

Local

Variable speed limit meeting

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Several of the ODOT employees as well as OSP officers agreed drivers are aware of adverse conditions as they are occurring in the afore mentioned areas, in other words it is obvious conditions require slower speeds to be safe, but all too often drivers drop down into the valley and assume conditions are no longer treacherous.

Unfortunately, that is usually not the case. Clark explained how the system is designed to work.

The 30-mile stretch is divided into three, 10-mile sections.

A sensor placed in each section controls what happens in regards to the speed displayed, including any message as to why that limit was adjusted, for example ice or low visibility.

Clark, as well as Don Fine and Dan Fine, who have been instrumental in inputting information into the system, agree that in the future more sensors will only contribute to the usefulness of the project because as it stands now a sensor could be detecting ice on the road surface triggering a speed change that may reflect on a sign several miles away from the sensor where there may not in fact be ice.

There was agreement

that some improvements may need to happen in the future.

Triggers for the changes in speed was another topic of discussion especially in areas where trucks are required to stop and chain up as road congestion is another reason that may trigger speed changes.

OSP questioned the ability to manually change the signs based on conditions they may be encountering while on patrol, triggering an in-depth discussion about what needs to happen in a situation such as that.

It was decided that local dispatch would need to be contacted or regional dispatch as in the case of OSP who could then in turn get in touch with ODOT for evaluation as to whether a manual override of the system is necessary.

Another question raised was how local agencies would know if the signs changed. Joey Jayo from the Baker County Sheriff Department asked if the information would be available on the ODOT tripchek website.

The answer to that question was no, that is not currently an availability but is a good option for the future.

However, law enforcement can scan the ODOT radio channel for information and all were given a website that could also be checked.

It was also discussed that text and email notifications were an option. Enforcement of citations written was also cause for concern among law enforcement. Data pertaining to a specific time and location are recorded and stored.

If for any reason law enforcement needs that data, for example if a citation is contested, access to that specific data will be granted.

It was also noted by law enforcement and ODOT, both heard concerns from the community that the overhead signs also housed cameras.

That rumor was put to rest with a clear and concise no that this was not the case.

It should also be noted that roadside speed limit signs have been removed in the VSL area where the overhead signs are to ease confusion as speed limit changes.

All other roadside signs remain and signs stating that a driver is entering a variable speed limit area have been placed both east and west bound before entering the area.

Roadside signs are also visible stating when drivers are leaving the VSL area. Concern was raised that more signage was needed at freeway on ramps as drivers are entering the VSL area via a connecting state highway and may not realize they are entering a

VSL area.

This being the first of its kind project in the state ODOT's Ace Clark said that he would "Urge patients" as the system is "Not perfect."

ODOT is hopeful that with the success of this VSL project, after working out initial kinks, others in the state will soon follow, specifically mentioned were Boardman to Pendleton and Mount Hood to Portland.

Don Fine and Dan Fine of ODOT indicated that they did have some spare parts if repairs were needed and everyone from ODOT present at the meeting encouraged drivers if they encounter an issue or see something not quite right to notify dispatch immediately so that adjustments can be made promptly.

The overhead signs were hard wired to existing power as solar power in our area is not always reliable and can be sketchy.

As with every fiscal year money was allocated for this project in ODOT's yearly budget, basically in lieu of other projects such as smoothing out curves, this project was prioritized and completed.

There are also plans in the near future to add a third passing lane to the Ladd Canyon area as an ODOT project and replace a failing culvert under the freeway in that area.

Dog deaths

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Chief Wyn Lohner confirmed that at least one other citizen has come to the Department to discuss the death of a dog. However, when a citizen declines officer contact or would prefer not to have a case opened, it becomes impossible for police to assist beyond the initial discussion.

Sherman said she plans on working with the police in the hope of finding some answers, if indeed there is a poisoning problem in town.

Lohner did say that the one case they are currently investigating regarding a possible dog poisoning was likely not related to any other potential poisoning due to the specific details of that case.

Virus

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The most common symptoms are listed below, but not all patients experience every symptom or the same severity: Sore throat, malaise, lesions inside the mouth, red rash, without itching but occasionally with blistering, on the hands, feet and around the mouth, fever, irritability in infants, and loss of appetite.

The Center for Disease Control states that there is no treatment for the disease. It has a limited life span, and will run its course. CDC recommends treatment of individual symptoms, such as NSAIDS for fever and pain.

There are also no preventative measures which can be taken before an outbreak. General good hygiene practices are always helpful, such as frequent hand-washings.

The most common victims of the virus are young children. Most youngsters do not practice especially good hygiene and are less likely to protect themselves from possible contagion.

However, older children and adults are also potential victims, and may even carry the virus without experiencing any symptoms.

The duration of the illness is normally seven to 10 days. However, Mayo Clinic warns "although your child is most contagious with hand-foot-and-mouth disease during the first week of the illness, the virus can remain in his or her body for weeks after the signs and symptoms are gone. That means your child still can infect others."

Pine Eagle Charter School requires that children's spots be healed before their return to school.

Several parents elected to keep their healthy children home today, in an attempt to avoid contagion.

Candi Mader said "I'm keeping my daughter home. Don't want to risk the baby getting it also."

Jayne Shouse stated, "My daughter has a cold and I didn't want to expose her to anything else while her resistance is down."

With the five-day Thanksgiving Break beginning Wednesday, the hope is that the disease will have run its course by the time the students return on Monday.

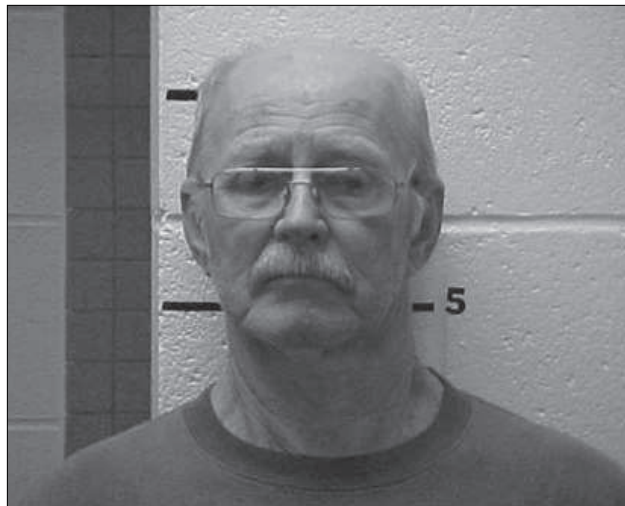


Photo courtesy of the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

David Lee Hayes

Sex offender sentenced to 14 years

On November 22, 2016, David Lee Hays (dob 1-20-1947) of 1310 C St. Baker City, OR, was sentenced to 168 months (14 years) in prison.

Hays pled guilty to one count of Unlawful Sexual penetration in the Second Degree, one count of Sexual Abuse in the First

Degree and one count of Attempted Sodomy in the First Degree.

Seven other charges were dismissed as part of plea agreement with the District Attorney's Office.

The victim was a child at the time of the offenses and is now an adult.

The victim was known to Mr. Hays.

Hays was sentenced to 75 months in prison on the Unlawful Sexual Penetration charge.

He was sentenced to 75 months in prison on the Sexual Abuse in the First Degree charge with 33 months consecutive to the Sexual Penetration charge and 42 months concurrent.

He was also sentenced to an additional 60 months for the Attempted Sodomy in the First Degree charge which also ran consecutive to the other counts.

Hays will be on post-prison supervision for 60 months following his prison terms and will be required to complete sex offender treatment and register as a sex offender upon release.

District Attorney Matt Shirlcliff said in a press release on Monday, "We wanted Mr. Hays to receive a lengthy prison sentence as a result of these crimes as they have caused significant trauma to the victim."

"It was also important for the victim to have the case resolved without a trial. The victim was very pleased with the result of the sentence."

Man shot in leg Wednesday

On November 23, 2016 at about 2:13 a.m., Baker City Police received a report from the Emergency Department at the St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City that a patient had been brought in with a gunshot wound.

Baker City Police Department (BCPD) Officers responded to the hospital and found the victim was Joshua John William Kepner, (03/16/1985), who had sustained a gunshot wound to the upper left leg. Kepner was later transported by ambulance to St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise.

At this time police believe that the wound was sustained by a bullet fired from a handgun, which was recovered, and that it occurred in the backyard of Kepner's residence at 1188 Washington Avenue in Baker City. The wound is suspected to have been self-inflicted.

The Baker County Major Crime Team was called out to investigate the shooting. Members of the Baker County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police and Baker County District Attorney's Office arrived to assist BCPD personnel.

At this time the investigation is ongoing and there have been no charges filed.

Theater auditions

Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre is proud to announce auditions for "The Odd Couple-female version" on Dec 5th and 6th at 6:00pm at the Irongate Theatre in the Basche Mall in Baker City, Ore.

Director, Leanne Hinkle is looking for six women and two men for the production which will open Feb 10th, 2017 for a two weekend run.

Even the best of friends can make the worst of roommates. Neil Simon's mismatched couple is butting heads again in this gender twist on his mega-popular 1965 comedy. It's now the 80's as messy Olive Madison and neat freak Florence Unger come to live together following their respective failed marriages. But it's a hilariously challenged pairing as these two, with the help of a circle of Trivial Pursuit-playing friends and a pair of handsome Spanish neighbors, survive three weeks as the most mismatched roommates of all time.

For further information please contact Director Leanne Hinkle at 541-554-5549.

Saint Alphonsus Foundation—Baker City Invites you to . . .

Festival of Trees 2016

Preview Among The Trees

Thursday, December 1, 2016

6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15 per person

Hors d'oeuvres

No-host Bar

Silent Auction

Gala

Friday, December 2, 2016

5:30 p.m.—11:00 p.m.

Cocktails 5:30 p.m. ~ Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$55 per person

Buffet Sit Down Dinner

No-host Bar

Silent & Live Auction

Following the auction, dance to the live music of "Wasteland Kings"

Events are held at the Baker County Event Center—2600 East Street Baker City, Oregon

☞ Tickets Available at Betty's Books, The Sycamore Tree and Saint Alphonsus Medical Center—Baker City

Family Day—Saturday, December 3, 2016

Viewing of the Trees

"Make It, Take It" ~ Sponsored by Crossroads Art Center

Photos with Santa ~ Sponsored by Baker City Kiwanis

For more information contact Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

