

Local & State

Buehler to run for Walden's seat

By Kyle Spurr
The (Bend) Bulletin

Knute Buehler, an orthopedic surgeon who represented Bend in the state House until an unsuccessful run for governor in 2018, announced Tuesday he will seek the Republican nomination for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District.

The Congressional seat opened when U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, decided not to seek re-election next year.

Buehler hinted at plans to run for the seat in October, and made it official Tuesday.



Buehler

"Many Oregonians are tired of being disrespected or ignored by Portland liberals and elite D.C. politicians," Buehler said in a press release. "In Congress, I will defend the values, rights and jobs threatened by the powerful arm of big government. I will be a conservative voice for the people and place I call home."

Buehler's announcement comes about a year since he lost the governor's race to Kate Brown. The 2018 governor's race was the most expensive in Oregon history.

More than \$35 million was raised between Brown and Buehler. The largest chunk went to television ads, primarily

negative attack ads by the candidates on each other that blanketed the state.

Buehler raised and spent more than \$19 million during his campaign for governor. It set a new record for a Republican seeking statewide office.

The governor's race was a rematch. Brown defeated Buehler in the 2012 race for secretary of state. Brown then became governor in February 2015 when Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned amid allegations of influence peddling in his administration.

Among the other candidates seeking Walden's seat is State Sen. Cliff Bentz, the Ontario Republican whose district includes Baker County.

TRADE

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"Mexico can be a very good market for us for potatoes," Ward said.

He said American potato growers have a natural advantage over both their Canadian and European counterparts simply because they're closer to Mexico, which reduces transportation costs.

Ward said about 65% of Oregon's potato crop is exported.

As for wheat, the USMCA would eliminate Canada's wheat-grading system, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture terms "discriminatory."

The issue is that Canadian rules automatically rate American wheat imports as "feed grade" rather than the higher-value grades, said Blake Rowe, CEO of the Oregon Wheat Growers League and Oregon Wheat Commission.

Doing away with those rules would not have a direct effect for Oregon wheat farmers because they don't export to Canada, Rowe said.

But he believes the USMCA would have an indirect benefit for Oregon grow-

ers by making it easier for wheat farmers elsewhere — particularly in states bordering Canada and for Midwest growers for whom Mexico is a key market — to sell bushels to those two countries.

If more wheat from those regions is exported to Mexico and Canada, then Oregon farmers in theory should receive higher prices when selling to their main export markets in Asia, Rowe said.

"We're certainly very supportive of USMCA," he said. "We've lobbied for it, and we'd love to see it pass."

Wheat sales from Baker County totaled about \$6 million in 2017, the most recent year for which figures are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Overall, crops, including potatoes, alfalfa and peppermint, generated \$33 million in sales that year. Beef cattle sales are the biggest part of the county's agriculture industry, with 2017 sales of about \$46 million.

Cheryl Martin, a North Powder rancher and district vice president for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said she's optimistic that the new trade deal could boost sluggish cattle prices by removing uncertainty about the future

for trade among the three countries.

The Oregon Wheat Growers League isn't alone in its endorsement of a revised trade deal with Mexico and Canada.

In September the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, which represents agriculture agencies in all 50 states, wrote a letter to the Democratic and Republican leaders in both the House and Senate, urging them to ratify the USMCA during 2019.

All former U.S. agriculture secretaries, dating to the Reagan administration in the 1980s, also signed a letter supporting the USMCA.

Agriculture Secretary Perdue also touts the USMCA as increasing export opportunities to Canada for American dairy products.

Although Baker County has no dairies, Ward said the trade pact's dairy provisions, both for Canada and Mexico, could benefit local farmers who sell alfalfa to dairies.

He said he has talked with some large dairy owners who would like to expand their exports to Mexico in particular. "If they can sell more dairy products there, that will help alfalfa markets, and we will

do better selling alfalfa," Ward said.

Rowe said ratification of the USMCA would help ease uncertainty that has worried farmers over the past two years or so related to the Trump administration's trade policies.

Rowe said one concern was that Trump would cancel NAFTA before a new deal was approved. That would have eliminated current tariff-free sales of American wheat to Mexico, potentially increasing the supply of wheat for export to other foreign markets and driving down prices for Oregon wheat, he said.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden touched on that topic — although related to potatoes rather than wheat — in a February 2019 letter to the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

In the letter Wyden wrote that tariffs imposed by the Trump administration had led foreign countries to retaliate with tariffs on American exports, including potatoes.

Wyden asked federal officials for an update on how the Trump administration was dealing with retaliation affecting Oregon potato exports to China and Mexico.

HEART TO HEART

Invest in Oregon's arts and culture

It has been a remarkable year for arts and culture in Baker County!

African metal wildlife roaming along Main Street, charming visitor's young and old, thanks to the Art Roamers.

The final season of the 50th anniversary celebration of "Paint Your Wagon" at the Baker Heritage Museum.

The improvements and ongoing evolution of Churchill School including the Churchill Dance Hall and Hostel.

Excellent programs about the North Powder Ice Industry at Eastern Oregon Museum and a wonderful program about the history of cattle by the Baker Historical Society.

The extensive work, behind the scenes on the Baker Orpheum Theatre as they get the engineering studies

finalized so they can move forward with the restoration of the theatre in the heart of downtown Baker City.

And so much more ... I thank all these amazing partners for their hard work and commitment to making Baker City a vibrant arts and culture community.

Crossroads Carnegie Art Center celebrated the 110th anniversary of the Carnegie Library Building. We hosted our most successful fundraiser "Oktoberfest," since opening at the Carnegie Library in 2008.

We hosted a glorious concert "Music from the Heart" in August to raves, we have had first rate art in our gallery every month and the outside world has begun to find Baker County and the vibrant arts, culture, heritage and humanities scene here.

This year, I have worked as a board member with the Cultural Advocacy Coali-

tion to assure that funding continues for critical arts and cultural programs and this year the Legislature extended the Oregon Cultural Trust Tax Credit for six more years and we saw major investment by the state in some important projects including the Lincoln County Cultural Center, Nikkei Project and High Desert Museum.

This year Crossroads, Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre and the Baker County Cultural Coalition received grant funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust. This investment by our state and the citizens of Oregon is a huge success story. You make a donation to one of 1,400 participating arts and culture LOCAL nonprofits, with a donation or a membership, then make a matching donation to the Oregon Cultural Trust and you will receive that back as a tax credit on your Oregon taxes. If you file as an individual,

you can donate up to \$500 to Local nonprofits and \$500 to the Oregon Cultural Trust and receive a \$500 tax credit! As always talk to your tax professional for advice.

In turn, those funds are invested back into Oregon via grants ... It is a circle of commitment by Oregonians to Oregon. So as the year comes to a close — now is the time to make those end of the year gifts, and all gifts to the Oregon Cultural Trust must be received by Dec. 31. For more information go to www.CulturalTrust.org

We appreciate your support of arts and culture! Have a joyous holiday season! May 2020 be filled with even more arts and culture opportunities to engage all citizens.

Ginger Savage
Executive director
Crossroads Carnegie Art Center
Baker City

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Saturday, December 14, 7:00P.M.
Sunday, December 15, 3:00P.M.

*Children's Choir performs Friday & Saturday only

Baker Heritage Museum (Campbell & Grove)
Donations Accepted at the Door

Council will ask voters to change city's charter

By Samantha O'Conner
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Baker City voters will decide in the May 2020 election whether to do away with pay for City Council members, and give councilors more authority to sell surplus city property.

Councilors decided Tuesday to put on the May ballot two suggested changes to the city charter, which dates to the 1950s. Councilor Randy Schiewe was absent Tuesday.

One change would eliminate the clause that says councilors will receive \$10 for each meeting they attend, to a yearly maximum of \$150.

The second would delete the section that requires the city to secure the approval of voters to sell any city equipment, such as vehicles, with a market value of more than \$10,000.

The city has a surplus backhoe it wants to sell, and officials believe its value exceeds \$10,000.

"The new language would be: Surplus equipment may be disposed of by a majority vote of the council with all proceeds going to the appropriate city fund to be used for future equipment replacement," Warner said.

Because the charter requirement that voters approve sales of certain equipment, the proposed sale of the 1995 Case 580 four-wheel drive backhoe will also be on the May ballot.

In other business Tuesday, city councilors:

- approved two \$500 grants through a city program designed to help downtown building owners improve the appearance of their properties.

- One grant will help pay for a new sign at Royal Artisan, 1912 Main St., and the other will help replace exterior windows at 2020 Main St.

- approved the third and final reading of an amended ordinance No. 3353, dealing with juveniles cited for violating curfew or being truant.

- The previous ordinance allowed the Baker City Justice Court judge to fine the parent or guardian of juveniles cited; the amended version also allows the judge to fine the juvenile up to \$100 for the first citation, up to \$250 for the second, and up to \$500 for the third and subsequent citations.

- approved a contract between the Baker City Public Arts Commission and the Oregon Department of Transportation to install a vinyl wrap artwork on a traffic signal control cabinet at Main Street and Washington Avenue.

- approved the first and second reading of the 2019 Oregon Fire Code.

- awarded a three-year contract for maintenance of the city's parks, Mount Hope Cemetery, City Hall and the Crossroads Carnegie Art Center to Grass Master Inc., the current contractor. The contract pays the Baker City company \$171,210, annually, an 8.4% increase from the current deal.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Police K9 program fundraiser Dec. 14

Tickets are available for the Baker City Police Department's fourth-annual fundraiser for its K9 Drug Prevention program. The event will be Saturday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m. at the Baker County Event Center, 2600 East St. Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$10 for kids 6 to 12 and free for kids under 6. Tickets are available at the Police Department, 1768 Auburn Ave., at Barley Brown's Tap House and Thatcher's Ace Hardware.

Durkee Christmas program Dec. 15

DURKEE — A Christmas children's program and a potluck are set for Dec. 15 at the Durkee School. The annual potluck starts at 4:30 p.m., and will be followed by the program. Santa Claus will also make an appearance.

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