

BAKER SCHOOL DISTRICT MAKING MATERIALS AVAILABLE THROUGH JULY 2

Parents invited to review language arts curriculum

By Chris Collins
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The Baker School District has invited parents and guardians of Baker students, and other community members, to take a look at English/Language Arts core curriculum materials for kindergartners through sixth graders recommended for adoption by the Baker School Board.

The materials will be on display at the District Office at 2090 Fourth St., through Thursday, July 2. The office's summer hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Titled "Into Reading," the

material is published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and was recommended by members of the K-6 English Language Arts Curriculum Cadre, Assistant Superintendent Betty Palmer told the Board at its June 18 meeting.

"The team wanted a program that would align schools and grade levels," Palmer stated in a press release announcing the public opportunity to review the material. "Into Reading" fits the criteria they were looking for.

"The District welcomes community input in this process" Palmer said. "We are grateful for the time and effort

individuals have committed to help make this important decision."

Parents and community members are asked to sign in at the front desk in the District Office, wear a face covering and follow proper hygiene protocol, the press release stated. A comment sheet will be provided to gather input, which will then be presented to the School Board along with the team's recommendation.

District policy requires that any materials considered for use as core curriculum first be approved by the Baker School Board. The Board will convene a work session June 30 to

consider the team's proposal. The Board will vote to accept or deny the recommendation during a public board meeting at which more community input will be accepted.

The team, which spent six months working to choose the curriculum, included teachers, administrators and specialists. Beginning in December, they reviewed state standards, weighed strengths and weaknesses of the present curriculum and prioritized the most important components needed to develop strong reading, writing, speaking and listening skills across the K-6 spectrum.



Photo by Jesse Soliz

Main Street was blocked for about 30 minutes Thursday night after a motorcycle collided with a pickup truck at Washington Avenue.

Motorcyclist not seriously hurt in collision with truck

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Main Street traffic was stalled for about a half-hour Thursday night after a pickup truck and a motorcycle collided at Main and Washington.

No one was seriously injured in the crash, which happened about 4 p.m., said Police Chief Ray Duman.

Duman said the two vehicles collided as they both were traveling north on Main Street. Shane Boylan, 27, of 3670 Ninth Drive, attempted to make a left turn into the westbound lane of Washington Avenue in his 1990 Dodge pickup truck when the pickup struck a 1988 motorcycle driven by Kaiden Williams, 28, of 1235 Valley Ave.

Duman said Boylan, who was not hurt, was cited on charges of driving while his operator's license was suspended and driving uninsured.

Williams was cited on a charge of not wearing an Oregon Department of Transportation approved motorcycle helmet.

A Baker City ambulance crew responded to the crash, but Williams, who was not seriously injured, refused transport. Duman said Williams later was checked out by emergency room staff at the hospital.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Baker School Board to discuss fall schedule, language arts materials

The Baker School Board will meet for a work session beginning at 3 p.m. Tuesday.

The video Zoom meeting is expected to last until about 4:45 p.m. A special Board meeting at which discussion topics may be adopted and approved is tentatively scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.

These topics will be considered during the work session, according to an agenda distributed Tuesday:

- Oregon Department of Education guidance for reopening schools
- Training and potential calendar shifts
- K-6 English/Language Arts curriculum material
- Plans for a new soccer complex

When the Board meets at 5 p.m. it will further consider the English/Language Arts Materials discussed during the work session.

A District organizational chart also will be discussed and considered for possible adoption along with the soccer facility plans. The meeting is tentatively scheduled to adjourn at 5:40 p.m.

Baker County Garden Club to meet July 1

The Baker County Garden Club will have a brunch and meeting July 1 at 10:30 a.m. at the Loennig home, 1638 Broadway St. in Baker City.

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative awards scholarships for lineman, trade schools

Two Baker City residents have received \$5,000 scholarships from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative to attend lineman school and pursue a career as an electrical worker.

Luke Barnes and Tristain Pogue are the recipients. OTEC also awarded \$2,500 scholarships to Cole Furtney and Tayler Wood of Baker City, and Opie McDaniel of John Day, to attend a trade school.

OTEC's board of directors awards scholarships from a pool of candidates in the cooperative's service territory, which includes Baker, Grant, Harney and Union counties.

Money for scholarships comes from unclaimed capital credits of OTEC members. Applications for both trade and lineman school scholarships are open year-round. You can apply at www.otec.coop/scholarships.

Free lunch program continues

Just as it did this spring, the Baker School District will continue to provide drive-thru service for free lunches and a free breakfast for the next morning for those 18 and younger throughout the summer.

The meals will be served

from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at two locations: Brooklyn Primary School, 1350 Washington Ave.; and Baker High School, 2500 E St.

Participants in the summer meal programs are asked to use the bus lanes at both locations to pick up meals.

The program, which began June 11, will continue through Aug. 20.

No application is needed to take part in the meal program. Participants need just show up, including out-of-town visitors, a flier announcing the program states.

Parents may join their children for \$3.50 per meal. Adult meal tickets must be purchased in advance from the District Office, 2090 Fourth St. More information is available by calling Jessica Dalton, the district's Food Services director, at 541-524-2260.

CASTLE

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While Dalton wants to modernize the Castle a bit, she also intends to retain its original charm.

"Almost everything is being reused," Dalton said. "Most of the pieces of trim are being reused and the original hardwood floors are being refinished."

Dalton said that the history behind the Castle was one of the biggest reasons why she bought it.

"I think it's amazing to think of all the people who have walked on these

same stairs," she said.

Dalton said she bought the Pythian Castle from a bank for \$400,000, and she hopes to have the renovations done by the end of summer. She sees the building as both an investment — with the downstairs offices and an apartment bringing in revenue — and a home for her and her two daughters.

Dalton is a designer, as well as the former executive director of the Baker County YMCA. She has restored homes in the past, but she said this is "definitely the biggest project I've ever tackled."

When finished, the Castle's 17,000 square feet will include The Hen House Cafe on the first floor, an architectural design studio, six offices for businesses to lease, a basement apartment, a full housing area on the second floor where Dalton plans to live with her daughters, and a ballroom with stained glass windows.

Dalton said that she plans to turn the ballroom, once the site of parties, into an event center that could be rented for weddings, parties and fundraisers when restrictions on the size of gatherings are eased.

LODGING

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The ordinance requires that 70% of the tax revenue be spent for tourism promotion, 25% for economic development and 5% for administrative expenses the county incurs in collecting the tax.

The 7-member Lodging Tax Committee recommends how to spend the 70% of the tax revenue for tourism promotion.

"The good news is, our initial projections were pretty dire and I think really clearly in early April particularly we did see our numbers plummet," Bishop said Thursday. "Those numbers are starting to creep up and inch forward. We are still down significantly, both in occupancy and in average daily rate, both of which will impact our TLT revenue but we are seeing more travelers starting to travel."

"We have had some good news there in terms of the bottom not being quite as low as we perhaps thought it was going to be," Bishop said.

Bishop said lodging tax collections for January and February numbers were similar to the previous year.

Baker City Mayor Loran Joseph, who is a member of the committee, said January's revenue was up by about \$2,500 over the same month in 2019, while February was down about \$2,500 and March down about \$4,500 — a drop of about 20% from the previous March.

Lodging businesses turn over tax collections quarterly, and Bishop told the committee he had only projections for the spring.

He said he expected collections for April and May to both be down about 90% from the previous year, but he now he expects a drop of between 70% and 80%.

He initially estimated an 80% decline for June, but he believes the actual revenue

will be down by about 75%.

"I'm happy that, while we are certainly not back to normal, things are beginning to look a little more familiar," Bishop said.

With most of Baker City's major summer events canceled, including the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, Miners Jubilee and the East-West Shrine All-Star Football Game, Bishop expects lodging tax revenue will continue to fall far behind last year's figures.

He estimates about a 50% decline for July, August and September, based on what he's hearing from lodging operators.

"We've been happy to hear from a lot of our lodging partners, even with cancellations of events like Miners Jubilee, the Sumpter flea markets, the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, a lot of folks are just holding those reservations, they are still going to try to come," Bishop said.

He expects the 50% drop, compared to last year, will

continue through the fall as well.

In looking at 2021, Bishop said he expects January and February will still have lower than usual occupancies, down by 20% to 25% for the first half of the year.

He's optimistic that visitor numbers, and thus lodging tax revenue, will return to a more normal range starting in the summer of 2021.

Bishop told committee members that Travel Oregon has put together a cooperative marketing program with Expedia.com and its online market platforms. Travel Oregon is investing \$175,000 in the campaign. Bishop said he felt there was a huge opportunity for the county.

"This is a six-month campaign that will run on Expedia and all of their online platforms featuring basically a landing page with Travel Oregon's Landing page, which will include all of the six participating regions, and then in lieu of Eastern Oregon, Baker County would be featured

then on that landing page," Bishop said.

He said it is one of the first opportunities for the county to partner with Travel Oregon in a way that is "really linked directly to that booking engagement with Travelocity (part of Expedia)."

Bishop said the county's proposed share of \$25,000 for the campaign, slated to run from July 15 to Dec. 31, would allow the county to target specific areas. He recommended the Boise and Seattle areas.

Bishop said that based on concerns from lodging businesses, the marketing would emphasize safe travel, asking people to follow social distancing.

"A lot of our focus again is focusing on those low group activity kind of events. A lot more on outdoor recreation," Bishop said.

The Committee voted to recommend the Baker County Board of Commissioners approve the \$25,000 in lodging tax revenue.

The **Baker City Herald**
will not be publishing a newspaper on
Saturday, July 4th.

Our office will be **closed on Friday, July 3rd**
in observance of Independence Day.

★

Happy
Birthday

★

America!



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