



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald

The tree features ornaments made by Oregonians.

CHRISTMAS

Continued from Page 2A

Swanson and her staff eventually pared the possibilities to five trees. The finalists included Douglas-firs and grand firs, but Swanson said the noble fir — a species that, unlike the other two, doesn't grow naturally in Eastern Oregon — was clearly the most comely of the competing conifers.

It was not, however, the most convenient.

The noble fir grew about eight miles up a gravel road that wasn't built to accommodate 80-foot trailers.

Workers had to widen the road in places to ensure the

truck-trailer combination, which stretches 102 feet in all, could reach the tree.

The noble fir was cut on Nov. 2.

Swanson, who will accompany the tree on its entire trek to the Capitol, said she had always wanted to retrace the route of the Oregon Trail. But she had never traveled farther east than Pocatello, Idaho.

That city happens to be the tree's next stop. The noble fir will visit Pocatello and Soda Springs, Idaho, today, then cross into Wyoming on Saturday.

The tree visited more towns in Oregon than in any other state, with stops in



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Rick Williams, right, CEO of Central Oregon Truck Company of Redmond, takes over driving duty from his employee, Laurie Wachoski, Thursday. The company's drivers are taking turns behind the wheel as the Capitol tree makes its way across the country.

"You guys had a beautiful celebration."

— **Nikki Swanson, Forest Service ranger who's traveling with the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree**

Sweet Home, Albany, Springfield, McKenzie Bridge, Oakridge, Bend, Detroit, Salem, Oregon City and The Dalles before Wednesday night's arrival in Baker City. That was the final Oregon location on the fir's itinerary.

"We were looking for small towns along the way, and iconic Oregon Trail sites, and Baker City was perfect," Swanson said.

Swanson said that although the Forest Service sets up an information booth at each stop and provides ladders and felt pens so residents can sign the banner affixed to the trailer, "each city makes the event its own."

She was overwhelmed by the response in Baker City, where hundreds of people turned out on Main Street

to see the tree, sign the banner, drink hot cocoa, listen to carolers and see Father Christmas and Smokey Bear.

"Last night was incredible," Swanson said. "You guys had a beautiful celebration. I'm impressed by how much joy there is in the air."

Following the ceremony the tree followed a police escort to its overnight stay at OTEC's compound.

Swanson said Forest Service law enforcement officers who travel with the tree consult with local police to find a secure place to store the tree at night.

"The tree needs to be protected — it is a national treasure," she said.

Actually the noble fir was pampered even while it was still standing.

Swanson said Forest Service employees watered the tree before it was felled to ensure it would be well-hydrated.

The enclosed trailer protects the tree from the elements, and it rests on special

cradles that prevent damage to the limbs.

A vinyl water bladder is attached to the tree's trunk so it can have a drink if needed.

Swanson said the fir hasn't sucked up as much water as Forest Service officials expected.

The tree travels with a considerable entourage, including seven Forest Service employees and four law enforcement officers from the agency.

Central Oregon Truck Company of Redmond supplied the truck and a team of drivers to haul the tree on its 3,000-mile route.

Although Swanson had more than two years to build anticipation for the trip across the nation with a precious cargo, she said that so far it has not merely met, but exceeded, her expectations.

"Every single thing, from the cutting to the stops, has gone perfectly," she said Thursday. "Part of it is having such a great team."

Tax refunds likely in 2020

By Gary A. Wamer
WesCom News Service

SALEM — A flood of state income tax revenue has the state economist forecasting that Oregon's "kicker" law will kick in next year, sending a projected median amount of \$174 back to each taxpayer.

"The kicker won't be paid out until after the biennium is over, with taxpayers getting the credit when they file in 2020 for the 2019 tax year," state economist Mark McMullen said Thursday.

Under state law, any personal income tax revenue that is above 2 percent of the original two-year fiscal projection is sent back to taxpayers as a tax rebate. Because the money is "kicked back" to taxpayers, it is commonly referred to as a kicker, even by state officials.

The December Economic & Revenue Outlook report, released Wednesday, shows that revenue is on track to exceed projections by about 7 percent above the original projected level. That translates to a potential kicker of just over \$724 million. The final kicker amount will be determined in August, after the end of the fiscal biennium in June.

Baker County



CHURCH DIRECTORY

<p>Baker United Methodist Church</p> <p>Sunday Worship Casual Service: 8:30 AM Traditional Service: 10 AM</p> <p>1919 2nd Street, Baker City 541-523-4201</p>	<p>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</p> <p>Sunday Worship Service 10:30 AM</p> <p>1995 4th Street, Baker City 541-523-5201 firstpresbaker.blogspot.com</p>	<p>Third & Broadway 541-523-3891</p> <p>Calvary Baptist Church</p> <p>Sundays 10 AM Service & Children's Church 6-7:30 pm Youth Group (Grades 7-12) Thursdays 5:30-6:30 pm Free Community Dinner www.bakercalvarybaptist.com</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH</p> <p>Sunday Service 11:00 AM</p> <p>www.spirituality.com</p> <p>3rd & Washington, Baker City 541-523-5911</p>	<p>CHURCH OF NAZARENE</p> <p>Sunday Worship 9:45 AM</p> <p>Pastor Troy Teeter 1250 Hughes Lane, Baker City (Corner of Cedar & Hughes) 541-523-3533 www.bakernaz.com</p>	<p>THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS</p> <p>Baker City 1st Ward Sacrament Meeting 1 PM Baker City 2nd Ward Sacrament Meeting 9 AM Baker Valley Ward Sacrament Meeting 11 AM 2625 Hughes Lane, Baker City 541-523-2397</p>
<p>Elkhorn Baptist Church</p> <p>Sunday School 10 AM Morning Worship 11 AM Evening Worship 6 PM Discovery Kids Worship 6:30 PM 3520 Birch St, Baker City 541-523-4332</p>	<p>Harvest Church & HARVEST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (Preschool-12 Grade) Harvest Cafe 9:15 am Morning Worship 10:10 AM 3720 Birch St, Baker City 541-523-4233 <i>The first Sunday of each month is Mission Breakfast. Donations and non-perishable donations for NEOCC are accepted.</i></p>	<p>New Beginnings Fellowship PC of G</p> <p>Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 AM Sunday Evening 6 PM Weds Service 7 PM</p> <p>Zan & Dawn Coen 1820 Estes, Baker City 541-524-1394</p>	<p>FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH</p> <p>Sunday Service 11 AM</p> <p>1734 Third Street, Baker City 541-523-3922 firstlutheranbakercity@gmail.com</p>	<p>ST. BRIGID'S IN THE PINES COMMUNITY CHURCH</p> <p>11:30 a.m. Services 1st & 3rd Sunday Holy Eucharist</p> <p>East Auburn Street, Sumpter 541-523-4812 A Mission of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Baker City</p>	<p>BAKER CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH</p> <p>Sunday Worship First Service 9 AM 2nd Service & Sunday School 10:45 AM Jr. High & High School Youth Tues 6:30 PM Youth Pastor Silas Moe 675 Hwy 7, Baker City • 541-523-5425</p>
<p>SAINT ALPHONSUS HOSPITAL CHAPEL</p> <p><i>Open to all patients, family and friends for reflection and prayer.</i></p> <p>St. Alphonsus Hospital in Baker City</p>	<p>AGAPE CHRISTIAN CENTER</p> <p>Sunday Services 10:00 AM & 6:30 PM</p> <p>South Highway 7, Baker City 541-523-6586</p>	<p>SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH</p> <p>Saturday Worship 11:00 AM</p> <p>www.bakercitysda.com 17th & Pocahontas, Baker City 541-523-4913</p>	<p>St. Francis De Sales Cathedral</p> <p>Daily Masses at 9 AM at the Cathedral</p> <p>Established 1904 Baker City Saturday Mass 6 pm Sunday Mass 9:30 am Spanish Mass 1:30 pm (2nd & 4th Sun) St. Therese in Halfway 2 pm Sat St. Anthony's in North Powder 1:30 Sun 541-523-4521 Corner of First & Church, Baker City</p>	<p>St. Stephen's Episcopal</p> <p>Services at 9 AM 1st & 3rd Sundays, Holy Eucharist 2nd & 4th Sundays, Morning Prayer 5th Sunday, Morning Prayer 2177 First Street • Baker City Entrance on 1st Street Corner Church & First Streets 541-523-4812</p>	<p>Faith Center Foursquare A Four Square Gospel Church</p> <p>Worship Service 10:45 AM</p> <p>1839 3rd St, Baker City 541-523-7915</p>

The church directory is published the last Friday of every month. Information for this directory is provided by participating churches, please call 541-523-3673 for more information.

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