

AIRPORT

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Chase is charged with hit and run (property), first-degree criminal mischief, criminal trespassing while in possession of a firearm, first-degree disorderly conduct and improper use of 911.

According to court records, in 1997 Chase, then living in Baker City, was arrested in Union County on charges of first-degree aggravated animal abuse, possession of a controlled substance and second-degree criminal mischief.

He did not go to trial, however, after it was determined that he had a mental disease or defect and was unable to stand trial.

Baker County Undersheriff Jef Van Arsdall said sheriff's deputies had a "contact" with Chase — he wasn't arrested — in November 2017. Van Arsdall didn't have details of that contact.

He said the Sheriff's Office has a record of only one other contact with Chase, which also didn't result in an arrest, from 2014.

The Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT team was called out about 2:34 p.m., after officers from the Sheriff's Office and the Baker City Police Department had tried, without success, to persuade Chase to exit the converted school bus he was driving, according to the Sheriff's Office.

He had driven to the east side of the airport, where he parked and stayed inside the bus.

The airport is about 3 miles north of

Baker City, and just east of Interstate 84.

The SWAT members arrested Chase "without incident" after he "willingly" walked out of the bus, Van Arsdall said.

Police found firearms inside the bus.

Reports to police about Chase actually started early Tuesday in Halfway, where Chase allegedly drove into a shop or garage at Pine Telephone Co., Van Arsdall said.

That incident prompted the hit and run charge.

Van Arsdall said Chase had spent much time in the Oxbow and Homestead areas at the eastern end of Baker County near the Idaho border.

Baker City Police received a complaint about Chase from McDonald's in Baker City later Tuesday morning, and his bus was also seen on Windmill Lane just east of the Campbell Street interchange, Van Arsdall said.

Chase arrived at the airport around 8:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Dustin Stephens, the chief pilot for Baker Aircraft, which runs the fueling, flight instruction and other services at the city-owned airport, said he watched the bus drive onto a taxiway beside the airport's main runway. That's an area open only to aircraft, Stephens said.

He said he and two other employees drove out to talk to the driver of the bus, who rolled down the window and "started screaming at us," Stephens said.

He said the man told the Baker Aircraft employees that a "big jet" was coming to pick him up, and that the plane would also haul away his bus.

Stephens said the man claimed to have "nuclear" materials on the bus.

Stephens said the man drove away, the bus going fast enough that when he turned the vehicle tipped significantly.

Police closed the airport as well as South Airport Lane, which leads to the airport entrance.

Troy Woydziak, Baker Aircraft owner, said he issued a notice to pilots alerting them to the closure. He re-opened the airport Tuesday evening.

The Baker City Airport has three runways, but depending on the amount of snow, at times only the main runway is open, Woydziak said.

He said air traffic volumes vary, but on a typical winter day three to 10 planes land per day, most seeking fuel.

Woydziak said he wouldn't have expected more than two private plans to land Tuesday because of the cloud cover.

He said a flight instructor and student pilot were practicing landings and take-offs Tuesday morning when Chase drove his bus onto the airport.

Woydziak said he radioed the instructor, who landed on one of the secondary runways. Baker Aircraft employees then drove out to pick up the instructor and student.

In addition to the Sheriff's Office, Baker City Police and the regional SWAT team, agencies involved in the incident included the Baker City Fire Department, Baker Aircraft, Baker County Road Department, Baker County Emergency Management, and New Directions Northwest.

EDUCATION

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Sen. Cliff Bentz of Ontario noted that he and the other state legislators in attendance — Reps. Lynn Findley of Vale, Greg Smith of Heppner, Daniel Bonham of The Dalles and Greg Barreto of Cove — are part of the Republican minority in the Legislature.

"My Democratic colleagues ... do not need our votes," he said. "They have a super majority in both the House and the Senate."

Bentz asked the crowd to provide him and the other legislators information "not so much about what you need, but how you suggest we Republicans approach this very interesting situation"

Nicole Albisue, superintendent of the Ontario School District, was the first to take the microphone and expressed opinions echoed by many throughout the nearly 3½-hour session in the Baker High School library.

Albisue, who has worked in education for 20 years and as superintendent for the past seven, talked about the high poverty rate in her district of 2,400 students, who all receive free breakfast and lunch every day.

Despite the challenges, Albisue said her district has improved its graduation rate from 50 percent seven years ago to nearly 90 percent today.

"An investment in our kids is really an investment in Oregon," she told the legislators. "You really can't go wrong with investing in education."

Because of funding cuts, her district has difficulty providing counselors and employs just one for the district's 1,200 elementary students.

Albisue was one of many speakers who addressed the difficulty for schools to handle the social and emotional issues faced by today's students in the classroom.

"We don't have the tools, skills or resources to manage that," she said.

The Ontario School District, which has had an influx of refugees in the community, has had to add interpreters for seven languages, she said.

"That blew up our budget for translating," Albisue said. "And with them comes social and emotional health issues because they come from countries that have experienced not great things happening."

Albisue said Eastern Oregon schools all struggle with recruiting and retaining teachers. Teacher training is not the issue, she said.

"They are more unprepared for the challenges with the behavior of students and poverty and all of that," she said.

The PERS bill in her district, which will reach \$700,000 next year, also is a hardship for all Oregon school districts, she told the

legislators.

"We keep thinking everybody is in the same boat, so something is going to have to be done," she said. "That's a big hit — a really big hit."

Katy Nelson of John Day, a board member on the Grant County Education Service District Board, asked the legislators to hold the line on spending and to keep in mind the poverty that prevails in Eastern Oregon.

"I would like you to protect a functioning lifestyle we have in Grant County of elderly people who own their homes, raise gardens and hunt and fish," she said.

About 25 percent of Grant County residents live on \$25,000 or less, she said.

"Try to protect us from a left wing that continually says we hate children and love ignorance when we don't vote for property tax increases.

"I ask for protection of an existing, severely threatened, functioning number of people in Grant County who care about children and are poor," she said.

Support for mental health services, early childhood education, school choice, innovation in providing choices for insurance coverage and expanding the opportunity for retirees to return to the classroom or to other school jobs were brought before the legislators.

Richard Chaves, a Baker City businessman who serves on the Eastern Or-

egon University Foundation Board and is also a trustee, spoke of how rural Oregon has worked together for the benefit of children.

"People here are doing their job," he said. "We need support from the state to continue.

"We don't meet with a lot of resistance as we try to improve our partnerships. Everybody is focused on what's the best thing for the students," he said. "You as Republicans could carry the message and I think it is ... finding common goals."

Emily Black, Baker High School student body president, was the lone student representative to speak.

She credited her family and her teachers with helping prepare her to enter college in the coming year.

She brought the message from other students in her leadership class who would like to see more "career paths and real-world learning" offered in the classroom.

"It was unanimous that access to a wider range of competitions or conventions would be widely beneficial to students," she added.

Black was among a group of students who attended a leadership conference in Orlando, Florida, over the summer.

"It was an opportunity ... to expose them to more because of our rural location. It sparked a great conversation among my peers," she said.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Baker FFA chapter president to be featured on RFD-TV program

Ty Morrison, Baker FFA chapter president, will be featured on a segment titled "Chapter Tribute" of the "This Week in Agribusiness" program on RFD-TV Saturday and Sunday.

Morrison was interviewed during this year's National FFA Convention, said Bibiana Giffit, Baker FFA adviser. He talked about the Baker community, the Baker FFA chapter and activities he's involved in through FFA, she said.

The program will air at 6 a.m. PST on Saturday and at 4 a.m. and 4 p.m. Sunday. RFD-TV airs via satellite on Dish Network Channel 231 and DIRECTV Channel 345. More information is available at www.rfdtv.com



Morrison

Jared Miller earns perfect 4.0 GPA at South Dakota State University

BROOKINGS, S.D. — Jared Christopher Miller of Baker City earned a perfect 4.0 GPA for the fall 2018 semester at South Dakota State University.

Miller is a student in the Jerome J. Lahr College of Engineering. He is the son of Chris and Holly Miller of Baker City. (Holly Miller's first name was incorrect in Monday's issue.)

Baker City Police patrol officer among graudates from DPSST Academy

Johnathan Parsons of the Baker City Police Department is a member of the 384th group to graduate from the Basic Police Class at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

Baker City Parks and Recreation Board meeting Jan. 22 to discuss master plan

Baker City's Parks and Recreation Board will meet Jan. 22 at 5:15 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St.

Agenda items include updating the community survey for the city's parks master plan, and a design for a sign at Central Park.

Free six-week workshops for small business owners planned this winter

The Northeast Oregon Economic Development District is offering a free six-week series of workshops designed to help entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Lisa Dawson has taught the "Business Foundations" workshops for more than a decade.

The classes will take place on Wednesdays 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Launch Pad Baker, 2019 Main St. The schedule:

- Jan. 16, 23 and 30
- Feb. 6, 13 and 27 (no class on Feb. 20)

Topics that will be covered:

- Gaining Perspective: Consider your business concept.
- Laying the Foundation: Define line of business and analyze financial essentials, from overhead costs to break-even point.
- Getting into the Flow: Cover the financial essentials of cash flow, sales forecasting, and financial documents.
- Mission and Markets: Revisit mission, discuss market research, and identify competitors in order to align with target markets.
- Get the Word Out: Discuss creative marketing strategies and give peer feedback on marketing materials.
- Goodbye and Good Luck: Present your business plan, share final pitch, and plan for next steps.

Registration is required by Jan. 11. To register go to www.neoeedd.org

Baker City Farmers Market annual membership meeting set for Jan. 22

The annual membership meeting for the Baker City Farmers Market is set for Jan. 22 at 6 p.m. at the Baker County Library, 2400 Resort St.

Baker City Airport Commission meets Jan. 14 to discuss air service proposal

The Baker City Airport Commission will meet Jan. 14 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St.

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon seeks Baker Co. board member

Community Connection is seeking a volunteer from Baker County to serve on the board of directors for the nonprofit organization that operates the Senior Center as well as food, housing, energy assistance and transportation programs.

The board member will represent the private sector. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to call Dianne Wright at 541-963-3186 or by email at diana@communityconnection.org

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1A

There were no other nominees for mayor.

Councilors then unanimously elected Downing as acting mayor. He will fill in for Joseph if necessary.

In Baker City's form of government the mayor is largely a ceremonial position. The mayor votes along with the other councilors, schedules and runs meetings but has no veto power or other authority.

As a candidate on the Nov. 6 ballot, Bruland received the fifth-most votes. The top four candidates were elected.

However, after second-place finisher Carly Annable moved out of town to take a job, the Council was left with one position to fill.

The City Council in December solicited interest from Bruland and three other candidates from the Nov. 6 ballot. Bruland and Daryl DeMoss said they were willing to serve, but less than two hours before Tuesday's meeting, DeMoss,

who received just 7 fewer votes than Bruland in the election, sent an email to the city saying he was removing his name from consideration.

DeMoss recommended the Council appoint Bruland.

Because both Bruland and Schiewe will serve two-year terms, voters will fill five seats rather than the usual four in the 2020 election.

With all seven councilors seated and Joseph elected as mayor, the Council moved onto the rest of its agenda.

Councilors accepted two grants, each of \$5,000, from the National Trust for Preservation and the Kinsman Foundation to pay for an architectural assessment of the Central Building on the Baker Middle School campus.

The 1916 building, which originally served as Baker High School, has been closed since 2009.

Hunter Noack, a concert pianist from Portland, will contribute \$500 to the assessment. Noack has expressed interest in buying the building and turning it

into a performing arts center.

The original estimate for the assessment was \$12,000, but it was reduced to \$10,500 after the scale of the project was cut back.

The assessment will be done by Trout Architects of Boise, and it's slated to be finished by March 15.

The Baker School District, which still owns the Central Building, also supported the assessment. The District has also secured grants for future assessments of the building.

Industrial Park land sale

Councilors also decided to alter the terms of the sale of a parcel in the Elkhorn View Industrial Park at the city's northwest corner.

In October the council had agreed to sell a 1.38-acre parcel to Peek-a-Boo Enterprises for \$22,536.78. The sale would have divided lot 11, which was originally 2.1 acres, into two lots, one of 1.38 acres and one of 0.72 acres.

But city officials later realized that a 2014 City Council

resolution prevented the city from dividing industrial park parcels into lots smaller than 1 acre.

The Council decided Tuesday to sell the entire lot 11 to Peek-a-Boo Enterprises, which sells fabric and sewing patterns, for the same price.

Much of the additional property in lot 11 has an easement and would not have been open for development even if the city didn't have the 1-acre minimum.

Orientation Thursday

The Council also scheduled a orientation meeting, because of the large amount of recent turnover on the council, for 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10 at City Hall, 1655 First St.

During the public meeting councilors will meet with department heads to hear about the status of the various city departments and their budgets.

City Manager Fred Warner Jr. expects the meeting to last between two and three hours. The meeting will not be broadcast online.



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