

KHKF-Issues and Programs- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2023

1. **ISSUE: Brad Dunten, Powder Valley Athletic Director honored with two major awards**

GUEST: Brad Dunten

DESCRIPTION: **NORTH POWDER-** Brad Dunten, Athletic Director for Powder Valley has received two major accolades. Dunten has been named not only the Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA) 1A Athletic Director of the Year but also the Oregon Athletic Directors Association 1A-3A Oregon Small Schools Athletic Director of the Year at the 2023 Oregon Athletic Directors Conference.

When asked what it means to him to receive these awards, Dunten had this to say, “First off I was truly honored to receive these awards. The determination for small schools and advocating for my studentathletes is what I pride myself with. I advocate effectively for all student athletes in co-curricular activities and feel the small schools deserves this recognition. They deserve the same opportunities no matter geographical location or size. These awards being an honor to receive allows me to reflect on my desire to be involved as well as motivates me to continue to advocate.”

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM April 21, 2023

2. **ISSUE: Haines Stampede Rodeo Receives \$3000 Grant**

GUEST: Colby Thompson

DESCRIPTION: In a recent post, the Haines Stampede Rodeo & Association announced that they received a \$3,000 grant from AgWest Farm Credit. In their announcement, they stated “The funds from the grant will be used for bleacher construction and lumber in the new ADA seating section at the Haines Stampede Arena.” Pictured above, AgWest’s Mark Coomer presented to the check to Colby Thompson, President of Haines Stampede, and Eric Swanlund, Vice President on Saturday at the arena.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM April 27, 2023

3. **ISSUE: Digital reader boards to be installed at LMS, LHS**

GUEST: LGSD Superintendent George Mendoza

DESCRIPTION: La Grande School District has traditionally used static, outdoor reader boards to share school news with the public, but now the district is revolutionizing its communication by investing in and installing three new digital reader boards, or smart signs, to share more news faster with their staff, students, parents and visitors.

Digital reader boards are a type of digital signage that displays a variety of real-time information important to district families and students, said Joseph Waite, Bond and Facilities Manager.

“These signs will have large digital display boards that will be controlled wirelessly,” he said. “They will use these reader boards for announcements for school events as well as events for athletics and clubs.”

The digital reader boards will allow for dynamic messaging that will not only be able to communicate with words, but with pictures and animations too. Digital signs can be operated from a remote location, requiring just a few clicks and steps to deploy new information in an instant.

“Both La Grande Middle School and La Grande High School will have purchased digital reader boards,” Waite said.

La Grande High School’s new reader board will be installed outdoors, replacing the old sign on 2nd Street and K Avenue. Likewise, La Grande Middle School’s reader board will replace their old, outdoor sign on 4th Street.

“In addition, the district has also ordered a large reader board that will be placed on the 1805 Adams Avenue property at our new Plant and Operations Center,” Waite said.

The district partnered with Northwood Manufacturing and Outdoors RV Manufacturing to purchase this electronic reader board.

“We will be able to announce all district events, as well as district initiatives to promote learning at school and at home,” he said. “The boards will arrive in 6-8 weeks, and we look to have them installed as soon as possible.”

As you pass by these new outdoor digital reader boards, take notice of the attention-grabbing technology, graphics and the increased information they give to the community.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM May 5, 2023

**4. ISSUE: Baker County Road Department has been named as a recipient of Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant**

GUEST: Baker County Road Department, Kelly Tanzey

DESCRIPTION: The Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) recently announced the recipients of its competitive \$18-million Community Wildfire Risk Reduction (CWRR) Grant. These funds will help communities across Oregon reach their goals of improving wildfire resiliency, using local programs and solutions.

Among those who were notified of the grant was the Baker County Road Department which was marked for \$307,346.00.

According to the Baker County Road Department, “The purpose of the project is to reduce the vegetative fuels along County roads within the Rock Creek/Bulger Flat Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) (County Roads: Bulger Flat Lane #566, Big Muddy Creek Lane #636, Little Muddy Creek Lane #583, and South Rock Creek Lane #552) to improve the safety of residents, future developments, and visitors, as well as, to increase the effectiveness and safety of firefighters and first responders. Each road is a one-way in and one-way out access within the WUI and all other arterial roads are unimproved.

Reduced fuels will also lead to lower fire suppression costs and fewer greenhouse gas emissions that result from wildfires. In addition, breaks in fuel continuity will aid in reducing the overall rate of spread. The ingress/egress route will be improved which will allow residents to evacuate more quickly and allow firefighters better ingress access to prevent structure fires.

This project consists of removing all vegetation with stems and trunks 18 inches and smaller in diameter within 15 feet of the edge of the traveled roadways. There is approximately 1 mile of unimproved road on Bulger Flat Lane that will require widening and base stabilization. Additional surface rock is needed on approximately 6 miles of all County Roads within the WUI. The purpose of the project is to provide safer egress routes for emergency evacuation, and to allow firefighters better ingress access to fight fires. The project will also provide a break in fuel continuity to aid in reducing the spread of fire. Rock Creek/Bulger Flat WUI was selected based on the confluence of developing rural residential neighborhoods with the wildland interface. The project is scheduled for 2023 through 2024. All work will be performed within the County’s existing right-of-way by the Baker County Road Department.

This community is located north of Hunt Mountain and south of the Union County line, containing dispersed year-round and seasonal dwellings. The area also contains four tracts of the Elkhorn Wildlife Area managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as the historical Rock Creek Power Plant. A portion of The North Powder River Wild and Scenic Waterway is within this WUI. Bulger Flat Lane is near the Elkhorn Mountains, less than 10 miles from Haines and less than 20 miles from Baker City. Bulger Flat Lane leads to The Summit Lake Trailhead, a very primitive trailhead located along the Wild and Scenic North Powder River. It serves as a trailhead for both the Summit Lake and North Powder River Trails. The trail immediately crosses North Fork Powder River and continuing up to Red Mountain Lake.

Gravel roads make good firebreaks because they allow for movement of fire equipment and personnel and are void of vegetation. This project will improve the effectiveness of a firebreak to reduce fire risk and improve the access of firefighters at the precise interface between buildings and the forest.”

It is important for citizens to know that “Rock Creek/Bulger WUI is listed as High Priority in the Baker County CWPP with a goal to “Develop safety corridors including roads, natural fuel breaks and Defensible Fuels Profiles Zones Identify and implement Fuels Treatments along major roads and highways. Identify opportunities to utilize roads and ridge.” (pg A-112. The Rock Creek/Bulger Flats WUI consists of 124 structures and 33,672 acres.” According to the Baker County Road Department.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM May 19, 2023

**5. ISSUE: 31 LMS Students Received New Bikes and Helmets After Having Perfect Attendance**

GUEST: Principal Chris Wagoner

DESCRIPTION: 31 sixth-grade students at La Grande Middle School were presented with brand new bikes and helmets this week thanks to having perfect attendance during the 2022-2023 school year.

This program is put on by Rogers Toyota of Hermiston and rewards sixth-grade students for their attendance.

Baker Middle School Principal Chris Wagoner says that the Rogers Family did a study many years ago that showed that great attendance in high school was something that could be predicted by how well kids attended in sixth grade. So that is why it is focused on sixth grade.”

Wagoner said that an assembly was held at the beginning of the school year to hype the students up about this program and inform them of what they can receive for having perfect attendance.

The definition of “perfect attendance” is defined by each school participating in this program. Wagoner says that at LMS, perfect attendance is when a student has three or fewer excused absences. An excused absence would be for something like a sickness, or something where the student *has* to be gone.

Wagoner notes that LMS has about 165 sixth graders and 31 of those students received a bike and helmet this year. This number rose dramatically from years past according to Wagoner, who said that they have done this for three or four years now and usually they average three students who receive bikes. Wagoner said that he feels that hyping this program up at the beginning of the year excited the kids and made the goal seem achievable to them.

La Grande Middle School received the highest number of bikes this school year, according to Wagoner, with over 5,000 bikes and helmets awarded in total over the years.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM June 9, 2023

6. **ISSUE: Baker City Council in Turmoil over Mayor seat. Councilors & City Manager Speak Out**

GUEST: Multiple Guests

DESCRIPTION: his week's Baker City Council Meeting was short lived when four members of the council chose not to participate in the meeting when councilor Beverly Calder claimed she was still mayor.

Calder was voted in as Mayor of Baker City in January 2023 by fellow councilors, however in April 2023 the council voted to remove Calder as Mayor and voted in Matthew Diaz. Information on that meeting and vote to remove Calder can be found at <https://elkhornmediagroup.com/matthew-diaz-takes-reins-as-mayor-of-baker-city-after-beverly-calder-voted-out/>

In Baker City, councilors are voted into their seats by the citizens, however the Mayor and Co-Mayor are voted in by sitting councilors.

This week Calder chose to “take a stand” and take her seat back, resulting in four fellow councilors, Mayor Matthew Diaz, Counselor Johnny Waggoner Sr, Councilor Dean Guyer and Councilor Nathan Hodgdon, not attending the meeting, thus denying a quorum.

Councilor Beverly Calder, Councilor Jason Spriet and Councilor Ray Duman remained at the meeting and attempted to move forward with the meeting. However, without a quorum the meeting was in “violation of state law and city charter”, according to City Manager Johnathan Cannon, who then chose to remove himself from the meeting, which he deemed to be unlawful.

Elkhorn Media Group has since reached out for comments from City Manager Cannon and all seven councilor members.

Below you will find statements from Manager Cannon and Councilors Hodgdon, Waggoner Sr and Calder. At this time no further statements have been made by the remaining councilors.

\*\*Note that statements on this incident are being presented in the order in which they were received to the Elkhorn Media Group Newsroom.

**From City Manager Cannon**

“Four city councilors chose not to attend the scheduled City Council meeting on June 13, 2023. This resulted from a dispute in that Councilor Beverly Calder indicated she is the

rightful Mayor of Baker City instead of Mayor Matthew Diaz. The four city councilors did not walk out of the meeting, three departed before the meeting began and one did not enter the Chambers. With only three of the four councilors in the room, a quorum was not achieved meaning a meeting of the Council could not be held. Councilor Calder referenced the City Charter and indicated they could hold a meeting, however the section of the Charter so referenced only allows a meeting to occur with less than a quorum in order to compel absent councilors to attend a meeting as provided by ordinance. I am unaware of any ordinance in the city that provides an enforcement mechanism for the provision which would compel the city councilors to attend. It seems that compelling city councilors to attend is the only situation where councilors can hold a meeting of the City Council without a quorum. When Councilor Calder indicated and proceeded to hold a meeting of the city council in violation of state law and the City Charter, I could not in good faith remain and participate in an unlawful meeting. I said as much in the meeting and left. City staff followed my lead and left the meeting following my departure.

Today, the City Attorney at my request issued a legal opinion regarding the selection of Mayor.”

The legal opinion is attached.

**From Councilor Nathan Hodgon**

“Regarding the dispute over the mayor seat, I take issue with the flimsy excuse that Councilor Calder was merely trying to uphold the charter because in her very next breath she violated it by attempting to hold a meeting and asked for motions without a quorum. If she wanted to revisit the topic, then her experience on council should have guided her to raise the topic for discussion and review which we could have done. The fact she unilaterally has attempted to usurp the role 2 months later without due process shows just how transparent her reasoning was even to her. What she did was illegal by any reasonable standard and may have cost her any standing she would have had in a discussion during a lawful council meeting. This action was profoundly unmayor-like and only confirms the wisdom in removing her in the first place. For the sake of the city and her own sake, I hope she sees reason and makes amends for her outrageous actions.”

**From Johnny Waggoner Sr.**

“I see Councilors Calders actions as here way to stay in the spotlight. She has said, she decided to sit in the mayors seat, as part due to conversation with City residents who told her they believe she is still officially mayor despite being removed from that position on April 11th by a majority of city council members. The city attorney statement is out there. I’m unsure who her personal attorney is that’s giving her advice. So until it’s settled I will not be attending any city council meetings that Mayor Diaz is not the chair of. Unless it’s an emergency situation such as budget. Councilor Calder can cry me a river until that time, or go tell it on the mountain it’s her choice.”

**From Beverly Calder**

“I love Baker City and was honored to be chosen as mayor, according to the rules of the City Charter last January. My goal was to help the council restore our sense of community by creating more engagement and more open communication. I worked to inspire cooperation and participation and sought to bring community voices and values into each council meeting.

Our council was able to appoint volunteers to fill every commission. We chose goals focused on building partnerships, improved livability, increased communication, and sustainable funding. We adopted rules to include more citizen participation and courtesy amongst the council. We did all of this in the first 100 days of my term as Mayor.

It was obvious there had been coordination between members of council and the city manager when Councilor Guyer made a motion on April 11th- in the last 5 minutes of a 3 hour meeting - to remove me as mayor. His stated reason was because he did not approve of a letter to the editor I had written, a letter written to inform the citizens of discussions coming before the council. In fact, Dean Guyer told me last fall that his priority was to protect City Manager Jon Cannon.

The council has public meetings so that the community has time to review the items of discussion and participate in the decisions before the council. The council rules define how items are placed on the agenda and how the community may participate. The rules of council also address the matter of the council supporting decisions made by the council.

On Tuesday night, I made a decision to stand up against the bullying that does not belong in our council chambers. I felt I had an obligation to every little girl, every young woman and every person that does not feel represented, nor respected, in our community to have the courage to speak up and take a stand.

I will continue to serve my community with honor and I will always strive to represent the best interests of the entire community.”

Additional comments from councilors will be added as they are received.

A video of the short council meeting can be found at [https://bakercityor.portal.civicclerk.com/event/167/media?fbclid=IwAR2nkzk7XARj1b4P8e4mU4te\\_2wQoytBbUOBe\\_5b0ZlY9uq4PCCxmksAN\\_I](https://bakercityor.portal.civicclerk.com/event/167/media?fbclid=IwAR2nkzk7XARj1b4P8e4mU4te_2wQoytBbUOBe_5b0ZlY9uq4PCCxmksAN_I)

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM June 16, 2023

