

CAPA

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“The community really comes together and supports the program,” Duman said. “Having the fundraiser and using the money to purchase the vehicle for Capa is a cost-savings for the city.”

The older K9 vehicle will be used by the code enforcement officer and the red pickup truck that has been used for that purpose in the past will be taken out of service.

In addition to extra space for Capa, the new vehicle has a larger charging system, which helps ensure that the dog is kept comfortable.

The old vehicle, which had traveled more than 110,000 miles, came to the department as a special service vehicle, but without the “police package” modifications, Chastain said.

Unlike the 2009 model, the new Tahoe has two batteries, one that is solely dedicated to the electrical system, which avoids the charging issues experienced with the older model, Chastain said.

He is able to monitor temperatures inside the vehicle when he is away from it by use of a phone app that notifies him if the engine dies

or if the battery voltages goes below 11 volts.

If the temperature in the vehicle rises above 85 degrees, he receives a message advising him to check on the dog. When the temperature hits 90 degrees, phone calls are sent to Chastain, his wife, Farrah, and the dispatch center advising them that Capa is in immediate danger and should be rescued. The vehicle’s lights and sirens will begin flashing an SOS message, the windows will roll down and the fan in the dog’s window will begin running

“If there’s no response, it opens the door and lets him out,” Chastain said.

He tests the system weekly to ensure everything is operating properly.

While many of the vehicle’s attributes are geared to Capa’s comfort, Chastain also is regaling in the comfort and convenience offered by the new Tahoe — although he acknowledges he did give up a bit of storage space to make room for Capa’s larger kennel.

Rather than an overhead light bar, the new vehicle has lights that flash along the top of the front windshield and along the running boards, tailgate and back window. Bright white lights along the

front, back and sides illuminate alleys and other dark areas to enhance nighttime searches.

The vehicle also is equipped with a laptop computer and mobile printer to allow Chastain to issue electronic tickets and to write search warrants and crash reports on the road.

The vehicle has an eco-engine that drops it from running on eight cylinders to four cylinders during times of low-power demand for better gas mileage.

“But when I need power, it’ll give it to me immediately,” Chastain said. “As soon as I hit the gas it kicks into gear.”

A fun feature of the new rig will be reserved for parades and special demonstrations to highlight the K9 team: The vehicle’s speakers will blast out the music and lyrics of “Bad Boys,” the theme of the long-running TV show “Cops.”

Chastain can’t speak highly enough about the donors who helped provide the vehicle to the department at no taxpayer expense.

“I can’t express enough the thanks for the support,” he said. “The area, the people who live here — for the most part it’s a law enforcement friendly place — they’re very supportive.”

BOARD

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Dodson jokingly thanked the large crowd for turning out in his honor.

Athletic Director Buell Gonzales Jr., who stood in for Baker High School principal Greg Mitchell, expressed appreciation to Dodson for providing furniture and equipment to BHS at “rock-bottom prices” as new programs are being established at the school.

Gonzales, in reading from information provided by Mitchell, said Dodson’s “staunch advocacy for BHS has improved the culture and performance of our school” while saving the District thousands of dollars.

Two visiting educators from Cambodia were the next to be introduced to the large crowd.

They were in Baker City to tour the area and visit the schools as part of the Oregon International School that the Baker School District is developing over time as the District’s third charter school, director Andrew Bryan said as he introduced the two.

“I am glad we can join in cooperation between our school and Baker High School,” said Nou Reth, a principal and leader of the Pannasastra International School in Phnom Penh, Cambodia’s capital.

He was accompanied by Ing Bun, a math teacher at the school.

Bryan presented the visitors each with copies of “Baker County: Links to the Past,” by the late Eloise Dielman, a longtime Baker English teacher.

Also accounting for part of the large crowd were the new teachers and paraprofessionals who have completed the District’s orientation program designed to help them ease into their new jobs.

Betty Palmer, assistant superintendent, introduced staff members included in this

year’s cohort, not all of whom attended the meeting. They are Channin Becker, Allison Brown, Mark Emerson, Emily Hawkins, Kelly Hood, Travis Jensen, Bill Markgraf, Megan McGuinness, Jessica Multop, Stephanie Nuttall, Lindsey Rogers, Becky Schutte, Elizabeth Smock, Mitch Stephens, Anna Swart, Jesse Taub, Eva Vaughan, Teagan Wick, Joseph Wilson, Chris Wittich, Darcy Wood, Jessica Young and Dylan Francesconi.

The Board next honored Jordan Remien. The BHS senior was recognized for his accomplishments “as a singer and as a person and almost an adult,” said choir teacher Hannah Violette.

Remien also studies with voice teacher, Allison Mitchell, the wife of BHS principal Greg Mitchell, on his way to reaching his goal of becoming a professional singer and a secondary music teacher. He won the Oregon contest sponsored by the National Association of Teachers Singing Competition and has advanced to the national contest, the results of which are forthcoming, Violette said.

“This recognition is for his achievement as an outstanding member of our department,” she said.

A contingent of five third-graders from Brooklyn Primary School gathered next to report on how their Leadership program works to improve the school environment for students and staff. Activities include leaving kind and positive messages around the school, helping set up lunch for first-graders, making Monday morning announcements, providing assistance as needed at school assemblies, changing messages on the reader board outside the school, meeting with assistant superintendent Palmer to discuss ways to improve the school, and beautifying the school grounds in ways such as planting flower bulbs and picking up trash.

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TAXI

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The Sanderses both work at Step Forward Activities, and Stephanie, 26, plans to continue there as a manager, driving the cab in the evenings and on weekends.

David, 29, had been wanting to start his own business for a while. He worked for Baker City Cab for about six months.

“It was a job that I really enjoyed, I liked getting out and meeting the different people in town and talking to them, conversing with them,” David said.

Baker City has been without a taxi service for at least two months. The Sanderses applied for a license to operate their business, Elkhorn Taxi, on Jan. 29.

“You have to be a people person or at least somewhat good with people to be able to drive a cab because you’re going to have a variety of different people,” Stephanie said. “And I think one thing with my job that I have right now is I get to work with wonderful different people every single day. So it’ll be kind of the same thing with the cab company.”

Stephanie said the couple has some “kinks to work out” with the business, such as maintenance of the cab.

“We wanted to try to avoid having any of those things happen so that Baker can continue to have a reliable cab service,” Stephanie said.

They will be using a 2005 Dodge Neon to start. David said he’d also like to buy a minivan to better accommodate customers with mobility issues.

“Our main goal right now is to get us kind of up and going and then get another rig within the next couple of months,” Stephanie said.

They have backup vehicles available if needed, David said.

They will be offering punch stamps, which will allow people who buy 10 rides to earn a one-way ride for free.

Once the company is operating, David said he will be contacting nursing homes, the hospital, and other places about their services.

They are focusing on servicing Baker



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald
Stephanie Sanders



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald
David Sanders

but will offer rides outside the city limits depending on how busy they are.

“Making sure that we’re accurate and realistic with pick up and drop off time estimates, that way people realize that we are consistent and reliable with their transportation needs,” David said.

Elkhorn Taxi will operate 24 hours a day.

A court ruling that taxi company drivers are employees rather than independent contractors, and thus company owners are liable for unemployment insurance taxes, has made it more expensive for cab companies, David said.

“I’ve been doing a lot of research and even companies in Portland were saying it made quite a difference with their business and the impact,” he said.

Nonetheless, the Sanderses would like to expand.

“We’re really hoping within the next few years to create at least a couple more jobs in Baker with the company just by drivers,” Stephanie said.

The city ordinance states that there can be no more than one taxicab licensed for each 1,500 people residing within the city.

David is trained in CPR and first aid, and Stephanie is an instructor. Their future drivers will all be trained in those skills.

“We’re really excited to start this adventure,” Stephanie said.

Their Facebook Page, Elkhorn Taxi, has their contact number and a call option.

Stephanie moved from the Sacramento area her junior year in high school, and David moved from McMinnville to Sumpter.

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