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EAST OREGONIAN

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County takes over NOWA water interest

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — An interest in Columbia River water that could potentially supply the former Umatilla Chemical Depot is changing hands from the Northeast Oregon Water Association to Umatilla County.

“This is one of those projects that will be able to sustain economic development in Umatilla County for years to come,” commissioner John Shafer said.

Commissioners voted Wednesday to approve an exclusive option agreement with NOWA in preparation for acquiring interest in the rights to pump up to 45 cubic feet per second out of the river through a pump station located there. The water could be used to serve potential economic development on the depot and to recharge the aquifer located there, giving farmers greater access to water for irrigation.

The project has about \$835,000 plus interest left to be paid off, which the county will purchase. Shafer said the county will immediately provide NOWA with the money for a \$25,000 interest payment due July 7.

Shafer said NOWA founder JR Cook had discussed with him that the organization needed someone to take over the financial obligation for the water interest but had not had any takers. Such an opportunity to draw water from the Columbia River is extremely difficult to obtain from the federal government.

“This one’s get all the federal permits done and it’s ready to go, it’s just capped off waiting for development,” Shafer said.

During Wednesday’s meeting, Cook called the interest a “very valuable asset to the region.” The water could be used by companies looking to build on the depot land and to recharge the large aquifer that runs under the depot.

“This project has the very real opportunity to take wintertime Columbia River water and recharge that aquifer that is actually in a critical groundwater area, that has been depleted to the point that there is a ton of storage because we’ve pumped all the water out of it,” he said.

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EO SPOTLIGHT

PUTTING UP A FIGHT

Stop B2H Coalition remains charged up to defeat massive power line project

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — JoAnn Marlette has been working to stop Idaho Power’s proposed power line through Eastern Oregon for so long, her campaign wardrobe contains not one but two T-shirt designs.

Marlette marched to a closet in her downtown Baker City apartment and returned clutching a pair of shirts. A gray garment bears the motto “Move Idaho Power.”

The second, and newer, shirt, in a much more conspicuous yellow with black lettering and graphics, is the work of the grassroots, nonprofit group Stop B2H Coalition based in Union County, Baker County’s neighbor to the north.

The moniker refers to Boardman-to-Hemingway, the 500-kilovolt, 300-mile transmission line Idaho Power, the Boise-based investor-owned utility, proposed in 2007. In the dozen years since, Marlette, 76, and the man sitting beside her, Whit Deschner, 65, also of Baker City, attended many meetings and pored over thousands of pages of documents related to the project. They don’t want the line.

“I just think it’s an erosion of our community standards,” Deschner said. “We have it made here now.”

Powering up

Jim and Fuji Kreider of La Grande have the same take. They serve on the Stop B2H Coalition’s board of directors. They left their La Grande home and careers to help rebuild communities in countries, such as Kosovo, and returned after eight



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Members of the group Stop B2H look out over a portion of land near Morgan Lake in La Grande where the proposed line would travel. In addition to the line itself, the group has concerns about the destruction of land for the creation of access roads and Idaho Power’s ability to control weed growth following the clear cut.

ONLINE

For a video of the Stop B2H Coalition, log on to eastoregonian.com.

years to find their own community in conflict because of the power line project.

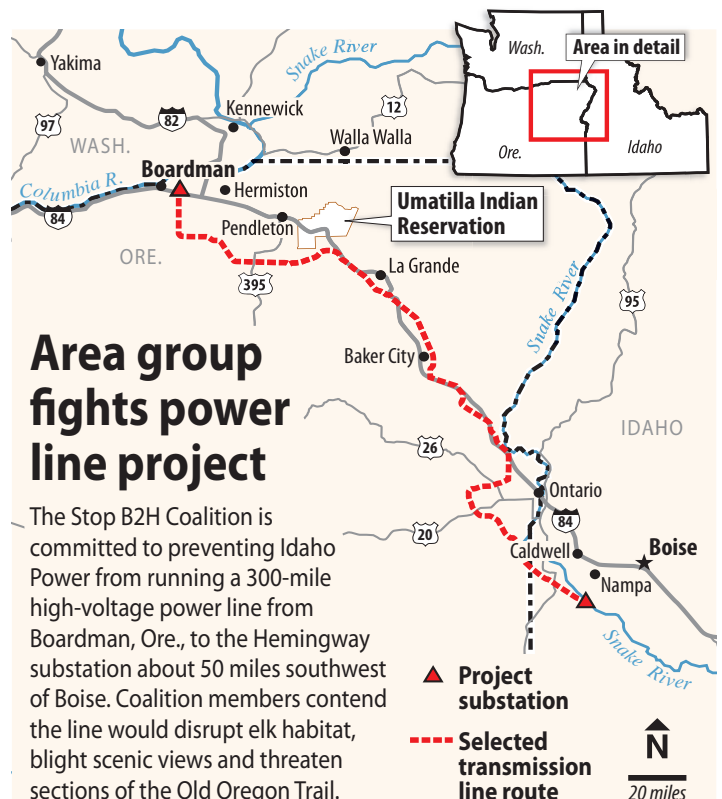
“What’s this company doing destroying our community, our cohesion?” she said.

The Kreiders took note, attended meetings and saw others speaking against the line.

“The longer it was going on, the more people were concerned about it,” Fuji Kreider said.

They and others joined forces in 2015 to launch Stop B2H. The group became a nonprofit in 2017, and that fall received its first grant to support the fight. The Oregon-California Trails Association gave the

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Boquist derides session-ending politics, explains his threat to police

By AUBREY WIEBER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Over the past two years, a Republican legislator once an ally of Democrats has become a one-man force waging war against his colleagues to the left.

The scrutiny given to Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, intensified to unprecedented

levels in June when in one day he made two comments that literally brought national media to his door.

His comments were triggered by Gov. Kate Brown’s avowal to send the Oregon State Police after Republican senators who left the Capitol in political protest.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and

Boquist used to be friends, though a June 19 floor session showed clearly how far that relationship has fallen.

“If you send the state police to get me, hell’s coming to visit you personally,” Boquist said.

He fueled attention when a Portland television reporter recorded him saying if state police come looking for him,

they’d better “send bachelors and come heavily armed.”

The Senate Special Committee on Conduct has scheduled a hearing for Monday, July 8, to consider Boquist’s conduct — the first step in possible discipline against Boquist, who has been in office since 2005.

For the first time in detail, Boquist has explained his

actions and his claims that the Senate skipped mandatory steps in its disciplinary process. He made the remarks in an interview on Wednesday with *Salem Reporter*. The transcript of that interview has been edited for brevity.

What is the origin of that phrase, “send bachelors and

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