

# JANUARY

■ Highest Temperature: 50, on the 13th, 14th • Lowest Temperature: 9, on the 2nd • Total Precipitation: .96 (avg.: .84)

## Baker County YMCA To Add Gymnasium, Wellness Center

# Moving Forward



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Timothy Bliss, right, and Daryl Robertson, 91, both say that the Y's expansion plans sound great. They use the resources at the Y to help keep fit, limber and strong.

By Chris Collins  
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JANUARY 5 — Leo Adler's love for Baker City continues to provide the spark needed to boost projects designed to benefit his hometown and the surrounding communities.

The latest project is an expansion of the Baker County YMCA, which will add a new gymnasium and double the size of its fitness center at 3715 Pochontas Road to about 48,000 square feet.

When Adler died in November 1993 at the age of 98, he left the fortune he'd accumulated distributing magazines throughout the region to the community to fund college scholarships and projects such as the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway and others like the YMCA expansion.

Heidi Dalton, the Y's CEO, said the recent award of \$100,000 from the Leo Adler Foundation has set the stage for the Y to complete

Phase II of the expansion plan that began in 2012.

That's when the Y bought and renovated the former Wilson's Warehouse Market at 3715 Pochontas Road, bolstered by two \$75,000 grants from the Leo Adler Foundation and other grants from organizations such as the Ford Family Foundation, the Oregon Community Foundation and the Meyer Memorial Trust.

## Changes To Wastewater Disposal Estimated To Cost \$11.4 Million

# City to look at funding options

By Joshua Dillen  
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JANUARY 1 — Baker City has committed to revamping its wastewater treatment plant and disposal system at a projected cost of about \$11.4 million.

It turns out that the city's population is just small enough that it might qualify for federal loans to help pay for the project.

At a Dec. 12 meeting, the City Council approved a draft plan that outlines how the city plans to comply with

tighter pollution rules by using treated wastewater for irrigation rather than piping it into the Powder River about a mile north of town.

The city will submit the draft plan to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for review. Michelle Owen, the city's public works director, said that once DEQ accepts the plan, the city will move forward to acquire funding for the project.

The first step for the city is attending a "one-stop meeting" at which officials

from DEQ and other agencies will explore the potential sources for loans and grants.

"All the funding sources kind of come together," Owen said. "We talk about the project and how their individual product may help us fund it."

After that meeting — with a clearer picture of what funding options to go after — the City Council will consider the finalization and the official adoption of the wastewater facility plan.

# Online threat locks schools

By Chris Collins  
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JANUARY 26 — Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner said a coordinated effort by regional law enforcement officers helped to find the man whose online threat resulted in all area schools being placed in lock out Wednesday afternoon.

The code yellow lock out designation is designed to keep outside threats from entering the schools.

After a half-day investigation, the suspect was identified as Ian Michael Cooper, 21. He was located in Graham, Washington, east of Olympia, and interviewed Wednesday by Washington sheriff's deputies.

Cooper told the investigators that when he wrote online "2 days without dark souls, I might go shoot up a school xo" he was making "a stupid comment."

# Weed board: Stay with tri-county agency

By Joshua Dillen  
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JANUARY 31 — Baker County Weed Board members voted unanimously Tuesday to recommend the county remain a member of a regional noxious weed control agency.

Last fall the Baker County Board of Commissioners voted to give a 90-day notice to withdraw from the Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (Tri-County), which includes Union and Wallowa counties.

Thursday is the deadline for Baker County to decide whether to leave the agency.

Tri-County, formerly based in Baker City but now with its office in La Grande, was formed more than 20 years ago to garner state and federal grants to deal with noxious weeds on private and public lands in the region.

# 5J board fills spot

By Chris Collins  
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JANUARY 24 — The Baker School Board voted unanimously Tuesday to appoint a former Baker City Council member to fill the vacancy on the five-member board.

Julie Huntington, 56, a staff accountant at Bingham, Bingham & Watt, will fill Position 5 on the Board. The slot has been vacant since September, when Melissa Irvine resigned because she moved to the Madras area. The term for the position expires June 30, 2019.

The board also appointed Linda Cyr, 39, to fill a vacancy on the school district's budget committee.

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# More flu cases reported

By Lisa Britton  
For the Baker City Herald

JANUARY 12 — Baker County has had more than twice as many confirmed cases of influenza during the current flu season compared with the same period last year.

This year's flu season started Nov. 19, which was

when St. Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City saw its first influenza patient. From that day through Tuesday, the hospital has had 25 confirmed cases of influenza virus.

For a similar period last winter, from Nov. 5 to Jan. 9, influenza cases numbered 11. The last case on April

16, 2017, signaled the end of flu season with a total of 33 cases.

The typical flu season is Oct. 1 through March 31, said Michelle Stairs, who handles employee health and clinical education at St. Alphonsus. She began offering influenza vaccine to hospital staff in September.

# Council member plans to sue city and county

By Chris Collins  
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JANUARY 29 — Baker City Councilor Adam Nilsson has served notice to city and county officials that he plans to file lawsuits against Baker County and the Baker City Police Department and employees of both entities.

The lawsuit is tied to an incident on Aug. 1, 2017, when Nilsson and a friend made a

trip to an abandoned cement plant along Interstate 84 near Huntington.

Nilsson, 46, of 307 Hillcrest Drive, submitted letters by registered mail and in person earlier this week that state his intent to sue Baker County and Sheriff's Department employees Lt. Jef Van Arsdall and deputy Gabe Maldonado, and the Baker City Police Department.

Nilsson said he sent the letters in order to meet the 180-day time line for tort claim notices — a step required for people who plan to file lawsuits against public bodies or their employees.

Nilsson is claiming Fourth Amendment violations of unlawful search and seizure by Van Arsdall and Maldonado during the Aug. 1 incident at Lime.