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School District Reaches Out to Local Businesses
With Potential Construction Opportunities

Baker School District has held several informational meetings for local businesses to outline potential opportunities if the proposed $48 million capital construction school bond is approved in the Nov. 6 election. In these gatherings, project managers from the Wenaha Group talked about various avenues where local contractors, tradesmen, suppliers and hospitality businesses might benefit.

“By meeting with businesses prior to the election, the district will be ready to move ahead quickly if the bond is approved,” said Scott Rogers, senior project manager with Wenaha Group.

Ten other Oregon school districts are pursuing bonds this November. “If you’re looking to be competitive in a bid market, timing is everything,” Rogers said.

“By being proactive the District will be in a position to start construction in summer of 2019. Starting construction as soon as possible creates significant value, compared to starting in 2020 with potential increase in labor and material costs,” Witty stated.

Rogers and Cassie Hibbert, Wenaha project managers, have met with Baker County Economic Development, the Small Business Development Center and the Baker County Chamber of Commerce to explain potential projects. Additional outreach meetings will be scheduled if the bond is approved.
“The intent, if the proposed bond is approved, is to package projects in ways that would allow local contractors to bid on them,” said Rogers. These opportunities would be in accordance with state procurement laws, which requires a fair bidding process. Rogers said assistance would be offered for local businesses to learn the process for bidding on public projects.

Proposals from potential architects are due Nov. 6. If the bond is approved a committee, including two members of the Bond Oversight Committee, will review the proposals and recommend a selection. “Early planning is critical,” Rogers said, “because many districts are seeking bonds in Oregon and Washington, which means many potential projects will need architects.”

“We want the best of the best because that's what Baker deserves,” Hibbert said.

If the bond is approved, construction would begin on some projects as early as June of 2019. All projects would be planned to create the fewest possible disruptions for staff and students.

An 11-member Bond Oversight Committee would monitor the planned improvements, progress, schedule and costs, if the bond is approved.

**About Baker School District 5J**

Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) in Baker City, OR, is the largest of three rural school districts in Baker County, serving 1,700 students and employing over 235 educators and staff. District elementary schools include Brooklyn Primary School, Haines Elementary, Keating Elementary School, and South Baker Intermediate. Baker Middle School and two high schools, Baker High School and Eagle Cap Innovative High School, are also part of BSD. Additionally, BSD sponsors two charter schools, Baker Web Academy and Baker Early College, each offering teacher-supported online education. BSD provides next generation education for the future of Eastern Oregonians and launched Baker Technical Institute (BTI), a career and technical program that partners with regional employers and industry experts to provide an innovative education in hands-on fields. BSD believes strong schools are the foundation of strong and vibrant communities and is committed to prepare students to become successful life-long learner.

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The Baker 5J schools exist to be the center of community vitality eliminating the barriers for gratifying individual educational experiences in order to have capable contributing citizens with character.