

News from the Athletic Director

Buell Gonzales Jr. continues forging community partnerships and building events

Buell Gonzales Jr. had a 90-day plan when he started his job as athletic director for the Baker School District.

His main goal — to build partnerships within the community — is evidenced by the list of businesses and nonprofits on his office whiteboard.

He knows that sports events impact the local community, so he's involved with the Transient Lodging Tax Committee and works closely with the Baker Tournament Committee.

Upgrades to the gym

He's making changes, too.

The most recent will be noticeable to anyone who attends a basketball game at Baker High School. At the end of January, a crew removed one row of bleachers from the east side to create more room between the court and the fans. This will allow teams to sit on chairs with room for people to walk behind.

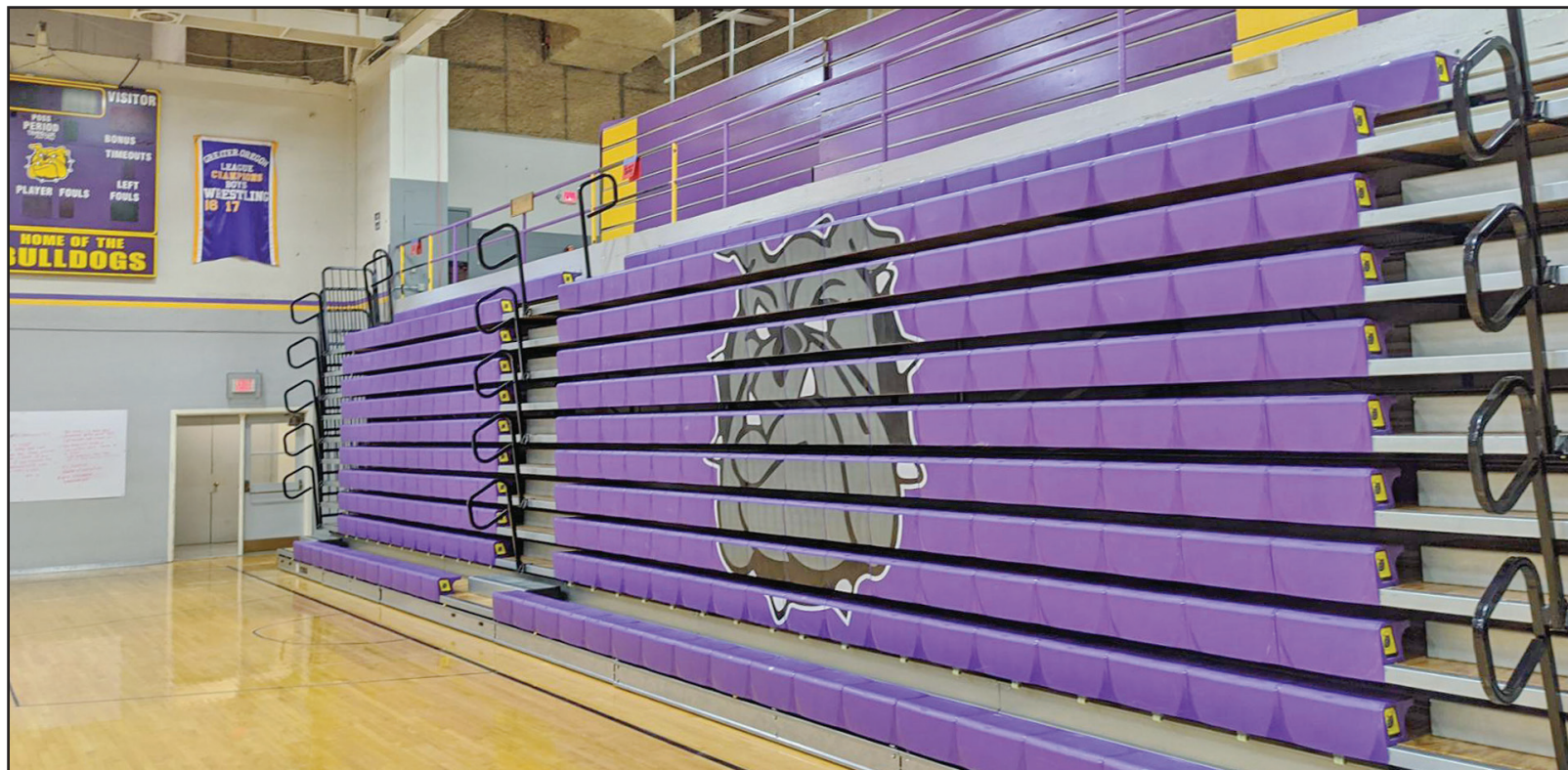
"For safety purposes, it moves the bleachers back 24 inches," he said. "It makes it better for coaches and players."

This issue was the most common complaint from coaches who play in the gym.

"The biggest thing was people walking in front of them," he said.

The cost is \$6,000 which is shared equally between the school district and Baker Tournament Committee.

Also coming is a new digital scoreboard that will display player's points and fouls. The scoreboard will be linked to



The Baker High School bleachers have been modified to create more room between spectators and the playing floor. With these changes teams will sit in chairs, allowing the audience to walk behind the players instead of in front of them.

clocks in the locker room so coaches know when it's time to take the court.

The total cost of the scoreboard is \$27,000. Of that, Gonzales raised \$22,000 from the community. The district added the remaining \$5,000.

A new video camera system was installed in mid-January that will live stream all events in the BHS gymnasium through nfhsnetwork.com. Access works through a subscription: \$10.99 per month, or \$69.99 per year.

"Every single home game will be live streamed," he said.

Looking to next year

Sports schedules are planned

a year in advance. Gonzales has worked with groups within the Oregon State Athletic Association (OSAA) to combine football schedules for divisions 3A and 4A. This will help the Bulldogs play teams closer to home.

"Transportation for football next year is over 1,000 miles less," he said.

For basketball, he's worked out two-year agreements with 4A schools across the state — one year they come here; the next we go there.

A goal he has is to reduce lost class time due to sports.

"Looking to get games on Fridays and Saturdays is huge," he said. "And local games so kids don't miss school. We're devel-

oping what's best for the kids."

New this year

Gonzales has worked to establish a clay target club at BHS for the spring season.

"We already have people who do it — we just need to organize it," he said.

He has also established a Captain's Club from the various sports teams, and clinics for the coaches.

Sports Complex

The Baker Sports Complex is owned by the school district, but managed by a separate board of directors. Gonzales said a priority this spring is to spruce up the fields and structures.

He's planning to keep the Sports Complex and other facilities busy for the summer with tennis, baseball, softball, soccer, and track and field — both local competitions and invitational contests.

"The goal is to have something going on every week," he said.

Family ID

Gonzales helped launch a Family ID platform that allows parents and guardians to register their children online for sports.

Go to bhs.baker5j.org and click on "Athletics." The "on-line registration" link is on the right side of the page.