

# BMCC:

Continued from Page A1

positions the college cut in recent years. Those were “paper people that existed only on the pages of the budget,” he said, and had no effect on the actual ending fund balance nor on students served.

“Most of the real cuts were classified,” he continued. “I know of 14. By grouping classified together with administration he obscures the fact that only a small number of FT administrators were actually relieved of their positions. I know of only two.”

Science instructor Sascha McKeon provided the board with a “broad compilation of the beginning year revenues and top five expenditures for the last five years.” She said there has been a drastic reduction in faculty wages and questioned why faculty should “shoulder the burden of low enrollment?”

She told the committee the projected revenue for next year is down 6%, yet the administration is seeking to cut 33% of the faculty.

“That does not track, when revenue is projected to be up next year by \$300,000,” McKeon said.

Gary Parker, Blue Mountain math and computer science coach, told the board, “Many of the programs scheduled to be cut have low overhead and generate excess revenue,” including math, English and adult basic education. And if Blue Mountain doesn’t have what students want, they will not come here.

A number of other faculty also spoke, but for the public tuning in via the streaming platform Zoom, this portion of the meeting was difficult to follow. The audio was poor in quality and there was no video. After instructors made their presentations, the college restarted the Zoom meeting, which then had video showing the boardroom and the rest of the meeting.

For the next two hours the budget committee, the rest of the college board, Browning and several administrators discussed the budget proposal and kicked its tires, including its \$17.2 million general fund.

During the course of the discussion, the board asked about roughly \$627,000 in money from Amazon the college was to receive from Morrow County. The board of

## BMCC 2022-23 BUDGET

Blue Mountain Community College’s budget document is available online at [www.bluecc.edu/about/administration/finance](http://www.bluecc.edu/about/administration/finance).

commissioners there, however, voted last week not to send the money to Blue Mountain. Board member Chris Brown, who represents Morrow County, asked the administration to explain what happened.

Browning said Morrow County commissioners on a 2-1 vote pulled the plug on providing the funds to the college because they wanted to keep the money in Morrow County.

“I think there was some politics in play with some of this,” he said, “and the information in the wind didn’t help.”

Browning didn’t specify what “information,” but the East Oregonian in recent weeks has reported the college was closing the industrial systems technology program, and Morrow County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay during the county board’s meeting last week said BMCC is not going to fund its part of the Workforce Training Center in Boardman, so the county could direct the money to the center. (For more on that development, see Page A3.)

The college president said he wasn’t giving up on receiving the funds, but he wasn’t counting on it, either.

Board member Kent Madison said it comes down to the college having too many tools — teachers — in its toolbox for the work it has to do. He said it’s important the college remains flexible in its educational mission.

Browning near the end of the meeting said it was his impression the board needed more time to digest all the information they received, and the board agreed, deciding to meet again May 10.

Before that, the college board of education meets May 2 to take action on notifying faculty on May 3 about layoffs.

The budget committee can meet once after that, May 12, to vote on the proposal.

*Editor’s Note: East Oregonian news editor Phil Wright taught part-time for Blue Mountain Community College in the early 2000s.*

# Farm:

Continued from Page A1

## Registered, commercial flocks

Twilight lapped across the hills like a quiet tide near Pilot Rock, south of Pendleton.

Krebs, with help from a Border Collie, led a pair of 300-pound rams through a gate.

These rams belonged to the farm’s registered flock, comprised of sheep with fine wool and white faces that meet Pendleton’s wool standards.

Each year, Krebs said, he sells about 100 top-quality rams as breeding stock.

Animals that don’t meet the standards are in a commercial flock, many of which end up as meat.

Krebs keeps track of each animal’s pedigree with electronic ear tags, which the farm started using four years ago. He said the tags provide him with data for targeted breeding.

Plus, Krebs said, he anticipates the meat market is moving toward consumers demanding more traceability — tracking with ear tags that animals have received antibiotics, for example.

“Traceability is coming,” said Krebs. “We’re trying to get ahead.”

The sheep business’ main profit comes from selling lamb through Stan Boyd, based in Eagle, Idaho, the farm’s broker for the Rocky Mountain Sheep Marketing Association.

Krebs said he’s pleased that demand for lamb is on the rise.

“I’m really optimistic,” he said.

He was interrupted by an uproar of dogs barking.

Cunningham Sheep Co. has about 40 farm dogs, each with different roles — working, herding, guarding — across a range of breeds including Border Collies, Turkish Kangal Shepherds and Great Pyrenees.

Some of the dogs protect sheep from predators.

## Main challenges

Predator pressure is one of the main challenges the farm faces.

Last year alone, the farm had 17 confirmed sheep kills and two dog injuries from wolves. Those were just the confirmed cases. According to Corey, “It’s tough to get a wolf predation confirmed.”

The family said the farm is



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

**A group of ewes in a holding pen outside the lambing barn at the Cunningham Sheep Co. ranch in Nolin.**

affected by the state’s decisions on wolf management.

“It’s not us making those rules. We just live and deal with them as best as we can,” Corey said.

To repel wolves, the farm has increased its number of guard dogs.

Krebs, the foreman, said the dogs take different roles. Some chase. Others bark. Yet others remain close to the sheep. Krebs said he doesn’t assign the dogs their roles; they decide.

“It’s like they have a coffee every morning and say, ‘You go here, I’ll go there,’” Krebs said.

The farm faces other challenges, too: the economy’s unpredictability, environmental regulations, the ongoing agricultural labor shortage and concern over the new farm-worker overtime pay law.

Despite the challenges, Krebs said he’s fortunate to have a team of about six H-2A migrant guest-workers who follow the sheep on the range.

“We’ve got a terrific team, couldn’t have better,” said Krebs. “They’re just go-getters.”

## Lambing barn

The next morning, Corey, Krebs, the herders and a veterinary student met at the lambing barn in Nolin between Pendleton and Echo.

Beside the farm’s Nolin headquarters, the Umatilla River, brown from rainstorms, meandered past cottonwoods and hills that buckled into each other.

In the river valley stood a grain elevator and nearby, the lambing barn.

According to the Oklahoma State University Extension Service, when Rambouillets lamb, only 20% to 35% have twins. This spring, Cunningham Sheep Co. birthed between 4,500 to 4,800 lambs out of 3,800 ewes — a good rate considering the breed and last year’s drought.

Inside the barn, Leah Swannack, a Washington State University veterinary student doing a mixed-animal rotation at the farm, was moving between jugs — stalls holding a single ewe and her young — checking their health.

The Coreys and Levys said they’re intentional about surrounding themselves with good veterinarians.

While Swannack did health checks, migrant workers labeled ewes and lambs with colored chalk-paint: blue for singles, red for twins. The farm also uses letters with different meanings: for example, “A” for “ayuda,” Spanish for “help,” painted on a lamb needing attention.

Even bumper lambs have their own warm, clean space with individual pens. Krebs jokingly calls this “The Hilton.”

With such a large operation, it’s crucial to be organized, he said.

## The future

With younger faces on the family board and council, Corey said he looks forward to seeing how the farm innovates in the future.

Younger family members have bounced around ideas that may take shape, including harvesting more of the farm’s timber, acquiring a small lumber mill and buying more land to expand pheasant hunting. Young family members have also talked about marketing lamb differently, with more direct sales under a brand name such as “Cunningham Lamb.”

At this point, those ideas are still just that: ideas. But as new generations of the family take leadership, Corey anticipates the farm will adapt with the times.

In the meantime, consumers continue to see the farm’s ripple effects far and wide: at the grocery store, on the landscape and woven into cloth in Pendleton Woolen Mills’ 35 retail stores.

# Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia ARE YOU AT RISK?

According to a new study by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the National Institute on Aging, men and women with hearing loss are much more likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. People with severe hearing loss, the study reports, were 5 times more likely to develop dementia than those with normal hearing.

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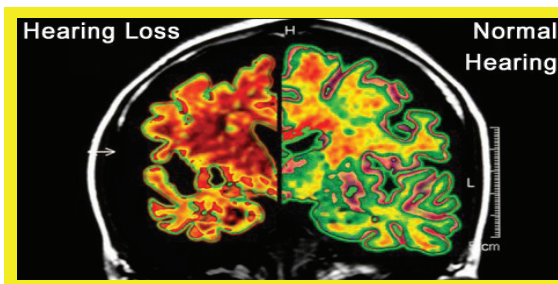
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