

Auto parts shop has new owners — and location

■ Derek and Claire Chamberlain also sell Cub Cadet and Toro lawn equipment at their new business on 10th Street

By Joanna Mann
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Chamberlain Auto Parts officially opened June 1 at 2223 10th St. in Baker City.

Derek and Claire Chamberlain, who bought the Carquest Auto Parts store from Joan and Douglas Hills of Baker City, own two other auto parts shops, in Vale and Ontario.

“My family’s third generation dairy farmers and I grew up in Vale, so farming is what we know,” Derek Chamberlain said. “So those are the types of towns we wanted to be in versus going the other direction.”

Chamberlain Auto Parts, also known as CAPS, is more than just an auto parts store, which is why the Chamberlains are not operating solely under the Carquest name.

CAPS is also a Cub Cadet and Toro lawn equipment dealer.

The Hills, meanwhile, continue to operate their auto repair shop at 800 Campbell St., the former site of Carquest auto parts.

The Chamberlains live in Vale, and Derek said he travels to the Baker City shop about twice a week to talk to customers, set up accounts and do whatever else needs to be done. The shop also employs workers with previous experience at NAPA and O’Reilly’s auto parts stores.

Derek Chamberlain said he started talking with the Hillses just over a year ago when he found out they were interested in selling their business.

He met with the couple in a Baker City coffee shop, where

they hashed out the details and began the process of changing hands.

Chamberlain then spent the next six to eight months searching for a building and employees to run the business before the original scheduled opening date of April 1, 2021.

Like many other things, COVID-19 threw a wrench in that plan as work crews had to quarantine throughout the opening process, and parts and equipment suppliers faced nationwide shortages. Even now, Chamberlain still does not have all the inventory he was hoping to have by the time CAPS opened.

“We’re still having issues,” he said. “We still haven’t gotten stuff that we ordered in March in anticipation of opening in April. So that’s



Joanna Mann/Baker City Herald

Chamberlain Auto Parts — CAPS — sells auto parts as well as lawn equipment at their store at 2223 10th St. in Baker City.

why there’s only eight or nine lawnmowers out there; because of the pandemic, we just don’t have them yet.”

CAPS has kept the same phone number as the previous location — 541-523-6366 — which has helped with making sure customers show up to the right place.

Chamberlain said he still needs to work on signage because sometimes people get confused when they pull into the parking lot. He hopes to connect with the community through a cookout he is planning for mid-July, pending approval from the Baker County Health Department.

“People can walk through and we can kind of show them what we have,” Chamberlain said. “Normally, we’d like to do it in April, May or later in September, but we want to make sure that we can do it as soon as possible so that people know we’re here.”

CANDIDATE

Continued from Page A1

“She was and still is welcome at the Republican booth during Miners Jubilee,” Jones wrote. “Dishonest campaign allegations such as these demonstrate a lack of experience and integrity.”

Gomez had hoped to schedule a time to sit in the GOP booth and talk to local residents.

Her campaign director, Kate Firmin, said Gomez still plans to visit Baker City during Miners Jubilee and to walk around the park meeting people.

“We’re changing gears right now to see how she can still be involved,” said Michelle Johannes, communications director for the Gomez campaign. “It is important to her because she feels Eastern Oregon has been really underrepresented in state leader-

ship and politics. She’s trying to visit as many counties and cities across the state as possible.”

Firmin said that during a phone call with Jones, Jones noted that there is a hometown candidate in the Republican race — McQuisten is the only local resident who has announced a campaign — and that Gomez should consider saving her money and campaigning elsewhere.

The press release from Gomez’s campaign includes several alleged statements from Jones that are in quotation marks.

Firmin said she did not record her phone conversation with Jones, but that she did take notes.

Jones, in an email to the Herald Friday, described the quotations attributed to her as “simply false.”

Jones also wrote that “professional campaigns typically put these requests in writing.”

However, Firmin said she made multiple attempts, prior to the phone conversation, to reach Jones and inquire about Gomez getting a time slot in the GOP booth, including through social media and email.

Firmin said Jones did tell her that there was an opening in the booth on Sunday. But Firmin said that although she asked for a specific time, Jones didn’t provide one.

Jones said in a Friday interview that McQuisten is the only candidate who has scheduled time in the GOP booth, and that the Baker County Republicans don’t schedule competing candidates in the same booth at the same time.

The calendar on McQuisten’s

campaign website shows “Miners Jubilee” on July 16, 17 and 18.

In an email to the Herald, Jones wrote that her daughter “graciously offered to relinquish her scheduled time on Sunday to help us accommodate (Gomez’s) request.”

In the press release, Gomez said “I stand with the people of Baker County and defend their right to hear from more than one gubernatorial candidate.”

Jones, though, pointed out that the Baker County Republicans promoted a Baker City appearance from another GOP gubernatorial candidate, Stan Pulliam, mayor of Sandy, who declared his candidacy before either Gomez or McQuisten.

The Baker County Republicans Facebook page had a post on June 5 about Pulliam’s visit to Baker City on June 11.

Recall effort of GOP leader fails

SALEM (AP) — A push by gun rights supporters to recall one of Oregon’s top Republicans has come up short.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports as of the 5 p.m. deadline Tuesday, July 6, a campaign to recall Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod had not turned in any signatures, according to the Secretary of State’s Office.

The effort would have required 8,922 valid signatures from voters in Girod’s district to force a recall election.

The recall campaign emerged in April after Girod and five other Senate Republicans took to the chamber floor to forcefully oppose a gun control bill. That opposition was not enough for gun rights groups that had grown accustomed to Republicans blocking bills by refusing to show up for votes.

In recent years, recall petitions against two state legislators have also failed.



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