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Wells Fargo branch to close in the spring

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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After decades of serving the community, the Baker City Wells Fargo Bank branch, located in the Safeway building at 1205 Campbell Street, will close in May 2018, according to Boise, Idaho-based Julie Fogerson, Regional Banking Communications Assistant Vice President.

Fogerson said that earlier this year, Wells Fargo

announced the closures of 200 branches across the country in 2017, including Baker City, with more closures planned for 2018.

The Baker City closure—the only one in the region Fogerson is aware of—coincides with the termination of the branch's lease, in May.

"We continually evaluate our branch network, and make adjustments based on customer use, market factors, economic

trends, and competitor actions; this process leads to both expansion, and closures. Our long-term strategic approach hasn't changed, while the way customers are doing business has shifted," she said.

Fogerson continued, "This is not an easy decision, or one that we take lightly. We continually look to service our customers in the way that they choose to do business with us, offering many ways to

bank, including phone contact 24 hours a day, mail, online, and by mobile app (application)."

She said that Wells Fargo is exploring options to leave an ATM behind, and the company will be notifying branch customers by mail in the coming months of the closure, as well as posting signage at the branch.

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Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

The branch, located inside the local Safeway, will close next May.

Cougar spotted near Pine Creek, Hunt Mountain



Photos courtesy of Shelly Shively.

These photos were captured on the trail cam positioned in the driveway of the Mellott family up Pine Creek outside Baker City.

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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Some recent complaints of cougar sightings in the Pine Creek and Hunt Mountain areas southwest of Haines prompted Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) District Biologist Brian Ratliff to pass on the suggestion that the sooner a problem cougar is discovered and reported, the easier the solution will be.

Earlier this month, Ratliff, of the Baker District Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office, said that ODFW received information "...in kind of a roundabout way..." of sightings of a cougar in the Pine Creek area, that had killed a deer on private property. There was significant chatter about cougar activity on social media, but Ratliff said there was a delay in advising ODFW of the situation.

"While that's a good way to get information out, it's not a good way to inform us," he said, noting that he isn't the biggest fan. "I don't keep track of social media, I'll be honest. I don't like the negativity, so, I stay away from it."

Jerry Boyd was joined by others online in getting the word out via Facebook posts.

He said that a neighbor in the Pine Creek/Hunt Mountain area was told by ODFW that a cougar was living in a gravel pit area that borders several properties (this was news to Ratliff, who said that's an odd area for a cougar to be living in), and that another neighbor on the north side of Hunt Mountain Lake saw cougar scat in his

domestic cat's feed bowls, among other posts.

Social media comments on the subject predictably ranged from leaving cougars alone, to shooting them, and there were many concerns voiced online back and forth, but by the time ODFW was contacted to lend assistance, which involved removing the attractant—what was left of the deer carcass, in this case—there wasn't much else to do from the agency's point of view.

Citing human safety as one of the reasons for ODFW to remove a cougar, Ratliff said, for example, "If someone had reported, 'Hey, I've got a dead deer, not very far away from the houses,'" at the time, killed by a cougar, "...we would go ahead and remove it. That cougar came back and set on that deer multiple times—it moved it." If it had been reported earlier, he said, "We could have very easily removed that cat. We could have found it, and removed it...But, since it wasn't reported to us until well after the fact, at that point, that cat's not even there."

Ratliff noted issues in the past with cougars in the Pine Creek area. "We've had to put cougars down before there. We've had multiple cats in that area. It's simply because of the fact that you have this great habitat there—you have whitetail deer and turkeys, and all these food sources. There's plenty of cover for animals to move about freely, and not be seen," he said.

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Nilsson takes plea

On November 20, 2017, Baker City Council Member Adam Nilsson (dob 4/13/1971) of 307 Hillcrest Dr. Baker City, Oregon pled guilty to one count of Criminal Mischief in the Third Degree.

As part of a plea agreement with the Baker County District Attorney's Office one count of Criminal Trespass while in Possession of a Firearm was dismissed.

Nilsson was sentenced to one-year bench probation. He was ordered to pay a \$150 fine and complete 50 hours of community service.

As part of his probation, Nilsson is prohibited from entering the lime plant area and is not allowed to apply graffiti to any property that is not his own.

Nilsson admitted during the hearing that he should have inquired further into the status of the no trespassing signs at the lime plant and that he should not have applied paint to the lime plant property.

"The County will continue to pursue charges for individuals who apply graffiti to property unlawfully. We have also started stricter enforcement for people who enter the lime plant area. This area is not safe and the County Commissioners do not want people at the lime plant for that reason," said District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff.

At around 8:40 p.m. on August 1, Nilsson was cited for criminal trespass while in possession of a firearm, and second degree criminal mischief at the old Lime plant near Huntington. Nilsson's companion, Ashley Schroder (30) of Portland, was also cited with trespass.

Sheriff Travis Ash said the citation happened while Deputy Gabe Maldonado was on patrol through the area, which lies just off I-84. Nilsson, who has a concealed carry permit was in possession of a firearm and spray cans of paint.

Suspect drives 60 mph in town

On November 19, 2017 at about 3:31 a.m., Baker City Police attempted to stop a 1997 Chevrolet pickup driven by Samuel Madison for excessive speed as it was travelling south on Cherry Street, near the Church Street intersection.

Madison refused to stop and drove at varying speeds up to an estimated 60 miles per hour for approximately 10 blocks, before finally coming to a stop on Balm Street near Auburn Avenue.

At the conclusion of the pursuit, Samuel surrendered to pursuing officers and was taken into custody without further incident.

Arrested at Balm near Auburn was Samuel Madison, 07/07/1981, for Attempt to Elude and DUII.

Friday Mostly sunny and mild. High near 50. Friday Night: Increasing clouds. Lows near freezing.

Saturday Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Highs near 50. Chance of precipitation is 40%. Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy with scattered rain showers. Lows in the upper 30s.

Sunday Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Highs in the mid 50s. Chance of precipitation is 40%. Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy with scattered rain showers. Lows in the mid 30s.

The Fire, Weather & Avalanche Center forecast:

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