TACO BUS

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Arteaga says she plans to retain the image of the MC Taco Bus and she will incorporate the reds, greens and whites of her business logo as she remodels and makes improvements at the new location.

She hopes to hire a local artist once she's well-established to produce artwork of the bus for display at the site.

Arteaga said the taco bus, in addition to being a moneymaker for the family, is her way of giving back to her mom for all she's done for Arteaga and her sisters over the years.

"She raised six girls by herself and worked two jobs," Arteaga said. "Forever and ever she has always supported us. Even now she's helping me clean up the house (that came with the new location)."

Ochoa, who suffers a birth defect in her feet that makes it difficult for her to stand and walk at times, was happy to give up the two jobs she had worked at for years to support her daughters. Now she works full time at the MC Taco Bus.

Ochoa spent 20 years as an employee of Orchard Wood Products, working from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. For her second job, she worked from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. in janitorial service for Hurley Building Maintenance. Ochoa has assumed the role of cook at the bus named in her honor.

"She likes the work and she loves the customer service," Arteaga says of her mom's role cooking at the bus.

And it's given mother and daughter a chance to spend more time together.

"There was no time to really have a relationship," Arteaga says of her mother's former work schedule. "I love being with her."

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Yeni Arteaga explains how a new food cart will be used for special events.

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

The former In & Out Drive-In restaurant will be the new home of the MCTaco Bus.

The family was forced to make a change in their taco bus business in December when Baker City Fire Chief John Clark informed Arteaga that she would have to move to window-service only.

Clark told her that the bus is categorized as a food cart rather than a building. He said that if she intended to continue to operate it year around with indoor seating she would be required to provide sewer and water service to the bus as if it were a building.

Clark made the ruling about two weeks before Christmas, and Arteaga says she watched as her once burgeoning business decreased by about half over the next few months.

The bus formerly offered seating for up to nine people, including four tables, two with seating for four and two with seating for two, and an additional five stand-alone chairs.

"That killed 50% of my sales," Arteaga said. "I can't survive on 50% of sales."

She realized she needed to make a change and so she began looking for a building in which to establish the business.

Although 2019 started off in a bad way, her luck appears to have taken an upswing. When she learned that the In & Out property was for sale, she made an offer and was able to close the deal by April 2.

Arteaga hopes to move into the home that's on the same property as the former drive-in in the next couple of weeks and to begin operating at the former In & Out in about 2½ months.

She said Clark has agreed to allow her to continue operating the taco bus as long as she is making progress toward the move.

Like her mother, Arteaga is no stranger to hard work. She was the caregiver for her sisters during her school years while her mother worked.

Her sisters, Rut, 25, and Hope, 19, and their 14-year-old sister, Jasmine, and Arteaga's own 14-year-old son, James — she says many incorrectly believe Jasmine and James are her "twins" — contribute when they can.

Hope and Rut also work full time at Marvin Wood Products. Jasmine is a high school freshman and James is an eighth-grader at Baker Middle School.

Arteaga's boyfriend, Mike Hutton, and her mother's boyfriend, Jose Crespo, provide support for the business as well.

Arteaga's other sisters, Onoria, 28, who also works at Marvin Wood Products, and Miriam, 21, who has been attending college in Portland, also have helped along the way.

"We are building this thing together," Arteaga says. "This business is going to make money."

Arteaga studied business at Blue Mountain Community College after high school and spent 10 years at Safeway, working her way up to assistant produce manager.

Along the way she learned from the Safeway store's former manager, Ken Krohn, who she calls the "money man," about how to provide superior customer service, order goods and manage inventory.

She took on a second job to provide respite care at a Step Forward group home managed by Ken's wife, Mari Krohn. Arteaga learned lessons in that role that also have helped her manage her own business.

When she realized that she was not spending enough time with her son and that she couldn't get ahead to buy a home of her own without a larger paycheck, Arteaga started looking for a better job.

She began asking everyone she could where they worked, how much money they earned and — if the wage was high enough — were there any openings at their place of employment?

Finally she learned that the prison was hiring. She applied and got the job. That was four years ago.

While Arteaga's luck seems to be changing for the better, she also is no stranger to watching her best laid plans go awry.

She was just a junior in high school when her son was born. She credits the efforts of Kim Virtue at Baker High School with encouraging her to follow through to earn the credits she needed to graduate on time with the BHS Class of 2006. And she has fond memories of her sixth-grade teacher, Eth Carr, who provided the support and encouragement she needed to learn English as her second language.

Her family moved to Baker City from Fresnillo, in Zacatecas, Mexico, about 20 years ago. Her father, Simon Arteaga, was an alcoholic and never helped support the family, Yeni said — not in Mexico and not in Baker City. He was deported and returned to Mexico years ago.

In addition to her BMCC business courses and work experience that have prepared her for being a successful businesswoman, Arteaga credits Economic Development Director Greg Smith and his assistant Julee Hicks; Jeff Nelson, Baker City business adviser for the Small Business Development Center at BMCC; and Bryan Tweit, Baker director of the Hatch Lab, with providing her guidance along the way.

In her spare time, Arteaga and her family also have served food under a 10-by-10 canopy at special events such as the Miners Jubilee, the Haines Stampede and the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally.

This year, Arteaga has added a new tool to her business plan. Rather than having to unload coolers, food and drinks to place under the canopy and then load it all back up when it's time to leave for home, the family will be towing a "brand-spanking-new, custom-made" food cart trailer to the events.

Baker County CHURCH DIRECTORY

Haines United Methodist Church
Easter Sunday
Breakfast 8 a.m.
Service 9 a.m.
Reverend Lisa Payton
Just west of Haines on the Anthony Lakes Hwy
Come Join Us!

Baker United Methodist Church
Sunday Worship
Casual Service: 8:30 AM
Traditional Service: 10 AM
1919 2nd Street, Baker City
541-523-4201

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sunday Worship Service
10:30 AM
1995 4th Street, Baker City
541-523-5201
firstpresbaker.blogspot.com

Calvary Baptist Church
Third & Broadway
541-523-3891
Sundays
10 AM Service
& Children's Church
6-7:30 pm Youth Group
(Grades 7-12)
Thursdays
5:30-6:30 pm
Free Community Dinner
www.bakercalvarybaptist.com

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
Sunday Service
11:00 AM
www.ChristianScience.com
3rd & Washington, Baker City
541-523-5911

Baker City
Church of the Nazarene
Sunday Worship 9:45 AM
Pastor Troy Teeter
1250 Hughes Lane, Baker City
(Corner of Cedar & Hughes)
541-523-3533
www.bakernaz.com

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
Baker City 1st Ward
Sacrament Meeting 9 AM
Baker City 2nd Ward
Sacrament Meeting 10:30 AM
Baker Valley Ward
Sacrament Meeting 12 PM
2625 Hughes Lane, Baker City
541-523-2397

Elkhorn Baptist Church
Sunday School 10 AM
Morning Worship 11 AM
Evening Worship 6 PM
Discovery Kids Worship
6:30 PM
3520 Birch St, Baker City
541-523-4332

Harvest Church
& HARVEST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
(Preschool-12 Grade)
Harvest Cafe 9:15 am
Morning Worship 10:10 AM
3720 Birch St, Baker City
541-523-4233
The first Sunday of each month is Mission Breakfast. Donations and non-perishable donations for NEOCC are accepted.

New Beginnings Fellowship PC of G
Sunday Morning Worship
10:30 AM
Sunday Evening 6 PM
Weds Service 7 PM
Zan & Dawn Coen
1820 Estes, Baker City
541- 524-1394

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Sunday Service 11 AM
1734 Third Street, Baker City
541-523-3922
firstlutheranbakercity@gmail.com

ST. BRIGID'S IN THE PINES COMMUNITY CHURCH
11:30 a.m. Services
1st & 3rd Sunday
Holy Eucharist
East Auburn Street, Sumpter
541-523-4812
A Mission of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Baker City

BAKER CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Sunday Worship
First Service 8:30 AM
2nd Service & Sunday School
10 AM
Jr. High & High School Youth
Tues 6:30 PM
Youth Pastor Silas Moe
675 Hwy 7, Baker City • 541-523-5425

SAINT ALPHONSUS HOSPITAL CHAPEL
Open to all patients, family and friends for reflection and prayer.
St. Alphonsus Hospital in Baker City

AGAPE CHRISTIAN CENTER
Sunday Services
10:00 AM & 6:30 PM
South Highway 7,
Baker City
541-523-6586

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
Saturday Worship
11:00 AM
www.bakercitysda.com
17th & Pocahontas, Baker City
541-523-4913

St. Francis De Sales Cathedral
Established 1904
Daily Masses:
M, T, Th, F 9 AM
Day Chapel in Cathedral
Wed Daily Mass 9 AM
at St. Alphonsus Chapel
Sat 8 AM at Day Chapel
Baker City Saturday Mass 6 pm
Baker City Sunday Mass 9:30 am
St. Therese in Halfway 2 pm Sat
St. Anthony's in North Powder 11:30 Sun
541-523-4521
Corner of First & Church, Baker City

St. Stephen's Episcopal
Services at 9 AM
1st & 3rd Sundays, Holy Eucharist
2nd & 4th Sundays, Morning Prayer
5th Sunday, Morning Prayer
2177 First Street • Baker City
Entrance on 1st Street
Corner Church & First Streets
541-523-4812

Faith Center Foursquare
A Four Square Gospel Church
Worship Service
10:45 AM
1839 3rd St, Baker City
541-523-7915

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