

# Baker City Police called to disturbance during GOP forum

By JAYSON JACOBY  
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Two Baker City Police officers responded to a complaint about audience behavior during a forum featuring several Republican candidates for Oregon governor March 25 at the Baker Elks Lodge.

Officers Justin Prevo and Jonathan Parsons responded to the Lodge, at 1896 Second St., around 6:09 p.m., according to the dispatch log.

They escorted a few people from the Elks Lodge early in the forum, which started about 6 p.m. Police didn't make any arrests and no charges were filed, Police Chief Ty DUBY said.

Duby said on March 29, that he "doesn't feel really comfortable" with what happened.

"It puts us in a bad situation," DUBY said.

He said he doesn't believe police are responsible for ensuring people attending an event such as the forum, which took place at a privately owned venue, comply with the audience rules.

So long as people attending aren't acting in a threatening way, DUBY said he doesn't believe police officers should be involved.

Greg Baxter, Baker

County district attorney, said he is awaiting reports from the Baker City Police to determine whether there is anything to pursue with possible charges.

Rick Rienks, of Baker City, who along with his wife, Penny, was escorted from the Elks Lodge by Prevo

County Republican Party, which organized the forum, set, including a prohibition on people videoing the event or applauding while candidates were speaking.

Kerry McQuisten, Baker City mayor and a Republican gubernatorial candidate who attended the forum, said

*"NO PART OF OUR WONDERFUL CONSTITUTION GIVES ANY INDIVIDUAL PERMISSION TO CAUSE HARM SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY FEEL ENTITLED TO. THIS BEHAVIOR ISN'T PATRIOTISM; THIS IS THUGGERY."*

— Kerry McQuisten, Republican candidate for governor



McQuisten



Thielman

*"ONE MUST WONDER WHY A CANDIDATE, VIA HER MOTHER/CAMPAIGN MANAGER, WOULD BE SO DETERMINED TO STIFLE THE RESPECTFUL COVERAGE OF CANDIDATE POSITIONS."*

— Marc Thielman, Republican candidate for governor

validity" to McQuisten's implication that his supporters conspired to disrupt the Baker City forum.

In a March 28 letter responding to the incident at the forum, the six-member executive committee of the Baker County Republican Party blamed the disrup-

consists of Jones; vice chairman Julie McKinney; treasurer Joanna Dixon (who is also treasurer of McQuisten's campaign committee and, like McQuisten, a member of the Baker City Council); secretary Justin Langan; and delegates Tom Van Diepen and Keith Jones.

The letter states that the ban on livestreaming the forum, except for hosts, was added after "ugly behavior" at a forum in the Portland area when someone "used their recording/livestreaming to bash other candidates with slander and name calling."

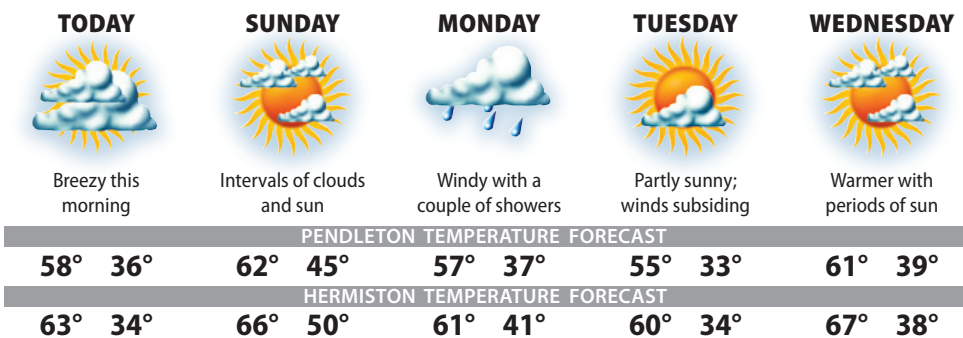
Jones said the organizers' video of the forum will be posted online.

The letter states that during the Baker City forum, one couple was recording the event and, after being asked to stop, declined. Jones said she believes Langan, who was part of the security detail along with Van Diepen and Sharon Bass, then called police.

Rienks said that when officers Prevo and Parsons arrived, he told them that he was there to listen to the candidates and did not feel there was any reason for him and his wife to leave.

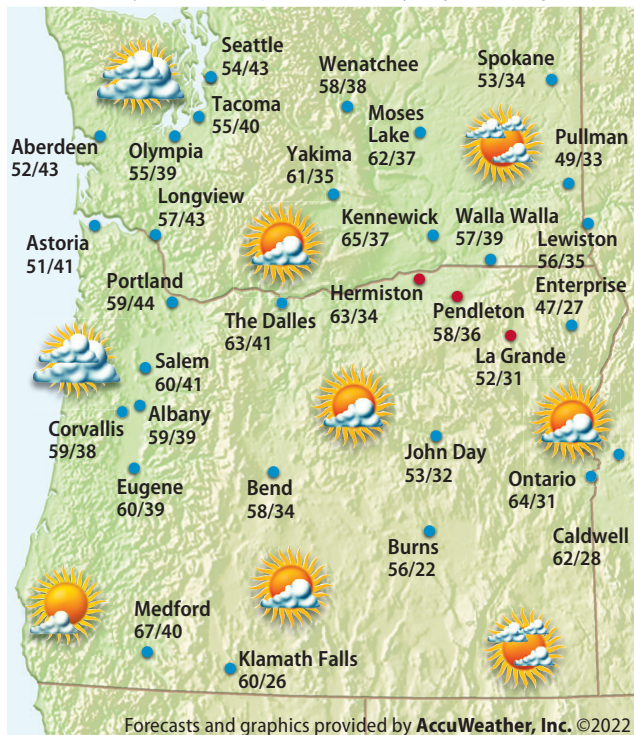
He said he considers the episode a "betrayal" of the candidates who attended, and he intends to send an apology letter to each of them.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



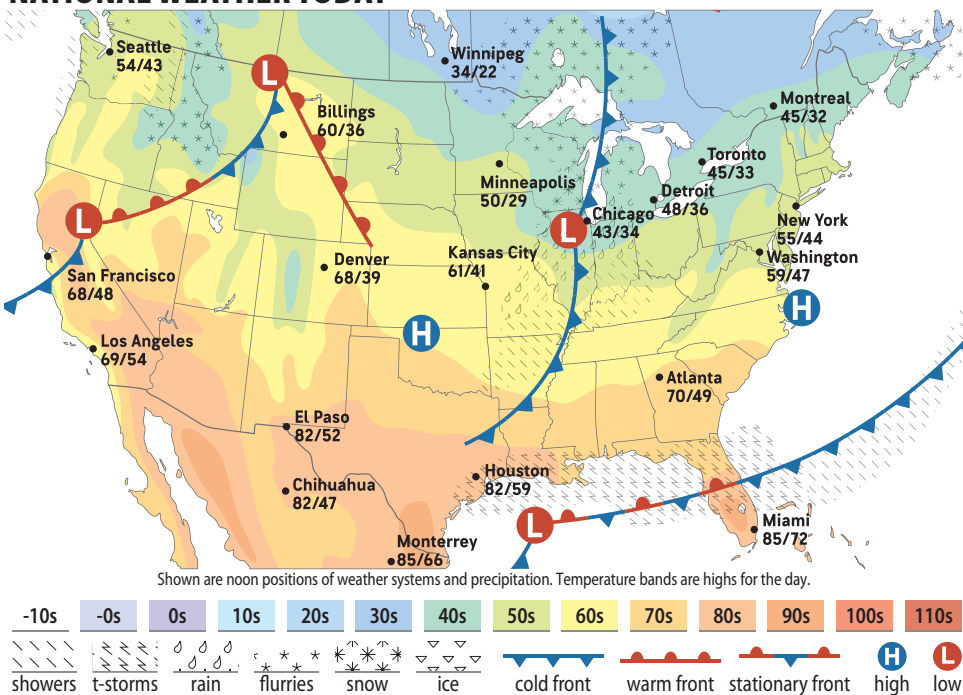
## ALMANAC

Table with weather statistics for Pendleton and Hermiston, including temperature, precipitation, and wind data.

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states) High 92° in Zapata, Texas Low -5° in Gunflint Lake, Minn.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## OSP sergeant shot and killed in Joseph

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — An Oregon State Police sergeant was found dead Tuesday, March 29, in Joseph of a single gunshot wound to the head, according to a press release from Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish.

Fish and WCSO deputy Paul Pagano responded to a 3:41 p.m. call of a possible medical emergency at the residence of OSP Sgt. Marcus McDowell on North College Street in Joseph.

When Fish and Pagano arrived, they found McDowell unconscious in his patrol car in the driveway. After the officers made a forced entry into McDowell's vehicle, they found him to be dead of a gunshot wound.

Fish said it is not yet known if McDowell's death was self-inflicted or if foul play was involved.

"The final determination will be by the state medical examiner," he said March 30.

Fish said McDowell had been an OSP trooper for 17 years, previously working in the La Grande area patrolling Wallowa and Union counties. The sheriff said McDowell has lived in Joseph "many years"



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

**Oregon State Police troopers walk up to a Wallowa County Sheriff's Office pickup Tuesday, March 29, 2022, as part of an investigation into a shooting death at a residence along North College Street in Joseph.**

and has family in the area.

Units from Enterprise Ambulance and the Joseph Fire Department also responded, as did three Enterprise Police Department officers, a total of three WCSO units and three OSP troopers. North College Street between East Joseph Avenue and East Williams Avenue was blocked to traffic while the investigation was underway.

OSP Superintendent Terri Davie issued a statement in the release.

"Thank you to our partner

agencies for their assistance, compassion and professionalism during this tragic time," Davie said. "Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to the family, friends, coworkers and responding emergency personnel."

OSP has not yet responded for a request for additional comment.

Officers and investigators from Enterprise Police Department, Pendleton Police Department, state police and its crime lab are providing assistance in the investigation.

## IN BRIEF

### Walla Walla PPD shuts down app, will return to social media

WALLA WALLA — The Walla Walla Police Department's digital app has gone dark.

WWPD spokesperson Gunner Fulmer confirmed the app was taken offline about three weeks ago.

"We had to end the app as we were having issues and were having trouble getting them fixed," Fulmer said. "We had a deadline for repayment for the year with the app company and opted not to renew."

The department reported in November 2020 the app would cost the city about \$120 per month.

Police Capt. Chris Buttice, who will become the department's new chief on May 1, said one of his first priorities will be determining how to best communicate with the public.

"The police app was problematic and

originated from outside the country," Buttice said. "We're exploring how we are going to communicate with the community."

Fulmer said the department is preparing for a return to social media.

The department left social media in June 2020 and later announced it would keep in touch with the public via the app.

The department also launched Bridging the Gap classes, taught by Fulmer, where members of the public can ask questions about the department and law enforcement and get face-to-face answers from Fulmer.

Fulmer has presented the class to almost 300 community members and had planned on continuing it throughout the rest of the year.

However, attendance began to fall this year, and Fulmer announced the April 4 edition of the class — which has since filled up — will be the last until October.

— Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

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