

Local & State

Community Connection receives \$38,500 to help with coronavirus

By Sabrina Thompson
The (La Grande) Observer

LA GRANDE — Community Connection of Northeast Oregon received \$38,500 in funding from the Oregon Community Foundation in response to COVID-19 financial concerns.

This funding will go toward filling the gaps during this crisis. Community Connection Executive Director Margaret Davidson said the direction of the funding has not yet been determined as the organization evaluates where the money is needed most.

CCNO serves Northeast Oregon, including Baker, Wal-

lowa, Union and Grant counties, as a central nonprofit agency, partnering with local food pantries and services for elderly, disabled, low-income and residents in need.

Community Connection has received requests for grocery assistance, Davidson said, and there is concern about people being able to make rent payments on time.

Davidson explained this can have a trickle-down effect on landlords meeting their own financial obligations, which in turn can create a snowball effect on the local economy.

“It is going to be used to

serve people,” Davidson said. “In whatever we may need to do to serve all four of our counties.”

CCNO has committed its primary funding from federal grants and assistance, Davidson said, so having the grant will help cover unexpected costs, particularly with the recent layoffs and business closures.

“Very few small business plans include a global pandemic,” said Oregon Community Foundation Board Director Sabrina Parsons of Eugene in a news release. “We recognize the urgent need for people to stay

at home to promote public safety, but when business slows, operating costs don’t disappear. The only thing that will get us through this crisis is access to funding to cover expenses until we can open our doors again.”

The foundation reported it granted nearly \$2 million across the state to nonprofit organizations. Additionally, the foundation began the Small Business Stabilization Fund to lend money to nonprofit community lenders, which may help these lenders offer low and no-interest loans to local for profit and nonprofit businesses.

SHIELDS

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Although students are not in classes, BTI staff members put their heads together and met with Saint Alphonsus Medical Center officials last week to see what BTI’s engineering lab could do to produce face shields to protect workers.

“When the hospital reached out and asked if BTI could produce these, I was excited to have an opportunity to contribute to the cause,” Chris Wittich, BTI engineering instructor, stated in a press release.

“We immediately went to work on the design and began prototype production with the use of 3D printers in our lab,” he said.

Wittich reviewed three designs, one each from Hewlett-Packard, Portland State University and Boise State University, before choosing the BSU design, Dalton said.

“Boise State had worked with Saint Alphonsus on the shield and already had met the medical standards,” and it was the easiest to assemble, Dalton said.



Submitted photo

From left, Abby Dunten, RN, Dr. Kaare Tinglestad, and Lexi Liebelt, RN, in the Saint Alphonsus emergency room wearing face shields made at the Baker Technical Institute.

“Manufacturing these face shields for our health care providers is an incredible gesture from BTI.”

— **Dr. Leslie Jackson, vice president of medical affairs, Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City**

shields for those entities. At this time the 3D printers and BTI staff members are working night and day and on weekends to meet the requests. Those participating in the project include Dalton, Wittich, Sandy Mitchell, who’s the BTI administrative and marketing assistant, teacher Dave Frazey, and Julie Homan, who works in the District’s print shop.

BTI, with five 3D printers set up for classroom work, has one of the largest inventories of the specialized printers around, Dalton said. Only three printers have been used for this project.

Dalton said the printers are not suited to large production work, but instead are intended for classroom use. Three shields are produced every three hours in the BTI lab, Wittich said.

The first batch went to the Baker City hospital Wednesday and the shields were well-received by Saint Alphonsus doctors and nurses, Dalton said.

Dr. Leslie Jackson, the hospital’s vice president of medical affairs, expressed her appreciation for the school’s efforts.

“Manufacturing these face shields for our health care providers is an incredible gesture from BTI,” Jackson stated in the press release.

“It will allow us to further protect our colleagues on the front line fighting this pandemic,” she said. “This effort demonstrates BTI’s innovative organizational cooperation, which is one of the many community strengths found in Baker City. We are truly grateful.”

Dalton said helping the hospital employees prepare for the county’s first confirmed COVID-19 case is nothing more than repaying the efforts of those who have eagerly welcomed BTI students into their facilities and provided their guidance and expertise to the health care component of the career and technical training program. BTI, which is housed in the northwest wing of Baker High School, was started in the fall of 2014.

“This is us giving back the other way,” Dalton said.

He said the face shields are being offered free to the Baker County partners. And for others, they will be made available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

“We’ll keep printing and keep shipping them out,” he said.

Other communities or health care providers can place an order for the face shields at bakerti.org or by calling 541-524-2651.

The face shield production project is just another way

the Baker School District is using its resources to serve the community, Dalton said. He pointed also to the weekday free food service program for all children 18 and younger and the child care service offered to essential workers in emergency services and health care occupations throughout the community.

“Everybody has offered to pay,” Dalton said of the face shield project, but the cost of supplies is minimal and the staff is already on the job working.

“If people want to donate to the engineering program or BTI or to a scholarship for the students, those would all be great things — but not expected,” he said.

The additive manufacturing processes — including computer-aided design and 3D printing— students are learning in BTI’s engineering and construction programs are state-of-the-art, he said.

“It’s pretty amazing what can be done,” he said.



BAKER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Thank you to the Community Organizations and Volunteers who have helped us serve our families over the past few weeks!

We are truly grateful for the help you’ve provided. We couldn’t do this without you!

OTEC, Just Serve, Lutheran Church, Soroptimist, Open Door, St. Stephens Church, David Wright, Ma’Lena Wirth, Kim Virtue, Chuck & Tricia Everson, Leo & Gayle Poe & Family, Evelynn Spivey, Grocery Outlet, Albertsons, Safeway

State limits hunting, fishing to Oregonians

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon has banned all non-resident hunting, fishing and shellfishing activity in an effort to stop a surge of nonresident anglers mostly from Washington.

The action follows Washington’s decision to close all hunting, fishing and shellfishing until at least early May, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife cited COVID-19 concerns and said it will last until coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Curt Melcher, director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said north Oregon Coast communities are especially supportive of the action.

“Rural communities are concerned about the potential impact of COVID-19 on medical and emergency services, search and rescue and their citizens. Some have asked us to close seasons to reduce travel,” he said in a news release.

The emergency order applies to all current fishing and hunting seasons. Oregon will refund hunters with out-of-state tags for spring bear or turkey hunts.

LOCAL BRIEFING

County Democrats cancel April meeting

The Baker County Democrats will not have their regularly scheduled monthly meeting in April. Whether they meet during May, and in what manner, will be determined by the first of May.

Vector Control board to meet April 16

The board of directors for the Baker Valley Vector Control District will meet Thursday, April 16, at 1 p.m. at the District office, 19611 S. Airport Lane. The public can attend through webex; a link is available at bvvd.org.

Temperature reaches high for 2020

Thursday was the warmest day in Baker City in more than half a year, as the temperature climbed to 74 degrees at the Baker City Airport. It was the warmest day since Sept. 24, 2019, when the high was 78. The record high for April 9 is 78, set in 2016.

Baker City Planning Commission public hearing by teleconference April 15

The Baker City Planning Commission will have a public hearing, by teleconference only, on April 15 to consider two applications. The meeting will start at 6 p.m. The public can participate by calling 1-877-820-7831 and entering this code — 8204693.

The two applications:

- Applicant and property owner Lane Parry is requesting a variance to the 5-foot side setback in the residential medium-density zone to allow a future property line adjustment to accommodate an existing accessory structure and to correct a boundary discrepancy at 3750 Campbell St.
- Applicant Christina Smith, on behalf of property owner 5th Street Rental LLC, is requesting approval to use an existing single-family home as a real estate office in the residential high-density zone at 2333 Main St.

Copies of applications and other materials can be emailed for free by calling 541-523-8219 or emailing planning@bakercounty.org

HEART TO HEART

Lighted cross gives us hope

A sincere appreciation and thank you to the people responsible for the lighted cross that shines above Baker City. During the Christmas season we thoroughly enjoyed the lighted cross shining above our home. With recent events it is wonderful to see the cross shining again, giving us hope and reminding us all of what really matters.

Tom and Donna Bunch
Baker City

SPECIAL EASTER SAMPLER TAKE OUT

APRIL 12

OPEN 12:00 PM



Please call to pre-order so we can prepare

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\$26.00

Easter RoundUp
Dinner includes: Prime Rib, Smoked Brisket, Ham, Green Bean Casserole, Mac and Cheese, Stuffed Pepper Casserole, Mashed Potatoes, Cowboy Bread, Salad, Triple Chocolate Mousse Dessert

Also regular menu items available

Open Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri at 4:30pm • Sat 3:30pm • Sun 12:30pm
Closed Tuesday • TAKE OUT ONLY
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