

Baker City Herald

December 14, 2018

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In **OUTDOORS, 1B**
Tips for filling the gift list

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Health & Fitness • Outdoors • TV **\$1.50**

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Libby Rudolph of Baker City.

Local, 3A

ENTERPRISE — Decades of large wildfires across the West have a Wallowa County U.S. Forest Service District staff putting a critical eye to protecting the wildland/urban interface.

Local, 3A

LA GRANDE — In 2014, Eastern Oregon University retained only 56.7 percent of its freshman class into its sophomore year. Three years later, 70.1 percent of EOU's freshmen returned.

BRIEFING

County commissioners to meet Monday

The Baker County Board of Commissioners will meet Monday, Dec. 17, at 9 a.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St.

The agenda includes discussion of the 2016-17 fiscal year audit, which was almost a year late; extending a professional services agreement with Timothy Bishop, the county's tourism marketing contractor; and a proposal by Randy Joseph to buy part of the former lime plant property.

Last Chance Bazaar at Nazarene Church

The Nazarene Church is hosting a Last Chance Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 15, at the church's Family Life Center, 1250 Hughes Lane, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Proceeds from the event go toward the Nazarene Church's Upward Sports Basketball and Cheer League. Food is also available, including hot dogs, potato salad and chili. All proceeds from the food support a Youth Conference that the teens will attend in July.

Retirement party for County Clerk Cindy Carpenter

A retirement party for Baker County Clerk Cindy Carpenter is set for Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St. There will be cake, punch and coffee. Carpenter is retiring at the end of 2018 after serving as clerk the past four years.

WEATHER

Today

34 / 23



Snow possible late

Saturday

38 / 30



Partly cloudy

Sunday

42 / 34



Mostly cloudy

Baker City's Ambulance Revenue Returns To Normal After One-Year Decline

Billing Rebounds



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald file photo

Jason Bybee, firefighter/paramedic, checks inventory in a Baker City ambulance before it's called into action.

By **Jayson Jacoby**
 jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker City's revenue from its ambulance service has rebounded from the one-year dip that city officials cited as partial justification for the \$3 per household monthly public safety fee imposed starting July 1, 2017.

That fee, approved by the City Council, remains in effect. The fee, which is \$6 per month for businesses, raises about \$180,000 per year for the city's general fund, which includes the fire and police departments.

City officials said during the spring of 2017 that the public safety fee was necessary to prevent the possible layoffs of two employees in

the police department and two in the fire department.

Ambulance revenue, which totaled about \$789,000 for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2018, equates to about 44 percent of the fire department's annual budget of about \$1.8 million.

City Manager Fred Warner Jr. said that although ambulance revenues have improved since the one-year decline, he doesn't intend to propose that the City Council either reduce or eliminate the fee.

Warner said that although revenue from the public safety fee helped the city avoid layoffs in the police and fire departments, the city also budgeted for the increase in ambulance revenue after the city took

back the responsibility for billing as of July 1, 2017.

Warner noted that the ordinance imposing the public safety fee will expire on June 30, 2020, unless the City Council decides to extend it.

When Warner introduced the proposed public safety fee in the spring of 2017, he pointed out that during the 2016-17 fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2017, the city's ambulance revenue was running well below projections.

The city had hired a Texas company, Emergency Revenue Resources, on a one-year contract to handle ambulance billing for that fiscal year.

See **Billing** / Page 3A

Baker's new ice-buster

By **Casey Crowley**
 ccrowley@bakercityherald.com

The Baker City Public Works Department has two new tools for clearing snow and ice around the city this winter.

A new Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) grader will be stored at Salisbury Junction, about 10 miles south of Baker City, and will be used by both ODOT and Baker City.

The most distinctive part of the grader is the bright blue piece fitted to the bottom of its blade.

Made by Swedish company Olofsors, the steel blade has sharp tips designed to cut through snow and ice and allow the grader to clear the road or street more thoroughly.

City officials are concerned that the blade might peel off the top layer of chip-sealed streets, and they will be monitoring this.

The city will use the ODOT grader mainly on heavily traveled streets such as Main, Campbell, 10th and Broadway.

See **Ice** / Page 8A

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

The blue metal attachment on ODOT's new grader blade helps break up ice. Baker City will also be able to use the machine.



SEASON STARTS SATURDAY AT ANTHONY LAKES

Ski area will open

A snowstorm Tuesday night and Wednesday morning deposited 7 inches of powder snow at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort and made it possible for the ski area to open for the season on Saturday morning.

The new snow capped the heavier, wetter snow that fell during November, creating a solid snow base, according to a press release from the ski area in the Elkhorn Mountains about 34 miles northwest of Baker City.

Anthony Lakes' triple chairlift, along with the handletow and magic carpet, will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Groomed runs include Broadway, Variety, Vista and Road Run. On the Nordic trail system, the Lake Loop, Campground Loop, Gunish, College and Training Loop will be groomed.

See **Skiing** / Page 3A

Chickenpox cases in two schools

By **Chris Collins**
 collins@bakercityherald.com

An outbreak of chickenpox, which had once been considered a rite of passage for most small children, was seen as an unusual occurrence in Baker's two in-town elementary schools earlier this month when three children came down with the illness.

Cindy Johansen's three children, who all are grown now, brought chickenpox to her home in their childhoods. But the South Baker Intermediate School secretary says the disease is so rare since the advent of the chickenpox (also known as varicella) vaccine, that she's only seen about five cases in her 23 years as a secretary for the District — and two of them were this year's.

Beginning in September 2000, vaccination against chickenpox was required of susceptible children in schools, according to the Oregon Public Health Division. The Health Division began a phase-in of the vaccination for children in Grades K-12 between 2000 and 2006.

See **Chickenpox** / Page 2A

TODAY
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MONDAY — WEEKEND HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS ROUNDUP



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