



The Baker County Press

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Train strikes car in Haines

• FOUR INDIVIDUALS INJURED

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Around 9:04 p.m. on Monday night, Baker County Consolidated Dispatch received a call of a train versus passenger car collision in Haines.

There were no fatalities. The accident occurred at the crossing located at 4th Street and the Anthony Lakes Highway.

Four individuals, Cade Browne, 19, Samantha

Sexton, 19, Jacob Sexton, 18, and Sally Blair, 21, were in a white 2015 Dodge Dart driven by Browne, when, according to Sheriff Travis Ash, "A train was stopped on the railroad tracks located at Front Street and Fourth Street in Haines, Oregon, with the crossing arms lowered."

Three of the victims are from Haines, except for Browne who resides in North Powder.

Ash said that the vehicle "attempted to cross the railroad tracks and was struck by a second train traveling southbound."

Personnel from the Bak-

er County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police, Baker City Police Department, Haines Fire and Baker City Ambulance responded to the scene.

At least one of the female victims was initially found ejected from the vehicle on the tracks with severe head injuries.

Lifeflight out of Ontario was launched, with an arrival time of 52 minutes from that point.

EMTs responded quickly, taking victims to Saint Alphonsus in Baker City for treatment.

Another ambulance was later requested, and after some delay, arrived on

scene in Haines slightly ahead of Lifeflight into Baker City, and transported a fourth victim, the other male, also to the hospital with head and hip injuries according to scanner traffic that night.

The two females were subsequently Lifeflighted to Boise.

There were no injuries among the train crew.

Train traffic resumed at roughly 1:30 a.m., and the following morning, Union Pacific crews were on site evaluating the crossing.

Investigators said that alcohol does not appear to have been a factor in this accident.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Union Pacific crews conducted inspections at the crossing Tuesday morning.

Beaver trapped, shot in city



Photo courtesy of ODFW.

Beavers are the largest rodent in North America, weighing up to 40 lbs. Trapped to near-extinction in the 1800s, they now maintain a healthy population, including along the Powder River.

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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Earlier this month, Charles Risley, 75, of 3385 Kirkway Drive, shot an adult male beaver behind his home, with what was most likely a high-powered air rifle, according to Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner, among other authorities.

The beaver had been suffering from a rotting hind leg, caused by a trap that was still attached.

Lohner said the incident happened on Sunday, December 10, at about 4:10 p.m., and when officers first responded, the Oregon State Police (OSP) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) were contacted, because the beaver is a "fur-bearing animal," a protected species that involves special regulations, regarding hunting and trapping.

Lohner said, "Apparently, Fish and Wildlife wasn't concerned about shooting it, because it had a trap, and it was suffering."

ODFW Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff said, "If I had walked up there and saw that animal like that, I would have euthanized it. I'm telling you, I saw it, and I would have done the exact same thing."

Ratliff said that the beaver had an old trap still attached to a hind leg, a trap that had been tied down, and the animal managed to free the trap somehow, and carry it off.

"It had been there for a very long time—the bone was broken, and the leg was rotting—so, the animal was clearly suffering," he said.

SEE BEAVER PAGE 3

Former rural fire chief indicted

Last Thursday, a Deschutes County Grand Jury charged former Baker Rural Fire Protection District Chief Dan Weitz, age 60, with the crimes of theft by deception and official misconduct in the first degree.

The charges arose from

Weitz's purchase of a self-contained breathing apparatus compressor from the Bend Fire Department.

The State alleges that Weitz represented to the Bend Fire Department that he was purchasing the compressor for use by the

Baker Rural Fire Protection District when in fact he was purchasing it for his own personal use. Because the \$5,000 compressor was purportedly being sold for use by the Baker Rural Fire Protection District the Bend Fire Department sold

it to Weitz for a \$4,000 discount.

Weitz is presumed innocent and has the opportunity to contest these allegations starting at his first court hearing on January 11, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

Arrests made in two robberies

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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Local law enforcement officers had their hands full last Sunday with two separate burglaries / robberies at two local businesses.

By mid-afternoon, the suspects in both incidents were in custody.

PIZZA HUT

On December 17 at approximately 12:30 p.m., Christopher Lee Scott, age 33 of Aurora, Oregon, entered the Baker City Pizza Hut on Campbell Street, and demanded money while indicating to employees there that he had a knife.

Scott stole an unknown amount of cash and a cell phone.

Baker City Police officers responded to the scene and with the help of an employee were able to develop a suspect immediately.

The suspect and vehicle information were passed along to other local law enforcement agencies and at approximately 1:50 p.m., OSP Trooper Eddie Mercado located and Tim Zinn stopped the car on I- 84 near the 302 exit.

Scott was taken into custody without incident and lodged at the Baker County Jail on charges of Robbery II and Theft III.

Additionally, BCPD has seized the suspect's vehicle and a search warrant is pending.



Photo courtesy of the BCSO.

Christopher Lee Scott.

SPENCE INDUSTRIAL

Earlier that same day at approximately 8:38 a.m., Baker City Police Officers were dispatched to a reported burglary at Spence Industrial on Broadway Ave in Baker City.

Officers discovered that items with an estimated value between \$5,000 and \$7,500 had been stolen.

Officers were able to speak with a witness who provided the license plate number of the suspect's vehicle, a silver-colored Dodge Neon.



Photo courtesy of the BCSO.

Ian Eastland.

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Friday Partly sunny, becoming mostly cloudy with a 30-40% chance of afternoon snow showers. Highs in the upper 20s. Southwest winds around 8-16 mph.

Saturday Mostly sunny with highs in the mid 20s. Northwest winds around 5-10 mph. Saturday Night: Partly cloudy with a lows around 9. South to southwest winds around 5-10 mph.

Sunday Mostly cloudy with highs in the low 20s. Chance of snow showers. Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy with a lows near 7 and a 40% chance of snow showers.

The Fire, Weather & Avalanche Center forecast:

Our forecast made possible by this generous sponsor:

Official weather provider for The Baker County Press.

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