

# Local

## BAKER COUNTY CALENDAR

### THURSDAY, DEC. 20

■ **Baker Rural Fire Protection District Board:** 5:30 p.m. at the Pocahontas Fire Station.

### TUESDAY, DEC. 25

■ **Merry Christmas**

### TUESDAY, JAN. 1

■ **Happy New Year**

### FRIDAY, JAN. 4

■ **Live Music by Keith Taylor:** Ragtime piano, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, 2020 Auburn Ave.; no charge.

■ **First Friday Art Shows:** Baker City art galleries are open late to showcase the month's new artwork; opening times vary between 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. at Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, Peterson's Gallery, Broderick's Gallery and others.

### MONDAY, JAN. 7

■ **Haines Fire Protection District Board:** 7 p.m. at the Haines Library.

### TUESDAY, JAN. 8

■ **Baker City Council:** 7 p.m., City Hall, 1655 First St.

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 9

■ **Lower Powder River Irrigation District Board:** 6 p.m. at Barley Brown's, 2190 Main St.

## TURNING BACK THE PAGES

### 50 YEARS AGO from the Democrat-Herald December 20, 1968

The 6 a.m. temperature at Anthony Lakes was 6 degrees above zero this morning with overcast skies and some fog, no wind. There are 56 inches of base snow and 3 inches of new snow.

### 25 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald December 20, 1993

A range management reform proposal trotted out last summer by the government was the main topic Saturday at a private meeting with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

### 10 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald December 19, 2008

A study looking at alternatives for bringing irrigation water to land served by the Smith Ditch advanced this week with the approval of a \$22,500 grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

### ONE YEAR AGO from the Baker City Herald December 20, 2017

SUMPTER — One rural fire department has lost a long-time volunteer firefighter.

But he's still around.

The department also gained a new firefighter, but not the living kind.

Before 83-year-old Don Perkins retired early this month after 20 years with the Powder River Rural Fire Department as a volunteer, and 25 years with Baker City Fire Department before that, the Powder River department added a new fire engine to the fleet at its Mosquito Flats Station just east of Sumpter.

Wes Morgan, Powder River fire chief, said one of Perkins' co-workers from Baker City described Perkins as a "fire-eating son of a gun," when he was a young firefighter.

Perkins, who was born in Baker City and raised on a ranch north of town, said he has always had a passion for firefighting. That's what motivated him to volunteer with the Powder River department after he retired from Baker City.

## OREGON LOTTERY

**MEGABUCKS, Dec. 17**  
2 — 28 — 32 — 33 — 45 — 46  
Next jackpot: \$5.7 million

**PICK 4, Dec. 18**  
• 1 p.m.: 5 — 1 — 1 — 7  
• 4 p.m.: 2 — 3 — 0 — 5  
• 7 p.m.: 5 — 1 — 4 — 2  
• 10 p.m.: 7 — 7 — 0 — 6

**WIN FOR LIFE, Dec. 17**  
27 — 50 — 70 — 76

**LUCKY LINES, Dec. 18**  
1-8-9-14-17-24-25-29  
Next jackpot: \$20,000

## SENIOR MENUS

- **THURSDAY:** Roast turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing and gravy, green beans, roll, broccoli-bacon salad, pumpkin dessert
- **FRIDAY:** Cheeseburgers with trimmings, potato wedges, corn, coleslaw, cookies

Public luncheon at the Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St., 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; \$4.50 donation (60 and older), \$6.75 for

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## WOLVES

Continued from Page 1A

Most importantly, she is confident that the Andersons' techniques are ones that most ranchers can employ — the DelCurtos among them.

Although DelCurto is excited about the prospects, she's also realistic.

"These are things we can do, but it's not an overnight change," she said. "It's going to take years to train the cattle to stay in a group. You have to be persistent."

### Frustrating spring

But compared with the situation several months ago, DelCurto said the notion that she and her husband need to be patient hardly seems an obstacle.

After wolves from the Pine Creek pack killed four calves and injured seven others during April, DelCurto said "we didn't know what to do."

The DelCurtos owned one of the injured calves. It died in June after the couple had spent about \$850 in veterinary bills to treat the animal's wolf bite wounds.

DelCurto said she had a phone conversation with Suzanne Stone, an official with Defenders of Wildlife, an organization that advocates for preserving wolf populations, about a workshop designed to help ranchers co-exist with wolves.

Nothing came of the conversation, at least initially.

But then in September Stone offered the DelCurtos a trip to a four-day conference in Montana, all expenses paid.

DelCurto said she and her husband had scheduled a trip to the Oregon Coast with their grandchildren, but they decided to cancel it and go to Montana instead.

"This was important," she said.

The DelCurtos spent four days in the Tom Minor Basin near Yellowstone National Park.

They learned how the Andersons have made their ranch more profitable despite dealing with a range of predators that includes wolves and grizzly bears.

DelCurto said the lessons from the Andersons — and in particular Hilary, who is also a wildlife biologist who has worked in Yellowstone — were a revelation.

"She gave you a whole different perspective of looking at things," DelCurto said.

In particular, she said, the Andersons emphasized that ranchers should consider wolves as just one of the many threats they have to deal with, rather than concentrating solely on the predators.

The bottom line, DelCurto said, is that a calf that dies



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife photo

Wolves from the Snake River pack captured by a remote camera taken on Feb. 1, 2017, in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald file photo

Sheila and Barry DelCurto are eager to try new techniques for managing their cattle to reduce wolf losses.

from a disease has the same effect on the ranchers' profitability as a calf that's killed by a wolf.

The goal, in either case, is to address the threat, and in the case of wolves the idea is to manage cattle in ways — the herding concept is a key example — that make them less vulnerable to wolves, DelCurto said.

"We know the wolves are there, and they're not going away," she said.

Some of the other recommendations from the workshop are ones that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has given to ranchers since wolves returned to Oregon in 1999.

Burying cattle carcasses rather than leaving them on the ground is an example, DelCurto said.

Protecting winter cattle pastures by installing fladry — a type of temporary fencing designed to keep wolves at bay — is another.

DelCurto said that although she's apprehensive about what might happen next spring when she and her husband move their cattle to spring pastures in the Low Hills country southeast of Pine Valley — where most of the wolf attacks happened earlier this year — she's also excited about trying the techniques she learned about.

"We had been worrying all summer because we had no clear idea how to

change things," DelCurto said. "Now we do. There's no guarantee this will work, but in my opinion it's worth a try. I do know it has worked for other people."

After deciding she wanted to bring the Andersons to Baker County for a seminar, DelCurto made a presentation to United Community Partners, a Halfway nonprofit.

The organization offered its tax-exempt status to help DelCurto raise an estimated \$6,000 to put on the seminar.

"The project is in keeping with our mission to assist citizen-led initiatives that benefit Pine Valley and the greater Panhandle," said Deanna Pennock, secretary for United Community Partners.

### Pine Creek wolf pack — plus 1

The situation in the Pine Valley area this coming spring is likely to be similar to 2018, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at ODFW's Baker City office.

Ratliff said the Pine Creek pack's breeding female gave birth to seven pups this spring, and biologists counted 12 wolves in the pack during an aerial survey in early December.

The pack followed elk herds migrating to their winter range in the Low Hills, and Ratliff expects the wolves will stay in that area until the elk return

to the mountains in the spring.

Ratliff said he will encourage ranchers, including the DelCurtos, to avoid moving their cattle next spring into the corridors that Pine Creek pack wolves have used in the past to enter and leave the elk wintering grounds.

Those corridors are relatively narrow, Ratliff said, and because he thinks it's likely the wolves will continue to confine their migration to those zones, ranchers should be able to avoid putting their cattle directly in the wolves' path.

In the meantime, ODFW will alert ranchers to the wolves' movements occasionally. Two of the Pine Creek wolves are fitted with tracking collars, including the pack's breeding male. Those collars are equipped with both a GPS transmitter, which broadcasts the animal's location twice a day to ODFW, as well as a radio transmitter.

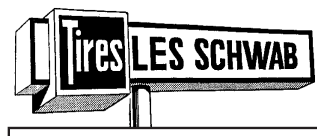
Baker County has given several ranchers radio receivers that can alert them if the collared wolf is close, Ratliff said.

ODFW also collared a third wolf, a male pup born this spring. Ratliff said the pup is not a member of the Pine Creek pack. Biologists know this is the case because the pup has black fur, and none of the wolves in the Pine Creek pack has black fur so the pup couldn't have been birthed by the Pine Creek pack's breeding female.

The breeding female is wearing a collar but it no longer works.

Ratliff said he hopes to capture the pack's breeding female this winter and attach a new collar that has a radio transmitter but not a GPS device.

The radio-only collars don't give ODFW daily location updates, but they last much longer — usually at least six years — and have proven less prone to malfunctioning than the combination GPS-radio collars, he said.



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