

Seismic work on schools wrapping up

Construction work designed to make Baker High School and Brooklyn Primary School more resistant to earthquake damage is nearing an end as the beginning of a new school year nears. The goal is to have the work done in time for staff to return on Aug. 27 to prepare for the first day of school on

Sept. 4. The Baker High School roof should be finished by early next week, Superintendent Mark Witty stated in a press release. Painting is under way inside and will move to the exterior of the building next week, he said. School registration is scheduled Monday and Tuesday in

the BHS Commons. Parents will be able to enter the building either at the main entrance facing E Street or through the west door near the gym parking lot. At Brooklyn Primary, 1350 Washington Ave., the construction crew will finish the roof by next week, and then shift its focus to exterior wall

work, such as replacing brick, Witty said. Griffin Construction representatives said the goal is to have the building safe for occupancy by Aug. 22. Work at the two schools was funded by grants totaling \$2.6 million awarded by the Oregon Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program.

Bicyclist says log truck nearly struck line of riders

Steve Toepel thought the truck hauling logs was sure to hit somebody. Toepel, who lives in Washington, was among the 225 bicyclists participating in a week-long trip this week. On Monday the riders were pedaling on Highway 7 from Austin Junction to Sumpter.

About 11:45 a.m., between Mileposts 16 and 17 near Whitney, Toepel said a truck hauling logs drove along the fog line and nearly struck about two dozen riders. "Had I put my hand out it would have come off," Toepel said. Toepel said he didn't see a company

name on the truck, but he believes the cab was painted blue. He said one of the logs on the truck's trailer had a distinct bend. Toepel said he reported the incident to Sheriff Travis Ash. Anyone with any information about the incident can call the Sheriff's Office at 541-523-6415.

BUFFALO

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Jeff Jentzsch of Twin Falls, Idaho, stopped in Baker City in late July on his way home from showing artwork at a reggae festival in Sandy when Anders noticed Jentzsch's trailer filled with pieces, including the buffalo. Jentzsch and his company, Art Roamers, represent artists around the world and sell their work for them. His clients include Samuel Ochanda from Nairobi's Kibera slum, what some believe to be the largest slum in Africa with an estimated population of about 1 million. "It's cool that they can overcome their circumstances and do something productive, fun and interesting," Anders said.

"To see someone doing arts in the slums, to me it was like a neon sign."
— Jeff Jentzsch, Idaho art seller
The buffalo is listed on Jentzsch's website for \$6,700 and the goat was priced at \$900. The warrior bust, which Jentzsch found in a warehouse in Kenya, was priced at \$3,000. The artist who created it hasn't been identified. Jentzsch said he met Ochanda during a trip to Kenya. Jentzsch was searching for a school he was verifying for a Utah nonprofit that was sponsoring the school. Ochanda helped him find the school after three trips to the area, as there are no addresses there. At the

time, Jentzsch said Ochanda was constructing a life-size ostrich. "To see someone doing arts in the slums, to me it was like a neon sign," Jentzsch said. He said Ochanda's work has received attention at art contests including at Art and Soul of the Magic Valley in Twin Falls, at which Ochanda won \$3,000. But Jentzsch said he can't send Ochanda all of the money at once for fear of risking his safety, as it would be dangerous to have so much cash in the Kibera slum. "I can't just send him \$3,000 in the slum," Jentzsch said. "We try to do it according to the artist's wishes." He also said he can't advertise Ochanda's successes abroad because his popularity could endanger Ochanda

and his family. "If he gets famous, he and his family are not safe," Jentzsch said. Nonetheless, Jentzsch said Ochanda has broken down and cried before when Jentzsch told him how well his art is being received. "It means a lot to him," Jentzsch said. He said the money has meant that Ochanda has been able to get medical attention for his 8-year-old son, who is believed to be autistic. Jentzsch plans to travel to Kenya in October to see Ochanda and collect his newest pieces of art. Jentzsch's company also represents artists from Romania, Uganda, Rwanda and first-generation U.S. citizens, along with local creators. He will be back in Baker City with his trailer full of art on Aug. 17 and 18.

ROOSTERS

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Barbara Rockenbrant and her son, Dan Van Kirk, started the petition drive and have gathered more than 50 signatures they plan to present to councilors Tuesday.

The Council meeting will start at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St. At least three other people are also gathering signatures on pro-rooster petitions. "I don't know why the Council felt compelled to take this on when there seems to be plenty of other things they could be doing," Rockenbrant said.

In a report to councilors, City Manager Fred Warner Jr. wrote that the rooster ban proposal was prompted by complaints from residents about frequent crowing.

Only one resident commented to councilors during the July 24 meeting, and she was in favor of the proposed ban.

Warner said that since the July 24 meeting, when councilors approved the first two readings of the ordinance, the city has received multiple phone calls from residents who oppose the ban.

The Baker City Herald has published four letters to the editor in opposition to the ban, one authored by Van Kirk and another by Rockenbrant.

"There is a lot of people that are not happy about this," Rockenbrant said.

Neither Van Kirk or Rockenbrant owns roosters, and neither has neighbors who do. Rockenbrant said she

had a neighbor who had one rooster, but she hasn't heard any crowing for about a year. In the past she has had roosters and she wishes she still did but she doesn't have them because she is too old to properly care for them.

"I really like roosters and I like to hear them crow," Rockenbrant said. "I have met a lot of people that say the same thing. They need to find a solution that doesn't go nearly as far (as an outright ban)."

Both Rockenbrant and Van Kirk plan to attend Tuesday's meeting. Rockenbrant says she hopes other rooster supporters will show up as well.

Although Baker City does not have an ordinance specifically banning roosters, existing ordinance 3252 makes it illegal for residents to keep an animal that is detrimental to the well being of the public due to "noise of a disagreeable or annoying nature."

Warner said he is not aware that the city has ever enforced that ordinance in a case involving a rooster, but he said it potentially could be done.

It's not clear how many roosters reside within the city. The city does not require people to obtain a permit or otherwise register fowl.

Rockenbrant believes the city should focus on animals other than roosters — deer, for instance, which she said have munched on plants in her yard.

Earlier this year the Council passed an ordinance making it a violation for residents to intentionally feed deer.

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For additional information, contact:	
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