

Student entrepreneurs gather in Baker City

By Samantha O’Conner
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Student entrepreneurs from Baker, Harney and Wallowa counties gathered for the first Youth Entrepreneurship Summit Friday at the Hatch Lab in Baker City.

Around a dozen students attended the summit, which included speakers and presentations from students.

Payton Jones, a student in the Incubator Entrepreneurship Class at Baker High School, said she enjoyed the Summit.

“I want to have my own business when I’m older,” said Jones, 17. “It’s nice having other kids presenting because then I get to learn from them and they get to learn from me.”

Among the student entrepreneurs who attended the Summit are:

- Katrina Haines, a junior at Enterprise High School whose business, KH Custom Stickers, started last fall.

- Foster Hobbs, a senior at Enterprise, brought examples of the decorative hooks and door pulls he makes in his blacksmith shop, Lostine River Forge.

- Mason Radinovich, a junior at Burns High School, launched One Road Cookie Company with a sugar cookie recipe he received from a relative in Ohio.

Bryan Tweit, who directs Launch Pad Baker, a non-profit incubator space that hosted the Summit, gave students a presentation: “How to Make an Impression when Selling your Product, Your Idea and Yourself.”

“Most of the kids we deal with are not under-achievers, they are kids finding ways to make their lives better and improve the opportunities they have,” Tweit said.

Stacy Green, creator/ advisor for the Mentor Match Youth Entrepreneur Program, who contacted Tweit about having the summit in Baker City, discussed “Lessons in Failure and How to Fail Successfully.”

The third speaker for the



Photo by Vanessa Spriet

About a dozen students from Baker, Wallowa and Harney counties gathered in Baker City Friday for the first Rural Teen Entrepreneur Summit. Students included, from left, Erick Bunarith of Baker High School, Payton Jones of Baker High School, Katrina Haines of Enterprise, and Aubrina Melville of Enterprise.

summit was Brenda Smith with High Desert Partnership in Harney County. Smith discussed “Entrepreneurship and What it Means for Economic and Community Development.”

Green started the Mentor Match Youth Entrepreneur Program in Enterprise in 2010.

“We just thought it would be fun to get people together that might have an interest in what these kids are doing and give them a chance to hear it,” Green said.

Bringing the students together allowed them to discuss their journeys, experiences, hardships and successes in a fun environment.

“We just thought it would be great, mainly for them to just hang out with each other and do more fun things,” Tweit said. “It’s a hard enough process being an entrepreneur as an adult, let alone a high school kid.”

“I hope what they’ll take from it is that there’s a tremendous amount of enthusiasm around entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship and that they will see that there’s

exciting things happening that teens are doing,” Green said. “There’s interesting things happening and that there are adults in the community and in their region that want to help and are willing to help provide mentoring, coaching, connecting, so that’s what I hope.”

Tweit said the ultimate goal is to help students create their own careers in rural Oregon.

“To live where they love living, to live where their families are, to live in the environment they’ve grown to love growing up in rural Oregon, and to realize they can be successful,” Tweit said.

“We try not to give them any answers but give them the tools to find the answers,” he said. “And we try not to ever say that’s a bad idea or good idea. We give them the tools to find out if it’s a bad idea or a good idea.”

Green and Tweit used their personal experiences in their presentations to the students.

Green said the idea for the Mentor Match Youth Entrepreneur Program

came to her when she met high school girls who were baby-sitting. “And they were just absolutely impressive in every way,” Green said. “And yet every single one of them was choosing early childhood education as their major. Wonderful major, they made great teachers, however at the time our school enrollments were plummeting.”

Green said she was concerned that the lack of jobs would force graduates to leave the communities where they grew up.

“I thought, we’ve got to get more of these kids interested in business and entrepreneurship, otherwise we’re not going to be able to fill our business community,” Green said. “We’re going to die if we don’t have young people coming up and with the skills that our business community needs to grow and thrive. So that’s how the idea for the program came about.”

Green said 66 students have completed the Wallowa County program. Of the 32 who are at least four years out of high school, 11 are back working in Wallowa County.

ELECTION

Continued from 1A

important to interact with people and to let them know who I am,” he said.

Joseph’s current four-year term on the Baker City Council expires Dec. 31, 2020, and he will be term-limited out because he was appointed on July 26, 2016, to serve an unexpired term of Sandy Lewis, who resigned. The partial term and the four-year term that expires this year constitute the two-year councilor term limit.

Joseph said it was his “disappointment with the lack of progress from the county commissioners” that led him to seek to extend his political career in the community.

He believes his constituents will benefit from “the energy, enthusiasm and attention to detail that I think I can bring.”

As a member of the City Council for the past 4½ years and Baker City’s mayor for the past year, Joseph said he understands the importance of refreshing his memory by reviewing the City Charter and development codes before voting on related matters during Council meetings.

Joseph said he believes recent actions of the County Commission indicate the current commissioners are not doing their homework to prepare for the twice monthly commission meetings.

Joseph and his wife own Sweet Wife Baking at 2080 Resort St., and will be moving to the former Stockman’s bar location at 2028 Main St.

Joseph said the couple hope to have the business moved by this summer and he will rely on his wife and the “fantastic staff” to continue operating the bakery.

He also is employed half-time by his father, Randy Joseph, at Lime Wind Energy where he and his brother, Wade, maintain the company’s six wind turbines near Huntington.

Nichols said Wednesday that he was surprised to hear of Joseph’s last-minute entry into the race.

“I didn’t expect it coming,” Nichols said. “I welcome him and we will go from there.”

Nichols said he would have preferred that Joseph had waited until the next election cycle in 2024 to seek a commission seat.

While Nichols complimented Joseph on the work he has done on the City Council, Nichols believes he is the better commission candidate.

“I thought I was doing a pretty fine job as a county commissioner,” Nichols said. “I will make a better commissioner because of my experience.”

Should one candidate receive 50%, plus one, of the total votes in May, that person would be elected, said County Clerk Stephanie Kirby. However, if neither wins the majority vote in May, both would advance to the Nov. 3 general election where the top vote-getter would be elected, she said.

Three incumbent Baker County officials are running unopposed for four-year terms in their positions: Surveyor Tom Hanley, Sheriff Travis Ash and Assessor Kerry Savage.

Gregory M. Baxter has filed with the Secretary of State’s office as a candidate for the position of Baker County District Attorney. Matt Shirtcliff has filed as a candidate for 8th Judicial District Circuit Court Judge for Baker County. Both were appointed to the positions last year by Gov. Kate Brown.

Shirtcliff replaced retiring Greg Baxter on the bench and Judge Baxter’s son replaced Shirtcliff in the District Attorney’s Office.

TAX MEASURES

Three local option tax levies will be considered by patrons of special districts and Baker School Dis-

trict voters will be asked to approve a bond measure to fund school improvements.

The \$7.5 million school bond measure, if approved, would be used to fund school safety and security, and address overcrowding in elementary schools while making better use of available space at Baker High School. Existing buildings also would be remodeled as part of the project.

The bond measure, which will be boosted by a \$4 million state grant if approved, will be repaid within 10 years. Taxpayers in the District will pay 66 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value to support the school

LOCAL BRIEFING

Kerry Savage appointed to Oregon Heritage Commission

Kerry Savage of Baker City has been appointed by Gov. Kate Brown to a four-year term on the Oregon Heritage Commission.

Savage is the Baker County assessor and has served a variety of roles in the Baker County Assessor’s Office for the past 30 years. During that time Savage worked with Oregon Heritage and the Oregon Heritage Grant program to buy a scanner to digitize the county’s surveys.

Savage is also an active community member who has served on the Baker School District budget board and in a variety of community roles including Little League, YMCA programs, Baker County Man of the Year for 2000, Boy Scouts of America Volunteer of the Year in 2000, East-West Shrine parade coordinator for three years, a member of the cohort five of the Ford Family Leadership program, and the 2017-2018 past president of the Oregon Association of County Assessors.

“It’s an honor to be appointed to the Oregon Heritage Commission,” Savage said. “I look forward to helping foster a deeper appreciation of our state’s history, so that Oregonians have a better understanding of our current society and an awareness of their own role in shaping the future.

“As a rural Oregon assessor, my passion for digitizing documents came from the flood of the Baker County Courthouse (caused by a broken pipe valve in 2010),” he said. “The Oregon Heritage Commission Grant helped to make these critical government documents accessible to the taxpayers. History can be found in our buildings, our culture and in our documents — they tell Oregon’s story.”

The Heritage Commission is composed of nine people representing Oregon’s heritage and geographical diversity. There are also nine advisory representatives from state agencies and statewide organizations.

More information is available from commission coordinator Beth Dehn at 503-986-0696 or Beth.Dehn@Oregon.gov, or visit the Commission’s website at www.oregonheritage.org

Garden Club to meet March 18

Janice Cowan will present information about pruning shrubs when members of the Baker County Garden Club meet Wednesday, March 18.

The group will gather at 10:30 a.m. at Community Connection, 2810 Cedar St.

Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$4.50 each for seniors 60 and older. New members are welcome.

City asks to have decorations removed from Mount Hope Cemetery

Baker City’s maintenance contractor, Grass Master, will soon be doing spring cleanup and grounds maintenance work at Mount Hope Cemetery, including removal of deteriorated decorations, flowers, floral designs, thatching, edging, fertilizing, and weed spraying, weather permitting. This work is scheduled for March 30 through April 9. Any decorative items, flowers, etc., should be removed prior to March 29. Items not removed from graves and headstones by that date will be collected by the contractor beginning on that date. Collected items, other than perishable or deteriorated items, will be stored until claimed or until Nov. 1, 2020. Items conforming to the cemetery rules may be placed on or returned to the graves beginning on April 10. A copy of the cemetery rules is available on the city’s website, www.bakercity.com. More information is available by calling the city at 541-524-2047.

improvements.

Baker County is seeking renewal of a four-year local option tax to fund general operations of vector control to eradicate mosquitoes within the district.

If approved, a total of \$560,000 would be levied over four years in equal amounts of \$140,000 per year beginning with the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The tax rate to fund the levy is about 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The county also is seeking the four-year renewal of a \$400,000 weed control levy (\$100,000 per year) at a tax rate of about 5 cents per

\$1,000 of assessed property value.

Residents of the voter precincts in Pine Valley, which includes Halfway, and Irondyke, which includes Oxbow, will be asked to renew a local option tax for Pine Eagle Health District. The levy would raise \$735,200 over five years to ensure that a medical provider would be available to treat patients at the Pine Eagle Clinic in Halfway. Property owners in the District will pay 85 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value to raise revenue to support clinic operations from fiscal year 2020-21 through 2024-25.

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