



Good Shepherd Health Care System/Contributed Photo
Kimberly and Richard Low pose for a photo with their newborn daughter, Baylor, who was born at 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 1, 2021, at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.

New Year's baby an early surprise for parents

Hermiston's first baby of 2021 was due Jan. 10

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A Hermiston couple welcomed their new baby daughter, Baylor Addison Low, to the world on the evening of New Year's Day in Hermiston.

Baylor was born at 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 1, at Good Shepherd Medical Center, making her the hospital's first baby of 2021. She is the Lows' second child, the first being their daughter Parker, a 3-year-old.

"I'm just excited and looking forward to a fresh start to a new year and the memories we'll make as a family of four," said Kimberly Low, 28, Baylor's mother.

Baylor was due Jan. 10, but when Kimberly Low had to be induced for a couple days due to her high blood pressure, the Lows knew that Baylor was coming sooner than they thought.

"Now I have a family member that's born on a holiday," said Richard Low, Baylor's father, a 32-year-old who works as a quality assurance manager for

Grain Craft Inc. in Pendleton. "I don't (know) what to expect from that, whether that will make it weird, if you have to plan harder, or if it'll be easier to remember the birthday."

Richard Low said that when he received the call to go to the hospital on Dec. 31, 2020, he grew excited that his daughter might be born on New Year's Day.

"It's amazing that you're entrusted with a new life," said Richard Low, a longtime resident of Umatilla County who grew up in Pilot Rock. "It's kind of humbling and overwhelming that you have to take care of a human life. It's very joyous, you know. It's the can't-wipe-the-smile-off-your-face kind of joy."

Kimberly Low is looking forward to teaching her daughter how to find joy in the small things in life, just like what they have shared with their daughter Parker — riding scooters, playing with chalk and eating popsicles in the driveway.

"Our daughter, right now, is the happiest kid that I look at," Richard Low said of Parker. "I would like the same thing for (Baylor). To enjoy the innocence of childhood and to grow up to be great."

UAS industry grows despite pandemic

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — While it has had devastating effects on other business sectors, Pendleton's unmanned aerial systems industry wasn't grounded.

Darryl Abling, the city's range manager, said operations never really slowed down during the pandemic as social distancing didn't really prevent UAS companies from running test flights.

Abling said total operations were up from 2019 and he expects them to reach a new annual high of 5,000-7,000 test flights in 2021.

He added that both public and private hangars are being built to accommodate customers and a UAS industrial park is nearly complete.

Abling said the total number of jobs now concentrated at the range is now just under 100, he said. While some are based in Pendleton, others are commuting in from elsewhere.

A veteran of aerospace giant Northrop Grumman, Abling said it's not unusual in the aviation industry for employees to commute in from far-flung locales to go to work.

Pendleton is building a UAS industrial park under the idea that it could lead to a UAS manufacturing facility in the future, a prospect that could lead to a significant jobs boost at the range. Abling said Pendleton has a few leads on companies interested in manufacturing, but even if it doesn't come together, the range should remain sustainable.

Abling said it also isn't a bad sign when there's turnover at the range. Last year, the range lost prominent customers Airbus and PAE.

Abling said residents should expect a fair amount of coming or going at a range, whether it's because a project is intentionally short term or a company simply isn't able to make their UAS idea work.

"They fail for a variety of reasons," he said. "It's a

hard industry to break into." Unencumbered by millions of dollars of debt that was wiped away by federal stimulus designated for COVID-19 relief, Airport Manager Steve Chrisman said he was bullish on the future of the airport.

Besides the growth of the UAS range, Chrisman spoke about a few other developments at the airport.

The Pendleton airport hasn't had an airport rental car supplier since Hertz left town following former air service provider SeaPort's bankruptcy declaration in 2016.

While it's not a full-fledged office, Chrisman said Enterprise Rent-A-Car will be installing a dropbox for car rentals within the next few months. Boutique Air, the city's current passenger air service provider, will continue to maintain its own fleet of rental cars, but Chrisman said Enterprise will give people who land in Pendleton more long-range options.

Chrisman said Makad

Corp. will begin work on its long-gestating airport hotel project in January. He confirmed that the Vancouver-based Makad will partner with Radisson on the 74-room hotel, but he said he didn't have many more details besides that.

Allan Fulsher, Makad Corp.'s general counsel, declined to comment while Tawni Camarillo, a company vice president, didn't return an email requesting comment.

While Makad Corp. developed the River Lodge and Grill in Boardman, its other projects at the Port of Morrow either failed to come to fruition or got bogged down in a lawsuit before being sold.

Its other announced project in Pendleton — a data center on Airport Road — has yet to break ground.

The Pendleton City Council approved a lease with a Makad Corp. subsidiary to build the hotel in the airport's long-term parking lot, but stripped many of the incentives it had asked for.

Multiple crashes shut down Tollgate highway

By **JEDIDIAH MAYNES**
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

TOLLGATE — Multiple vehicles crashing and sliding off the road on Highway 204 through Tollgate caused the road to be shut down Saturday, Jan. 2, the Oregon Department of Transportation reported.

According to the department's TripCheck website, the first crash happened

around 2:30 p.m., causing minimal delays. By 3:30 p.m., multiple crashes were reported and cars began sliding off and getting backed up in a traffic jam.

The highway was closed from the edge of Weston to the edge of Elgin around 3 p.m. in response to the crashes.

By 4 p.m., the highway at Tollgate had turned into

a virtual parking lot as traffic began to get more and more congested. Traffic did appear to begin moving slowly shortly thereafter.

Wintry weather was causing low visibility, and heavy snowfall made for slick road conditions.

The Tollgate area, popular for its winter recreation, was expected to receive 8-12 inches of snow this

weekend, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

ODOT spokesperson Tom Strandberg said he didn't have all of the details about the incident, but he said when the weather turns nasty in that area it's common for the closures to last for several hours.

By evening, the roadway was open again, according to TripCheck.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Umatilla County reports 223 new COVID-19 cases

UMATILLA COUNTY — Umatilla County Public Health reported 223

new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, Jan. 4.

The case count includes totals for Friday, Jan. 1 (New Year's Day), the weekend and Monday, Jan. 4. That brings the county up to 5,863 total

cases reported to the health department since the pandemic began.

Morrow County reported 28 new cases, for a total of 843 since the pandemic began. Oregon Health Author-

ity reported on Jan. 4 that so far 48,725 vaccine doses have been administered statewide, out of 190,500 doses that have been delivered to sites in Oregon so far.

— EO Media Group

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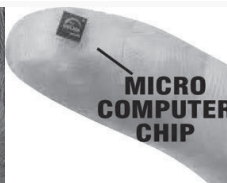


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