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Buell Gonzales will begin his new job as athletic director for Baker School District on July 1. He comes from Brookings, where he has served as district athletic director for the last seven years.

Brookings-Harbor School District is similar in size to Baker 5J, offering a complement of similar athletic activities to a combined middle school - high school enrollment of 825 students.

“The team was looking for specific experiences, philosophy and practices,” said Mark Witty, Baker 5J Superintendent. “We believe Buell Gonzales Jr. has those key qualities.”

As the district athletic director for Brookings-Harbor, Gonzales developed a 360 approach to coach evaluation, including documented practice observations, coach goal setting and reviewing feedback from assistant coaches, students and parents. He added tournaments for multiple sports “to make them bigger and bring more people to the community,” he said. Gonzales also worked on facility development, got involved leadership in OSAA and created a systematic plan of professional development for coaches.

Gonzales, 44, is native to Eastern Oregon. Born in Spray, his family moved to Monument and Long Creek before settling in Prairie City where his dad coached high school boys’ basketball. The year he graduated (1993) their team won the state 1A title at a tournament held in Baker City.

“I'm ready to hit the ground running,” he said. “I'm super excited to be back on that side of the state.”

According to the ODE state report card, Brookings Harbor’s 9th grade on track percentage (93%) is well above average. “We were impressed with the focus Gonzales puts on academic success,” said Witty. “He personally follows up with students who struggle to maintain their grades.”
“The Baker Community Sports Complex Board is looking forward to working with the new District Athletic Director,” said Mike Rudi, board chair. “The newly expanded Athletic Director position will be a great asset to further the Sport Complex Board's and District's goal of attracting youth and adult sports tournaments and to increase overall community usage of the Complex.”

As athletic director in Baker, Gonzales will be responsible for athletics from grades 7 to 12. His duties will include scheduling games, overseeing and supervising coaches, and working with OSAA. He will also promote and organize multiple athletic and community sports events within the district with the goal of economic development for the community.

“Buell Gonzales comes highly recommended by his peers and supervisors,” Witty stated. “It is clear he will bring energy and passion to the athletic director position and will leverage his experience to serve our community well.”

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

The Baker 5J schools enhance community vitality by providing opportunities for rewarding, individual educational experiences.
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.