

Oregon Trail exhibit opens at Baker Heritage Museum

By LISA BRITTON
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Kim Orr picked up the magnet labeled “pickles,” hesitates, then sat it back in the basket.

Instead, she chose the one labeled “rice.”

“You don’t like rice, but we need it,” she said, securing it onto the display board.

Then she chose another magnet. “Piano! Yes!”

“You don’t even play the piano,” said Randy Yawn, sorting through the remaining magnets.

These two, who live in the Willamette Valley and spent Memorial Day weekend in Baker County, pretended to “pack the wagon” while exploring the new Oregon Trail exhibit at the Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St., Baker City.

The display was created by the Bureau of Land Management’s National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, which is leasing space inside the museum while the center, about 5 miles east of Baker city, is closed for renovations for the next two years or so to improve its energy efficiency.

The Interpretive Center exhibit is in the Heritage Museum’s Leo Adler Room, and a full-size wagon is in the second-floor ballroom.

“The main priority is to stay relevant in the community while we’re closed,” said Sarah Sherman, NHOTIC project manager.

A grand opening of the new exhibits is set for Friday, June 3,



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Visitors on Saturday, May 29, 2022, explore the new Oregon Trail exhibit at the Baker Heritage Museum, Baker City.

from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. as part of First Friday activities, with free admission, costumed interpreters and light refreshments.

“We appreciate the county’s willingness to provide a venue for us to continue to tell the story of the Oregon Trail, the settlement of Eastern Oregon, and the history of the Bureau of Land Management while we update the center for the next 30 years,” Wayne Monger, Vale District manager, said in a BLM press release.

In addition to the display,

NHOTIC is planning special programs and performances this summer at Geiser-Pollman Park, just west of the museum across Grove Street.

Explore the trail

The exhibit begins with an introduction to the Oregon Trail, including the chance to pack a wagon with supplies for two adults and two children during the journey. A basket is full of magnets marked with items and the corresponding weight, and visitors can choose up

to 2,400 pounds.

“Do your math carefully,” the instructions read. “Too much weight and the wagon will be too heavy for your oxen to pull.”

The display continues with “Across the Wide Prairie,” which details why emigrants came west, as well as who embarked on the trail.

Other panels cover adventures and obstacles the pioneers encountered, the displacement of Native Americans, and early preservation efforts, such as markers

placed by Ezra Meeker.

The story then winds through trail preservation efforts by the Bureau of Land Management, including the building of the Interpretive Center, which opened May 23, 1992.

Other information in the exhibit details the Baker County Culture and Heritage Passport, which encourages everyone to visit participating locations in Baker County and obtain a special stamp in the provided passports.

Locations are the Baker Heritage Museum, Adler House Museum, Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, Sumpter Valley Railroad, Sumpter Valley Dredge, Sumpter Municipal Museum, Eastern Oregon Museum in Haines, Huntington Historical Museum and Pine Valley Museum in Halfway.

Baker Heritage Museum is open Mondays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.

About the renovation

The \$6.5 million renovation of the Interpretive Center includes new cement board siding, insulation, roofing, windows and doors, along with a new heating and cooling system.

Although the main road to the top of the hill is closed during the renovation, the Oregon Trail Ruts Access on Highway 86 will remain open to the public.

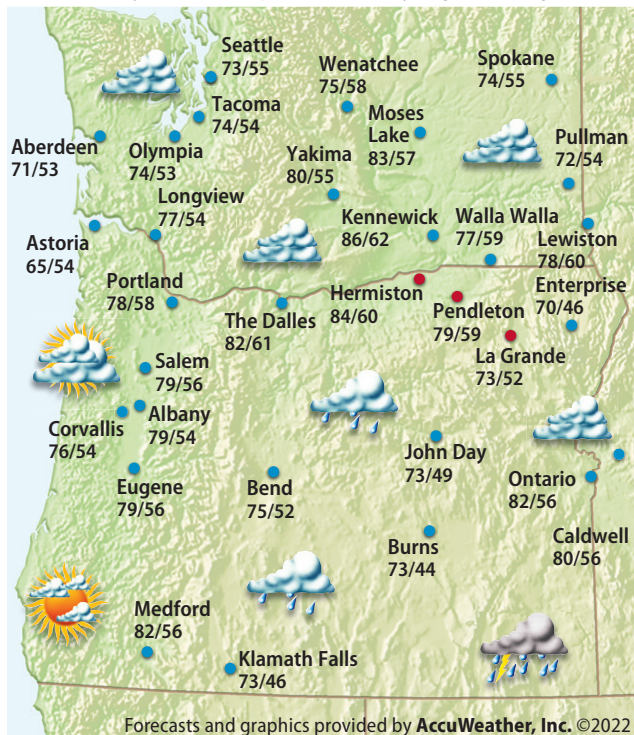
For more information and to learn more about the Oregon Trail, visit oregontrail.blm.gov or call 541-523-1843.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Cloudy, a shower in the p.m.	Mostly cloudy with a shower	Cloudy and cool	Showers; breezy in the afternoon	Partly sunny; breezy in the p.m.
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
79° 59°	71° 53°	67° 56°	66° 52°	68° 48°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
84° 60°	76° 54°	72° 58°	75° 55°	74° 51°

OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	79°	51°
Normals	75°	50°
Records	98° (1909)	35° (1919)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.00"
Normal month to date 0.06"
Year to date 8.66"
Last year to date 4.02"
Normal year to date 6.90"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	81°	52°
Normals	79°	51°
Records	102° (1986)	34° (1984)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.01"
Month to date 0.01"
Normal month to date 0.03"
Year to date 5.80"
Last year to date 2.23"
Normal year to date 4.41"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Fri.
Boardman NNE 4-8	WSW 7-14
Pendleton NE 4-8	WNW 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:09 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:38 p.m.
Moonrise today	7:20 a.m.
Moonset today	11:55 p.m.

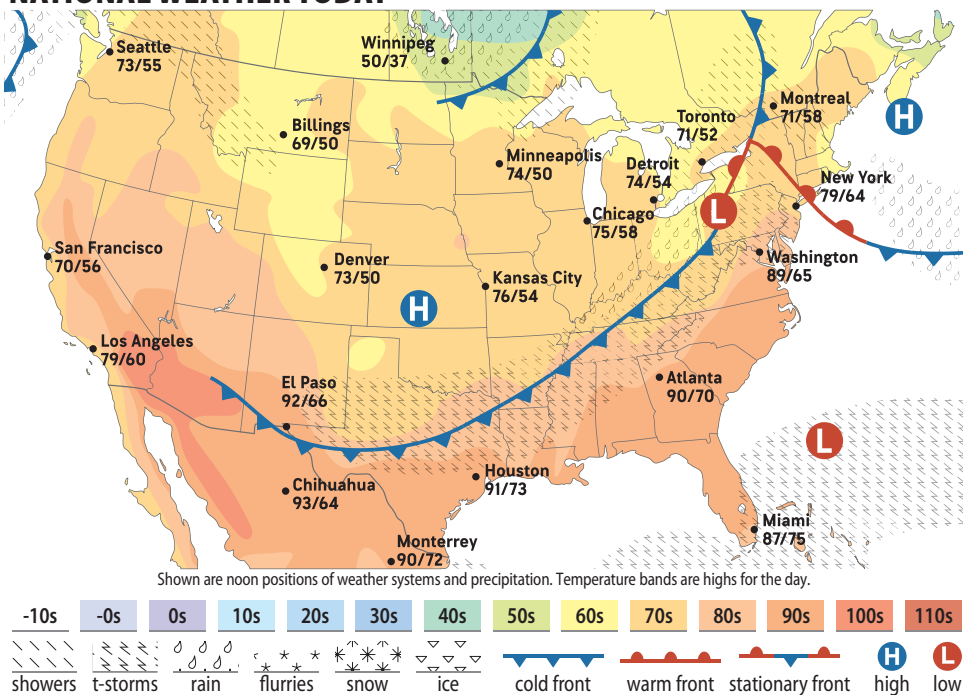
First Full Last New
June 7 June 14 June 20 June 28

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 102° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low 15° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Former gamer aims to shake up John Day as city manager

By ANTONIO SIERRA
Oregon Public Broadcasting

JOHN DAY — Corum Ketchum graduated from his master’s program and less than a year later runs a city.

The John Day City Council appointed Ketchum as an interim city manager May 10. The appointment is on a trial basis: Should Ketchum and the council remain satisfied with the arrangement, he’ll be made the permanent CEO in six months.

Ketchum manages a 14-person staff in a town of about 1,600 people.

For a 29-year-old who once considered a career as a pro gamer, the sudden upswing in his career wasn’t expected. But Ketchum said he’s ready for the job.

He attended the University of Oregon as an undergraduate so he could become a public planner. His career outlook changed after he joined Americorps’ Rural Assistance for Rural Environments program. He spent two years in Veneta, a town of 5,000 people west of Eugene, working with the city administrator on economic development projects.

Ketchum learned to enjoy working in a smaller community, where trying to get things done wasn’t as difficult as it was in larger and more “calcified” cities.

“The bureaucracy is always much thicker, where if you spend time in a rural community, you get to meet the couple dozen people who are really excited about investing in their place,” he said.

He returned to the University of Oregon to get his master’s in public administration with the intent of seeking a leadership role, but another passion almost took him down another path.

Ketchum grew up playing video games and was

good enough at games such as Overwatch and Team Fortress that he helped form an e-sports team.

“We never really made any money,” he said. “I’d say we earned pizza money. If we placed low on a tournament, we’d get paid like 100 bucks as a team, and then I’d divvy that six ways. We’d get like, 10, 15 bucks.”

As Ketchum wrapped up his master’s degree in 2021, University of Oregon was

looking to start its own official e-sports team and for someone to manage it. He didn’t get the job after applying, but a university administrator encouraged him to think bigger.

It was around this time Ketchum read a John Day investment plan that was focused on a project to build a water reclamation facility that would repurpose the city’s wastewater for other uses, including agriculture.

John Day was looking for a community development director and Ketchum felt like it was a good match for him based on his work in Veneta.

“It seemed like a really natural fit for my skill set and who I really am, and more or less a calling for me to come out here and fill that gap,” he said.

Ketchum grew up in Eugene but he has family ties to Grant County. His grandfather was a ranger for the U.S. Forest Service and worked in the Prairie City district.

During that time, his grandmother taught at Grant Union High School and his father learned to swim at the pool in John Day. His grandfather eventually transferred to a different district, but Ketchum said he still has family in Eastern Oregon.

In March, Ketchum started work under City Manager Nick Green, who built a reputation on introducing novel ideas to John Day, such as building 3-D printed

houses and the water reclamation project.

Ketchum wanted to absorb as much knowledge from Green as possible because Green was planning his exit. Ketchum had only been working for the city a few months when Green told him the city could spend thousands of dollars on a search firm, but he had a feeling they wouldn’t find a better candidate than Ketchum. The city council agreed and gave Ketchum the top job.

As the city manager, Ketchum said he wants to continue Green’s initiatives, while also offering more “short-term wins” for John Day, including more community events, downtown investments and outdoor trails.

Housing also is a concern for Ketchum. Although Grant County was the only county in the state to lose population in the 2020 Census, Ketchum said John Day has a less than 1% vacancy rate in its housing market.

Anticipating growth fueled by Boise to the east and Bend to the west, Ketchum said the city is working toward making more of its land developable for future housing. After decades of stagnancy, Ketchum said 40 houses will be built this summer and another 70 in the fall.

Ketchum only brought a few years of experience to the job by the time he became city manager, and he’s now a part of a profession where most of his peers are 40 and over. But Ketchum said his youth is a good match for the town.

“I think my youth is a real asset,” he said. “My demographic is the exact kind of person that we want to be seeing more of out here in John Day. People my age going into their 40s, the prime earners, the people that have families, the people that start businesses and are really in the rocket years as professionals.”

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

In the App Store:

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
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Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

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	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
52 weeks	\$135	42 percent
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Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

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