and brochures on local attractions. From the lobby, doors will lead to the café, marijuana store, and public restrooms. The construction office will have a separate entrance.

Long said they have a good crew working with them on the remodel,

though challenges constantly arise. The building was constructed in 1976 and has been sitting unused for about ten years.

The crew was close to having one of the bathrooms remodeled, when they found out the water heaters were bad.

When they removed the water heaters, they found the floors needed work. Other renovations include a new front door to meet ADA requirements and work on the sewage lines. They had to replace some of the drywall due to roof leaks.

The focus of the work is first on the marijuana store and lobby, then the café, and the construction office last. The Longs are planning an open house event on December 31st. Jenny Long said the event

will feature whatever is completed by that time. If the café is not operational, they will plan to offer coffee and cookies in the lobby.

The initial OLCC initial inspection for the marijuana business was December 1st. Long said it went well and the inspector was able to offer her many helpful tips, including on camera placement.

Long said they hope to open the marijuana store in January, depending on how the remodel goes.

She sounded optimistic that the City ordinance process will not delay the start of business, saying, "We didn't plan to open until January, anyway. Maybe they'll have it worked out by then."

### — WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, December 2, 2016 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady. Most demand lays with the retail/stable hay. According to some producers, horse owners are starting to prefer lower sugar, higher protein hay. Many hay producers are looking forward to upcoming snow in the forecast as hay sales tend to increase as the snow comes. Recent dry weather in some areas throughout the state has increased movement. All prices are in dollars per ton and FOB unless otherwise stated.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa — Large Square Fair	500 100.00-100.00	100.00
Timothy — Large Square Good/Premium	85 120.00-120.00	120.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

### — CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, November 30, 2016  
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1783

#### Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 153.00 - 191.00	Top 192.00
400-500#	Bulk 139.00 - 182.00	Top 185.00
500-600#	Bulk 125.00 - 142.00	Top 143.00

#### Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 119.00 - 144.00	Top 147.00
400-500#	Bulk 123.00 - 139.50	Top 140.00
500-600#	Bulk 114.00 - 127.00	Top 128.00

#### Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 117.00 - 129.00	Top 131.50
700-800#	Bulk 122.00 - 128.00	Top 128.25
800-900#	Bulk 113.00 - 121.00	Top 124.00
900-1,000#	Bulk 101.00 - 120.00	Top 120.50

#### Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 111.00 - 119.50	Top 119.75
700-800#	Bulk 105.00 - 115.00	Top 117.75
800-900#	Bulk 101.00 - 111.00	Top 115.00
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	39.00 - 49.00
Butcher Cows	51.00 - 58.00
Butcher Bulls	52.00 - 65.00
Pairs Older	900.00 - 1100.00
Hfretts.	67.00 - 83.00
Stock Cows Young	- N/A

ProducersLivestock.com  
541-473-3136

### — LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Currently the local log market is flooded with fire salvage logs. The log buyer for Malheur Lumber Co. stated they have all the logs they need under contract and are not accepting any new purchases. BCC/LLC of La Grande has receive so many burned fire salvage logs they are no longer accepting logs at the La Grande log yard. Any additional pine logs have to be delivered to the Elgin Log yard cut in plywood lengths and to a 8 inch top. For these pine logs cut in plywood lengths, BCC is offering \$280.00/mbf. They are also paying \$420.00/mbf for Doug Fir & Western Larch. For White Fir they are offering \$325.00/mbf. At the Pilot Rock Saw Mill BCC is offering \$360.00/mbf for a 12 to 15 inch top, for 16 to 19 inch top \$400.00/mbf & offering \$425.00/mbf for 20 inch plus top

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,  
Andersen Forestry Consulting

### — PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,177.00

Silver: \$17.25

Platinum: \$942.20

Palladium: \$733.30

Bloomberg.com

### — AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$357.25/bu/USD

Wheat: \$400.45/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$1047.00/bu/USD

Oats: \$212.50 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$9.92/cwt/USD

Canola: \$529.60 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$110.28/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$126.08/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$59.73/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

## Toy store reopens for holidays

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He continued, "Toys make a difference; what you give your child to play with will make a difference

in terms of their success in school and later in life as an adult; I'm absolutely convinced of that."

Marvin Sundean encourages adults to continue playing, such as puzzles and games they have and

encourages people to play interactive games.

Tumbleweed Toys and Tales are open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays. They have not set up to take credit or debit cards

at the present time and will only be able to take cash or check and they do not have a phone set up for the store.

They will let people know if these details change.