

BECON 10/20/23

Guests:

Kim Lewis brought her husband Pat

Mike Bazemore MSUB Athletic Director is our guest speaker

Announcements:

-Tanya Tweeten announced that the Halloween party for the club will be on October 27th at the Legion in the same room as breakfast. There will be a Halloween costume party with a Western theme. Check your email for more information that was sent out. There will be prizes.

-Dina announced the Ranch Rodeo was a 5pm show up time and they needed half to stay for the dance in the dirt afterwards. Also, don't forget about our tree for the Festival of Trees. For the Festival of Trees the club will be doing a Nutcracker themed tree in red, white, and blue. Donations are needed by the 28th of November. If you don't want to shop, give money and they will shop for you. And all the event are now on the website.

-Bill Kennedy announce they are looking for volunteers to work the Festival of Trees, which will be November 30, December 1, 2. They need about 100 volunteers.

Veterans Day there will be a celebration at the Legion with Friends of the National Cemetery and the American Legion Post 4. They will be honoring WWII Vets. The guest speaker is the head of the State of Montana Veterans Affairs in Helena. Taps will play at 11:00am and lunch will follow.

-Kim Lewis announced that the United Way is collecting socks for homeless friends. If you have socks or want to donate, contact Kim and she can collect them.

Dress a Child is short a few members to complete the sign ups. There is a \$150 budget per kid and breakfast is served after. This take place on Veterans Day (Nov 11) as well. So breakfast and lunch are covered if you hit the two events that day!

Mike Bazemore from MSUB was our guest speaker today. He is in his third year as Athletic Director for MSUB, and among all of the responsibilities he has, administration, compliance, facility management and fund raising are all part of the many hats he wears. Mike is a very accomplished and educated person with 2 bachelors degrees, 4-yr letter for Varsity Football at Michigan State, and he attended a Detroit Lions mini camp. He also played for the Outlaws in Billings. His wife Jamie and him have two children and have lived in Billings for a total of 13 years.

Mike explained that MSUB is a D2 school. The Triathlon is their unique sport, and the Cheer team is growing in intensity. Those are two of the stand out sports featured at MSUB.

MSUB is a Billings Institution. It is considered a commuter campus. Their goal is to be transformative. One of the things Mike shared is that “the experience of the athletes doesn't come at the expense of the admins.” He wants everyone to have a quality experience.

The thing he likes the most about his job is the interactions he has with the people. Even though at times, that can be the most taxing on his energy.

MSUB is part of the Great NorthWest Athletic Conference, which includes Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, and one school in Canada. Mike is a tough love kind of guy, and he teaches that the students need to get their studies done. They have a 3.2 GPA priority. Their teams have won a lot of awards and his goal is to continue to grow the school into a premier D2 school.

Fundraising is a large part of the job. He has \$531k donor and sponsor dollars every year that needs to be raised, and last year he had 1172 donors. The students are also expected to do community service hours. They have about 225 each year. They will read to elementary schools, volunteer for sporting events like track meets, etc.

Expenses are large when it comes to teams and athletics. Travel is the most expensive part of the department. Also, personnel limits can be challenging at times, and everyone has to wear multiple hats. It's not as simple as it used to be either. Now in addition to physical success and academic success, they also have to keep their eye on the students' mental health as well.

What's New and Upcoming

Rimrock Rivalry is a competition between MSUB and Rocky to see which school has the most cumulative trophies and wins. This is meant to build each other up, and not tear each other down. Iron sharpens iron. What is new is the turf on the soccer field, and the beer garden that our club has been volunteering for. The beer proceeds go to operational expenses for the Athletic department. They are wanting to do more outreach to places like Columbus to do Basketball camps and events in the surrounding areas because they are all part of our region.

They are hosting a 10-team women's basketball tournament in November so that will hopefully bring in some good support.

They are having a Halloween party on October 27th at the Pub Station.

Someone asked if we will ever get a football team again, and Mike said that he would love to have one, but they require a ton of funding. About \$15-20 Million would be needed to seed the team, facilities, and resources needed. Their current budget is only about \$4.5M now. It is a very expensive sport to start and keep running.