

KHKF -Issues and Programs- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2022

1. ISSUE: OTEC donates \$1500 to PRRFPD

GUEST: Oregon Trail Electric

DESCRIPTION: In appreciation of the crucial services that rural fire departments provide for the safety of the communities of eastern Oregon, The OTEC Member Foundation was proud to donate \$1,500 to the Powder River Rural Fire Protection District (PRRFPD) to help support its efforts to build a new helipad.

The OTEC Member Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, oversees Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's (OTEC) charitable programs supporting OTEC members, families and communities in Baker, Grant, Harney, and Union counties.

"OTEC and the OTEC Member Foundation place a high value on strengthening our partnerships with rural fire departments and districts across our service territory. Especially as we enter wildfire season, it is critical that we partner with them to help increase resources for responding to emergencies and help one another protect the communities we call home." said Lea Hoover, OTEC's Director of Member and Strategic Services who is also the Executive Director of the Foundation.

The money donated comes from The Foundation's Member-to-Member Bill Round Up Program, where OTEC member-owners can round their monthly energy bill up to the nearest dollar. It is a voluntary program run by OTEC and has no effect on OTEC's rates. OTEC members who sign up for the program donate an average of \$12 a year or can elect to donate a one-time specified amount.

The Powder River Rural Fire Protection District is working on building a new helipad for LifeFlight and firefighting resources. PRRFPD is an all-volunteer fire and EMS provider for the residents and visitors to the Sumpter area.

"On behalf of our volunteers, thank you to OTEC, and all of you the members that round up!" said Wes Morgan, Chief of the PRRFPD. "This donation, along with a safety grant from Special Districts of Oregon, and donated labor from volunteers, will add another tool to serve our area for firefighting and emergency responses."

The OTEC Member Foundation plans to continue using funds from the Member-to-Member Bill Round Up Program to donate to rural fire departments and other local responders in the future. If you would like to sign up for Member-to-Member Bill Round Up, please call OTEC at 541-523-3616.

About the cooperative

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative that serves 60,000 residents in four counties in Eastern Oregon. Headquartered in Baker City, OTEC has district offices in Burns, John Day, and La Grande.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*July 5\*\*\*

2. ISSUE: Elgin City Council voted on measures for November Election

GUEST: City Administrator Brock Eckstein

DESCRIPTION: At this week's Elgin City Council meeting the council voted to move a couple of new measures to the November ballot. According to City Administered Brock Eckstein the first one will be making the City Administrator job an appointed job instead of an elected job, which means that the city council would be able to appoint and hire and administer. Eckstein notes that Elgin is unique as they are one of the only cities in the state that holds an election for its administrator.

A couple of the other measures will include one that will enable people wishing to run for City Council to pay a \$50 fee rather than collect 20 signatures to get their name on the ballot.

Then the other measure will be changing the title of Recorder Administrator to Administrator to help with that job search when the council can hire an administrator.

Anyone who many have questions can contact the Elgin City Hall or speak with a councilor.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*July 15\*\*\*

3. ISSUE: Health Advisory Issues for Brownlee Reservoir

GUEST: Southwest District Health

DESCRIPTION: Based on Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) testing and Idaho's public health advisory guidelines, Southwest District Health (SWDH) is issuing a health advisory for Brownlee Reservoir. SWDH urges residents to use caution when recreating in or near the water. Recent samples taken from the water body indicate high concentrations of toxin-producing cyanobacteria, which can be harmful to people, pets, and livestock. Those with liver or kidney damage are at an increased risk of illness.

When recreating near or in Brownlee Reservoir, take the following precautions while the advisory is in effect:

- Avoid swimming, wading, or other activities in the water. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water. Do not drink or cook with water containing a bloom. Boiling and filtering the water does not remove the toxins and can increase the risk of adverse health effects.
- Wash hands thoroughly in clean water after handling fish caught in water experiencing a bloom. Cyanotoxins can accumulate in fish and the risk to people is being researched. Clean and wash fish thoroughly in uncontaminated water and dispose of internal organs before consumption. [If you choose to eat](#)

fish from this area, filet the fish and remove all fat, skin, and organs before cooking.

- Clean skin or pet fur with clean water as soon as possible after any water contact.

The public will be advised when it is likely the concern no longer exists.

Symptoms of cyanotoxin exposure include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or wheezing. More severe symptoms affecting the liver and nervous system may result from ingesting water. If symptoms persist, consult your healthcare provider.

Pets, livestock, and wildlife can get sick, or even die, within minutes to days after cyanotoxin exposure. Dogs are often the first affected because they are more likely to swim in or drink contaminated water or lick contaminated water or bloom material off their fur. If your pets or livestock have been in the water, immediately wash them with clean water to keep them from licking cyanobacteria off their bodies. Seek veterinary care immediately if your pets or livestock seem sick after going in or drinking the water.

Cyanobacteria are a natural part of Idaho's water bodies. When temperatures rise, their populations can bloom and toxic chemical compounds, or cyanotoxins, can be released into the water. Blooms can vary in appearance, and may look like mats, foam, spilled paint, or surface scum, and have a foul odor. SWDH works closely with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) and the DEQ in identifying, responding to, and monitoring cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms (HABS).

For more information about harmful algal blooms, visit DEQ's website at <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/> or DHW's website at <https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/recreational-water-health-advisories>.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*Aug 9\*\*\*

#### 4. ISSUE: MERA Red Apple Project

GUEST: Union County Commissioner Paul Andres

DESCRIPTION: Forest health management is an ongoing process and can involve a mix of both direct and indirect options for keeping lands safe and pristine. Going with the former plan, Union County's Red Apple Project will be providing needed thinning and brush clearing for the Mount Emily Recreational area upon its resumption.

According to Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes, the goals of the project are to reduce fire fuels, increase forest health and maintain the park-like recreational setting of MERA. Notably, the project is providing fire breaks. As explained by Anderes:

“It’s what’s called a strategic fuel break. It runs across the very top, North and South. What that’s designed to do is, if a fire starts at the bottom and moves to the ridgeline on Mount Emily, they’ll be able to have a defensible space and go further West and vice versa if it starts on the federal ground.”

Red Apple is being overseen by county public works director Doug Wright, who is coordinating with the forester and contractor assigned to the project. Work at MERA is broken into two distinct phases, with phase 1, completed last winter, involving the strategic fuel break. Phase 2 will see work finished on the roughly two hundred remaining acres of the project, including chipping of some slash piles.

Originally, this second phase was also scheduled for the winter in order to limit ground damage by working over frozen terrain. However, due to problems encountered with ground thaw in phase 1, the remaining clearing was rescheduled to the end of summer. Anderes explained in further detail, stating:

“We were trying to avoid disturbing the use of it. We did it in the wintertime. We learned a lot, and that it was a mistake. The plan was to work over snow, but we didn’t realize at the time that the base was not frozen, followed by one of the wettest springs we’ve had on record. The other thing is that the masticating head chews up the brush and scatters it in one fell swoop, but they weren’t able to get as close to the ground as they needed to. So not only is it unsightly but it’s potentially dangerous.”

To compensate for any issues or damages caused by Red Apple, all funds generated from logging during the project will be reinvested into MERA. In addition, the Union County commissioners voted previously to invest \$300,000 dollars received under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into MERA for both acquisitions and forest upkeep.

Once clearing begins, visitors to MERA should expect portions to be closed off entirely for safety, while others may still be open to non-motorized use. MERA as a whole will remain open. “We understand it’s an inconvenience. My hope is it’s a temporary pain for long term gain,” Anderes noted. Closures officially begin August 29.

For closure updates, visit: [Union County – Oregon \(union-county.org\)](https://www.union-county.org)

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*Aug 23\*\*\*

5. ISSUE: La Grande PD to hold Drug Take Back Day  
GUEST: La Grande PD

DESCRIPTION: **La Grande** (Release from the La Grande Police Department) On Saturday, October 29, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the La Grande Police Department, partnering with the Union County Safe Communities Coalition, Northeast Oregon

Network, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration will give the public its opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous, expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to the La Grande Safeway parking lot, located on the east end of Adams Avenue at 2111 Adams Avenue. (We cannot accept liquids or needles, only pills or patches.) The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

- Last Spring, Americans turned in 721,093lbs of prescription drugs at 5,144 collections sites put together by state and local law enforcement partners. During this event on April 30, 2022, Oregon alone turned in 5,988lbs of prescription drugs.
- The La Grande Police Department hosts a Spring and Fall take back event and maintains a drug drop box in the lobby of the police department that is available 24/7. You can also use the drop box at Red Cross Drug Store, and Rite Aid.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.

For more information about the disposal of prescription drugs or about the October 29th Take Back Day event, go to [www.DEATakeBack.com](http://www.DEATakeBack.com) or contact the La Grande Police Department at 541-963-1017.

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*Sept 6\*\*\*

6. ISSUE: Baker School Board update

GUEST: Superintendent Erin Lair

DESCRIPTION: Baker School District Superintendent Erin Lair spoke with Elkhorn Media Group's Shannon McKone late last week to give an update on some highlights from the recent Baker School Board Meeting. That interview can be found below.

(SM) Thank you for joining me, Superintendent Lair. Let's talk about some highlights from the school board meeting that took place yesterday evening.

(EL) Hi, Shannon. Our Admin Team attended last night's board meeting in person to report on how this first month of school is going in all our different buildings. Enrollment is strong, and excitement has been high as staff and students returned to a more normal school year

including lots of fun extracurricular opportunities. We heard that there were miraculously no tears on the first day of Kindergarten at BELC, that our middle school has a soccer team this year, that the staff and students at BHS are enjoying the presence of 27 year-long exchange students in addition to 10 students from Hautlieu (“Holier”) School on the Isle of Jersey this month, as well as so much more. I’ve been able to spend some good time in all the buildings, and it’s a goal of mine to be in all of our schools at least once per month. I also plan to attend at least one athletic and one non-athletic activity each month that scheduled activities exist; and right now, there is a lot to choose from. I recommend keeping an eye on the school calendars on our website, [baker5j.org](http://baker5j.org), as well as our Baker School District Facebook pages for opportunities to join in the fun.

(SM) It sounds like a great start to the school year. What other topics were covered at the board meeting that might be of interest to the community?

(EL) We also talked about our seismic and bond projects. The gym renovation at Baker Middle School should be complete in mid-October, and there is a lot of excitement around its re-opening.

Also, as we shift to a Construction Manager/General Contractor delivery method for our remaining bond projects, the current request for proposals has a deadline of September 29, and we had 5 firms from Oregon and Idaho attend a mandatory pre-bid meeting earlier this week.

You can listen to a recording of the board meeting on our website: [www.baker5j.org](http://www.baker5j.org)

TIME: KHKF MORNING NEWS 6:00AM-9:00AM \*\*Sept 26\*\*\*