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\$1.50



PENDLETON RUN

WILDFIRES

Danger creeps higher

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — The wild-fire season has been pretty tranquil in Northeastern Oregon, but Al Crouch and Nathan Goodrich are beginning to detect the potential for boisterous days to come.

They see it in the grass, nourished by plentiful spring rain but now curing into tinder beneath the July sun.

And in the heat that has finally arrived, pushing temperatures to triple digits at lower elevations, and humidity levels below 20%.

“It’s definitely drying out,” Goodrich, fire staff officer for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, said July 12. “Things have changed quite a bit in the last two weeks.”

Crouch, the fire mitigation specialist for the Bureau of Land Management’s Vale District, concurred with his fellow federal fire manager.

“The drying is happening fast,” Crouch said, also on Tuesday, the hottest day of the year in some places.

That’s especially so in Baker County and points south, he said.

The lush crop of grass, including invasive cheatgrass, that grew this spring has already dried in much of Malheur County, and the trend is moving north, Crouch said.

After the soggy spring, the Baker City Airport has been relatively parched, measuring just 0.05 of an inch of rain since June 6.

Thunderstorms that doused other parts of the region mostly missed Baker City.

Meacham, by contrast, has had 3.12 inches of rain during that span, most of it coming from a couple of June cloudbursts.

The Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton has recorded 1.33 inches since June 6.

The Willowcreek fire, which started on private property north of Vale on June 28, rapidly spread to about 40,000 acres, propelled by gusty winds on a day when temperatures reached 100 degrees in north Malheur County.

That fire shows the potential for fast-moving fires given a combustible combination of weather conditions, Crouch said.

Yet that blaze, which is still under investigation, is also a conspicuous anomaly.

The Blue Mountain Inter-agency Dispatch Center at the Union County Airport, which oversees much of Northeastern Oregon — although not Malheur County — has recorded just 17 fires this year, which burned a scant 2.7 acres.

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BRAAAP!

DIRT BIKES TAKE TO THE TRACK AT PENDLETON RUN



Photos by Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Top: The Summer Chute Out III dirt bike races kick off Saturday, July 16, 2022, inside the Pendleton Round-Up Arena during the Pendleton Run motorcycle event, which ran July 14-17. Above: Motorcyclist Kenan Duncan (44) advances at the race. Right: A stunt motorcyclist impresses with a flip



For more photos from the event go to page A6

CCS assessment appointments booked until December

Umatilla County plans to provide \$750K during the next three fiscal years for more clinicians

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Community Counseling Solutions, Umatilla County’s mental health and addiction treatment provider, is booked for mental health intake assessments until December.

“It varies for addiction and mental health and by location,” CCS Executive Director Kimberly Lindsay said. “Waiting lists are longest in Umatilla County, but shorter in Morrow, Grant, Wheeler and Gilliam.”

CCS offers a variety of behavioral health services, including indi-

vidual, family and group therapy, alcohol and drug treatment and 24/7 crisis intervention. It cooperates with other organizations, including residential and acute psychiatric services and school programs. CCS also provides case management for developmental disabilities in the five counties.

“Everybody gets a screening,” Lindsay said. “We could do more assessments, but then the client would have to wait five months for a clinical appointment. So the scheduling delay means we’re back to the same issue.”

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Mackenzie Whaley/East Oregonian

The mental health facility of Community Counseling Solutions, Umatilla County’s mental health and addiction treatment provider, is open at its Pendleton location Thursday, July 14, 2022. CCS has reported it is booked for mental health intake assessments until December.