

Baker City Herald

February 22, 2019

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In OUTDOORS, 1B

Where a river is born

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 James Colby of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Baker City competing for grant to help build all-abilities playground

Baker City is competing for a grant to help build an all-abilities playground at Geiser-Pollman Park.

The Moda Assist program, in conjunction with the Portland Trail Blazers, will donate \$20 for every assist the Blazers have this season. With 24 games left in the regular season, the Blazers have 1,321 assists — \$26,420.

The recipient will be determined by online voting between Feb. 20 and March 20. Baker City is competing against two other communities — Prineville and Independence.

To vote, go to <https://www.nba.com/blazers/assist>. You can vote one time per day.

As of this morning Baker City was in the lead, with 4,566 votes compared with Prineville's 2,921 and Independence's 2,588.

The lights in the clock tower at Baker City Hall have been illuminated with the contest colors to remind residents to vote.

WEATHER

Today

32 / 23



Partly sunny

Saturday

37 / 27



Snow showers

Sunday

39 / 26



Snow showers

The space below will be blank on issues delivered or sold from boxes. The space is for a postage label for issues that are mailed.

Counties Seek To Exempt National Forests From Travel Management Rule

Preserving Access



U.S. Forest Service photo

Riding four-wheelers is a popular pursuit on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

By Casey Crowley
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Baker County has joined five other counties in Eastern Oregon in petitioning the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exempt the Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests from the 2005 Travel Management Rule.

That's the rule that could lead the Forest Service to banning motor vehicles from thousands of miles of roads on the two national forests, a possibility that has prompted widespread protests in Baker County over the past decade.

Baker County commissioners

voted Wednesday to join the petition.

The document is scheduled to be hand delivered to federal officials on March 2 in Washington, D.C. The other five counties listed on the petition are Union, Harney, Grant, Malheur and Wallowa.

The Forest Service is an agency of the Agriculture Department.

The petition asks the department to exempt the two national forests from the Travel Management Rule based on the Administrative Procedures Act, which allows federal agencies to change a policy.

The petition says that the 2005

Plan and any additional travel regulations would "only harm local communities, county residents and recreational opportunities, while offering no tangible resource benefits."

If the Agriculture Department approved the petition, the Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests would continue to operate under their 1990 travel plans, which state that "the development, maintenance and management of the Forest development road system is to be continued as needed to respond to resource management objectives."

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Museum manager faces DUI charge

By Casey Crowley
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Baker County commissioners earlier this month approved a one-year contract with Maggie Schirack to become the county's new museum manager, after two county officials learned Schirack had been arrested Dec. 5, 2018, in La Grande on a charge of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

A four-member committee interviewed Schirack, 34, on Jan. 4 and offered her the museum manager job that day on a conditional basis pending a background check as is typical for hiring county employees. Since 2016 it has been illegal in

Oregon for employers to inquire about applicants' criminal convictions before the hiring stage.

Schirack didn't disclose the arrest during her interview for the position.

The background check revealed Schirack's arrest, said Heidi Martin, the county's human resources director and a member of the hiring committee

The three others are all members of the county's Museum Commission — chairman Steve Bogart, Hal Huntington and Cammy Warner.



Schirack

Martin said she told Bill Harvey, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, about Schirack's arrest.

The two other commissioners, Bruce Nichols and Mark Bennett, both said they didn't learn about Schirack's arrest until Tuesday, after they had voted to approve her one-year contract. Both commissioners said they would have liked to have known about Schirack's arrest before they voted on the contract on Feb. 6.

Nichols and Bennett also said they would like to know more about the circumstances of the arrest.

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IDAHO COUPLE ARRESTED IN DURKEE MONDAY

Court cases mean lesser charge

By Chris Collins
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Two recent Oregon Court of Appeals rulings prevented authorities from charging an Idaho couple with first-degree burglary, a Class A felony, when they were found inside a Durkee home without the owner's permission Monday night.

Deylen Scott Loos, a 33-year-old from Meridian, Idaho, whom police listed as a transient, and Pearl Naomi Adair, 38, of Boise, instead were charged with the Class A misdemeanor crime of first-degree criminal trespassing, District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said. The couple appeared in Baker County Circuit Court Tuesday. Judge Greg Baxter granted them both conditional releases from jail.

Loos and Adair also were charged with third-degree criminal mischief for "tampering with property" at the Durkee home where they allegedly had been staying without permission.

See Charge / Page 3A

Site of hearing for carbon bill moved

Baker County residents will have a chance to comment on the carbon cap-and-trade bill the Oregon Legislature is considering.

Although none of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction's four scheduled public forums is in Baker City, a remote hearing is slated for Monday, Feb. 25.

The event, originally slated at the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative office has been changed to the Baker County Event Center, 2600 East St.

The one-hour event starts at 5 p.m.

Local officials, including representatives from OTEC and the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, along with state Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, have expressed concern about the potential negative effects of the bill, including higher prices for natural gas and gasoline.

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County hires aid for its auditor

By Casey Crowley
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After Baker County's first year with a new budget auditor, it will rehire its previous accounting firm to assist with the annual audit.

The county's new auditor, Pauly Rogers and Co. of Portland, will still compile the audit report.

But Guyer and Associates of Baker City will draft financial statements and handle other tasks associated with the audit.

County commissioners

on Wednesday approved an agreement with Guyer and Associates for up to \$15,000 and 125 hours of work.

The county requested proposals from three accounting firms but only Guyer and Associates submitted an offer.

The firm, which had handled the entire audit for the county for many years, will compile financial statements, review Justice Court transactions, amass annual property tax information, test samples of Banner Bank credit card charges, review Road Depart-

ment and Museum Department inventories, review and verify reconciliation of outside checking accounts and consult with county department heads as well as officials from Pauly Rogers and Co.

The consultation with the audit firm and county department heads is the only service that doesn't have a specified maximum number of hours. Guyer will bill the county at a rate of \$120 an hour.

The idea to hire a third party to provide additional auditing services came from

Pauly Rogers after last year's audit was submitted to the state more than a year late.

The audit for the most recent fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2018, was due Dec. 31, 2018.

The county has received an extension from the state to June 30, and county officials hope to get back on schedule after this year, said Christena Cook, the county's administrative services director.

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WEDNESDAY — CLASS 1A STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT PREVIEW