

# APRIL

■ Highest Temperature: 85, on the 27th • Lowest Temperature: 17, on the 3rd • Total Precipitation: .79 (avg.: .80)

## Gale-Force Gusts Saturday Toppled Trees, Power Lines In Baker City

# Wind Wreaks Havoc



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald

The rental home of Zack and Heather Jo Sperl, Washington Avenue and East Street, narrowly escaped damage Saturday when a fir tree in their front yard toppled because of the windstorm. Their son, Cyllus, searched the length of the fallen tree hoping several owls that routinely roost high in the branches escaped injury. The Sperls said they will be sawing the tree for firewood.

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

APRIL 9 — Melody Dopp certainly doesn't consider herself lucky although she concedes that of the two big trees that fell, only one landed on her car.

Dopp's 2016 Ford Escape SUV was among the casualties of a brief but intense windstorm that battered Baker City a bit before noon Saturday, toppling numerous trees and power poles, turning at least one trampoline into a flying sculpture, and cutting power to almost 1,800 Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative customers for

several hours.

The winds accompanied a cold front that also splattered the city with heavy rain showers.

Peak wind gusts Saturday included 56 mph at the Baker City Airport, 66 mph at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and 57 mph in Baker Valley.

Dopp said she doesn't believe the tree that landed on her car, one of two mature evergreens that fell at the home of her mother-in-law, Eleanor Dopp, at 2460 Clark St., caused significant damage.

But that's not as much of a consolation as it might be.

Because this isn't the first of Dopp's Ford Escapes that has had an unfortunate fate this year. A fire on Jan. 20 that started in the garage of the home that Dopp and her husband, Wayne, own in Baker City destroyed the 2008 Escape parked inside.

That vehicle, Melody Dopp said, "looked like it had been in a war."

"It didn't even have a steering wheel — it all just melted," she said.

The 2016 model that was in the falling tree's path Saturday morning was a replacement for the scorched Escape.

# ODFW OKs wolf kill

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

APRIL 11 — State wildlife officials have given a Baker County rancher permission to kill up to two wolves from a pack that killed at least three of his calves late last week near Halfway.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) issued a permit Tuesday to Chad DelCurto.

Last week DelCurto moved 130 cow-calf pairs onto private land he leases for grazing in the Fourmile Gulch area, south of Highway 86 about eight miles east of Halfway.

Within two days wolves from the Pine Creek pack attacked DelCurto's cattle twice, killing three and injuring four others, according to ODFW.

The permit, which expires May 4, allows DelCurto to kill up to two wolves on the private property.

# Police chief to retire May 11

By Chris Collins  
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

APRIL 27 — Citing a recent conversation with City Manager Fred Warner Jr., Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner announced Thursday afternoon that he will retire on May 11 after 12 years as chief.

Lohner said it was with mixed emotions he has decided to retire and transition out of law enforcement "for the time being."

"This decision was made after a tumultuous year of evaluating my future options and trying to decide how long I wanted to stay in this career," he wrote in a letter.

Lohner, 54, said he came to his decision after a Wednesday conversation with Warner in which Warner discussed his vision for the department.



Lohner

# Candidates field questions

By Chris Collins  
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

APRIL 25 — About 75 people turned out at Baker High School Monday night to learn about candidates for Baker County Justice of the Peace and Baker County Commission chairman.

Justice of the Peace candidates Josie Hermann, Ray Duman and Brent Kerns shared their history and explained why each wants to sit on the bench as Baker County Justice Court judge. Don Williams, the current justice of the peace, is retiring this year from the part-time position.

# Dam spill could boost OTEC bills

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

APRIL 4 — A court ruling requiring officials to pass more water through the spillways of eight federal dams to aid migrating salmon and steelhead, rather than using the water to produce electricity, could increase monthly bills for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative customers for part of the year.

The decision Monday by a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affects four dams on the lower Snake River in Washington and four on the Columbia River.

The release of water started Tuesday at the Snake River dams, and will start April 10 at the Columbia River dams.

The Army Corps of Engineers operates all the dams.

# Governor In Town

By Lisa Britton  
For the Baker City Herald

APRIL 30 — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown visited Baker City Saturday to tour the Baker Technical Institute and meet with several Baker High School students who have found their passion through BTI programs.

One student, senior Dawson Vanderwiele, who is the first woman and youngest person to be a CAT Simulator certified instructor, hopes the governor's visit will bring more light on

career and technical programs.

"I really hope that her seeing BTI and the amount of jobs it is creating for high school students increases the amount of technical funding in Oregon," Vanderwiele said.


Brown's tour started in the health services room, where BTI President Doug Dalton gave an overview of the history.

BTI's roots are in the recession of 2007 to 2009. Dalton detailed how the district trimmed expenses to attain

financial stability.

The next steps were to create two charter schools, Baker Web Academy and Baker Early College.

Then came the 40-40-20 plan from the governor's office in 2011. The goal of this Senate bill was that, by 2025, 40 percent of Oregonians would have a baccalaureate degree or higher, 40 percent would have an associate degree or certificate in a skilled occupation and the remaining 20 percent would have at least a high school diploma.



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