



State Hoops

Your guide to the Class 1A state tournament this week at Baker High School

Baker City Herald

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Locals fear carbon cap bill

By Casey Crowley

Baker County residents on Monday evening had what's likely their only face-to-face chance to comment on Oregon's proposed carbon cap-and-trade bill.

Between 200 and 300 people gathered at the Baker Community Events Center for the hour-long hearing with the Legislature's Joint Committee for Carbon Reduction.

About 25 people testified to the committee by video connection, most expressing concerns about how the bill could harm the local and state economy.

Monday's event was one of five public hearings the committee has scheduled to gather comments about House Bill 2020, which would cap limits on carbon emissions in the state and also create a system by which companies that exceed the limit could buy credits — the "trade" part of the bill — with companies that don't.

Attendees filled a conference room with overflow seating in the larger section of the Events Center. Those standing in the back of the conference room reported difficulty hearing while in the overflow area you could not hear anything from the hearing for the majority of the time.

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Snow day: To go or not to go

By Chris Collins

When the snow begins to fall and the ice starts to form on the highways surrounding the Baker Valley and its outlying areas, Mark Witty knows he's going to be in for some criticism.

As Baker School District superintendent, Witty can be sure that there will be those who second-guess whatever decision he makes about whether to hold classes as usual or call a snow day. The first decision leads to disappointed students who might be anticipating an extra day off from classes.

The second sends parents scrambling to rearrange their schedules or to make special arrangements for their children, especially the younger ones, who can't be left home alone.

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Officials Say Improving Child Care Options Can Benefit Economy

Child Care Crisis



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Each morning at Masterminds Preschool, students, including Jax Garcia, start with basic hygiene of washing hands and brushing teeth.



Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald
Tori Hawkins, assistant teacher at Masterminds Preschool, works with student Gunnar Snider.

By Lisa Britton

For the Baker City Herald

Jax Garcia scrubs his hands with soap and water, then grabs his toothbrush.

"The first thing we do is hygiene. It's introducing habits, routines, schedules," says Ronda White, owner of Masterminds Preschool and Child Care in Baker City.

When Garcia finishes up in the bathroom, he joins his five classmates in the living room that White converted into a learning space.

Masterminds is a state-funded preschool through the Preschool

Promise program. It is for ages 3 to 5. Students attend for six hours, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To qualify for attendance, income must be no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, that is an annual income of \$50,200.

On Monday, Masterminds received several visitors who were in Baker City to release a report titled "Want to Grow Oregon's Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis."

Preschool and child care centers both cater to children age 5 and younger — a demographic that can

benefit from early learning opportunities.

The contingent who came to Baker City included Martha Brooks, state director of two bipartisan nonprofits — ReadyNation and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.

She was joined by Kelly Poe, director of community services for Malheur Education Service District (ESD), and Theresa Martinez, Early Learning coordinator and Preschool Promise director for Malheur ESD.

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Lisa Britton / For the Baker City Herald

Ronda White, sitting, talks about the importance of quality child care and preschool. White owns Masterminds Preschool, and on Monday visited with Baker School District Superintendent Mark Witty, left, and Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub representatives Kelly Poe and Theresa Martinez.

Council close on property rules

By Casey Crowley

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The Baker City Council is one step away from approving an ordinance intended to give the city, and the Baker Justice Court judge, more authority to deal with properties where trash piles up.

Councilors passed the second of three readings of the chronic neighbor-

hood nuisance ordinance Tuesday.

The council probably will do the third and final reading at its next meeting, set for March 12.

A group of residents from an east Baker City neighborhood have urged councilors to pass the new ordinance, which could result in the Justice Court blocking access to a property, includ-

ing by the owner, until the property is cleaned up.

The residents were prompted by the property at 1975 Birch St. The city has twice paid to remove trash from the property.

The ordinance adds the word "chronic" to the phrase "neighborhood nuisance" and adds a number of items to the definition of a chronic nuisance.

Those items are: accumulation of rubbish and waste, whether the property has adequate water and sanitary service, whether the property has been judged to be abated or has a tax lien imposed on it, and if the resident has any prior convictions from violating the city's property maintenance ordinance.

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Jess Defrees of Baker City.

Oregon, 3A

BEND — February's historic snowstorm left thigh-high snow on the ground Tuesday across Central Oregon, kept plows running on streets, shuttered schools and offices and grounded flights at Redmond Airport.

National Weather Service meteorologists Tuesday were trying to better tally how much snow fell Monday.

La Pine had the most snowfall in the region, piling up 48 inches by 3 p.m. Monday, according to weather service reports. The reports also showed Redmond had 30 inches of snow.

BRIEFING

Garden Club meeting March 6

The Baker County Garden Club will meet March 6 at 10:30 a.m. at the Sunridge for a meeting and lunch. Master Gardener David Cowan will give a presentation on how new plants are evaluated and chosen for local retailers. New members are welcome.

WEATHER

Today

39 / 30



Rain or snow

Thursday

37 / 16



Snow showers

Correction: A story in Monday's issue about the Billie Ruth Bootsma Clinic contained an error. The Clinic no longer offers injections for allergies.

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.



TODAY

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FRIDAY — POWDER VALLEY GIRLS AT STATE CLASS 1A HOOPS TOURNEY