

# Firefighters climb for a good cause

By Lisa Britton  
For the Baker City Herald

Five firefighters from Baker City donned full gear to race up 69 flights of stairs to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The event is called the Firefighter Stairclimb. It happened Sunday, March 10, at the Columbia Center in downtown Seattle — the second-tallest building west of the Mississippi River. Those 69 flights included 1,356 steps and 788 vertical feet. The full firefighting gear, including a breathing apparatus, weighs about 50 pounds. "It's difficult," said Travis Fields, a Baker City firefighter. The local participants started fundraising in September and so far have raised more than \$5,000. Donations will be accepted online at [www.llswa.org](http://www.llswa.org). Participants from the Baker City Fire Department were Fields, Jason Jacobs, BJ Lynch, Ben Decker and Brian Johnson. The department has sent

participants for about 10 years. This year's event brought 2,000 firefighters from around the world and raised \$2.4 million to support research and patient services for blood cancers. During the Stairclimb, a firefighter enters the stairwell every 15 seconds. "You can pass, or get passed," Fields said. The stairs are narrow, he said, so most passing has to happen on a landing. Here are the times from the Baker City firefighters:

- Jason Jacobs: 22 minutes, 17 seconds
- Travis Fields: 17 minutes, 59 seconds
- BJ Lynch: 44 minutes, 11 seconds
- Ben Decker: 21 minutes, 17 seconds
- Brian Johnson: 21 minutes, 24 seconds

The fastest overall time — 11 minutes, 3 seconds — was logged by a firefighter from the Kingsley Field Fire Department at Klamath Falls.



Baker City firefighter Travis Fields awaits his turn to ascend the stairs at the Columbia Center in Seattle during the annual firefighter fundraiser.

Submitted photo

## Rotary Club scholarships available

The Scholarship Committee of the Baker City Rotary Club is accepting applications from qualified students of Baker County and North Powder school districts. The deadline is April 15. For program information and applications, contact Brenda Holly at 541-523-7927 or [jetlag4h@hughes.net](mailto:jetlag4h@hughes.net). Applications are also available at local high schools.

## City planners to meet March 20

The Baker City Planning Commission will meet March 20 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St. Planners will have a public hearing on a proposal to add 17,168 square feet to the Harvest Church at 3720 Birch St.

Planners will also have a work session to discuss revisions to the site design review process. Copies of the Harvest Church application are available at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St., and digital versions can be emailed by contacting the planning department at [planning@bakercity.org](mailto:planning@bakercity.org) or 541-523-8219.

## Conservation district meetings planned

Baker County's four soil and water conservation districts have scheduled meetings over the next month. All meetings are open to the public.

- Baker Valley, March 14 at noon at the USDA Service Center, 3990 Midway Drive in Baker City.
- Eagle Valley, March 18 at noon, location to be determined. Call 541-523-7121, extension 100, for details.
- Keating, March 19 at noon at the USDA Service Center, 3990 Midway Drive in Baker City.
- Burnt River, April 2 at 5:30 p.m. at the USDA Service Center, 3990 Midway Drive in Baker City.

## Wildland fire refresher course set

Eastern Oregon Training Group will have the RT-130 Wildland Fire Refresher course on April 13 in Baker City. The course will start at 8 a.m. at the 5J School District Building, 2090 Fourth St. Cost is \$100. All participants should bring gloves for the practice fire shelter deployment.

Registration can be done at [oregonfiretraining.com](http://oregonfiretraining.com). Pre-registration is requested; the cost will be \$120 at the door. This is a required class for all federal and state contractors. More information is available by calling Laurel Goodrich at 541-403-0907 or Jeff Sherman at 541-519-6213.

# 'Growing the Food You Want!' series of gardening classes starts March 20

Volunteers with the Oregon State University Master Gardener program will offer classes geared to helping home gardeners improve their skills before the growing season gets underway this spring. The "Growing the Food You Want!" classes meet Wednesday evenings March 20 at 6 p.m. They will take place over five Wednesdays at garden centers in the community and at the OSU Extension Office. The cost is \$5 each or \$20 for those who register for all five classes by Friday, March 22. Hosting businesses will be open prior to class time from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Those attending are asked to bring a pen or pencil. Drinks and a light snack will be provided. To register, make checks

payable to OSU Master Gardeners and mail them to OSU Master Gardeners, 2600 East St., Baker City, OR 97814. More information is available by calling Mindy Sherrieb at 541-523-3449, or leaving a message for her at the Extension Office, 541-523-6418. Questions also may be directed by email to mastergardener.baker@oregonstate.edu. Accommodations for those with disabilities may be arranged by calling or emailing the Extension Office. Here is the class schedule and a brief description of each class:

- March 20 — Ace Hardware, 2200 Resort St. "Garden Soils: It's a Dirty Business." Master Gardener volunteer MarkliAnn Johnston will provide

tips on how to optimize the soils for food production.

- April 3 — Oregon Trail Nursery, 600 Elm St. "You and Your Plant Beds: No Sleeping Around." Master Gardener volunteers David Cowan, Johnston, Kim Anderson and Mindy Sherrieb will provide information about whether to use seeds or plant from starts and whether to plant in the ground, in raised beds or containers.
- April 17 — Baker Botanicals, 3797 10th St., "Three Vegetables: Night Shade, Root and Salad." Cowan, Johnston and Sherrieb will provide "uncommonly good tips for commonly grown veggies."
- May 1 — D & B Supply, 3515 10th St., "Tree Fruit Fun-da-mentals." Cowan will present information about

how to care for fruit trees.

- May 15 — OSU Extension Office, 2600 East St. "After the Harvest." Robin Maille, Extension agent for Union and Baker counties, will speak about harvesting and preserving for the best flavor and nutrients, including tips for picking and storing produce and deciding whether to dry it, freeze it, can it, or eat it fresh. Maille works in the family and community health program area in the La Grande Extension office. She oversees the SNAP Ed (supplemental nutrition assistance program education) and also supervises the Master Gardener program in Union County and serves as county Extension leader for Union County.

## COUNCIL

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Councilors have been discussing the ordinance since December. City Manager Fred Warner Jr. proposed the ordinance in part based on the city's experience with a property at 1975 Birch St. The city has twice paid to remove trash from the property, most recently in January of this year. A group of residents in that eastside neighborhood have attended multiple meetings to tell councilors about the effects of the trash accumulation on that property. On Tuesday councilors heard from both proponents and opponents of the more stringent new ordinance. Previously, Christopher Christie of Baker City had been the only vocal opponent of the ordinance, but two others also told councilors Tuesday they have concerns about the ordinance's effects on residents. Roger Hogan said that although he agrees something needed to be done about the Birch Street property, he is concerned that future councils could misuse the ordinance and use it to punish people

who don't deserve it. "I know you need to do something about Birch Street, but I don't think this ordinance is what is needed," Hogan said. Alice Lentz said she believes the ordinance has overly severe restrictions on properties deemed as chronic nuisances. Christie said councilors have not answered questions he has asked. He also contends there is no evidence that mice reported in the neighborhood were there because of trash at 1975 Birch St. Doc Botti, who lives at 1955 Birch St., said that before city workers removed material from 1975 Birch St., he brought to City Hall a bag of mice he found in his silverware drawer. Botti said he showed the mice to City Recorder Julie Smith, who confirmed the event. Botti said he supports the new ordinance because the previous version, which didn't allow the city to seek a court order barring access to a property, lacked "teeth." Joel Richardson, who lives at 1940 Birch, said that in his 27 years there he has seen three mice total. But after refuse accumulated at 1975

Birch, Richardson said he has had an infestation of mice. Residents who support the new ordinance said they have nothing against Lucas Gwin, who lives at 1975 Birch. They said they are only bothered by the lack of maintenance at the property. In other business Tuesday, councilors approved the capital plan for water and wastewater management, and the pavement management plan. They also accepted a bid to buy ductile iron pipe for the mountain water line replacement project to Core and Main, the lower bidder at \$312,519. Core and Main's closest location is in Meridian, Idaho. The city received four other bids ranging from \$316,000 to \$335,000. The pipe installation, which continues a project started several years ago to replace the decades-old concrete pipe that brings the majority of the city's water to town from the watershed in the Elkhorn Mountains, is scheduled to begin in July and be finished

by October. The money for the project is budgeted for in the 2019-2020 proposed budget. **Fiber optic line** Councilors approved a proposal to install fiber optic lines at the Elkhorn View Industrial Park. Eastern Oregon Net Inc. will do the work for \$95,138, and is required to install the service by March 25. The city has a \$137,000 grant from Business Oregon to pay for the project. The other bid was from Oregon Telephone Company for \$141,903. The council will have a work session today at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St., to discuss efforts to work with the Forest Service to reduce the risk of wildfire in the city's 10,000-acre watershed. The council might cancel its second regular meeting for March, set for the 26th, because Warner and public works director Michelle Owen won't be able to attend. The agenda for the meeting likely would be short.

## CRAFTERS

*Continued from Page 1A*  
The Baker City Planning Commission will have a public hearing March 20 on the couple's plan to build the 15,250-square-foot building. The hearing is set for 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St. According to the application, the couple plan to have a 6,180-square-foot retail space, as well as a woodworking shop, office, warehouse and caretaker's unit. Chad Williams said they hope to open the crafters' mall — the only part of the building that

would be open to the public — in early summer. Williams said he and his wife, who sell wooden crafts of her design at bazaars around the region, believe there is a need for a retail mall for people to offer their wares. "There are a lot of crafters in town and we wanted to open a place to help the crafting community," he said. He envisions the mall offering items such as knitted clothing, jewelry, wood and metal items. "Any kind of craft," Williams said. He said his wife would also like to put on crafting classes in the building.

## HEART TO HEART

### Spirit from girls state basketball title can spur neighbors to help neighbors

Wow! The picture on the front page of Monday's newspaper was certainly worth more than 1,000 words ("The History Makers"). You helped everyone in Baker City to celebrate with the girls basketball team. Thank you. If we, as a community, can come together to celebrate winning a state basketball tournament, maybe we could come together to help our neighbors who are overwhelmed or unable to accomplish the task of cleaning up their yards. I imagine several neighbors complaining about a nuisance property over the backyard fence and then agreeing to talk to the neighbor in need of help and volunteering to haul off the trash and spruce up the yard. A work party of neighbors would do a lot to raise spirits, not only for the person in need, but of those who come to help. At the end, maybe the smiles and hugs of those neighbors can rival those on the cover of your newspaper.

James E. Davis  
Baker City

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**CAPTAIN MARVEL** PG-13  
FRI & SAT: (4:00) 7:00, 9:45 SUN: (4:00) 7:00  
MON-TH: 7:00

**HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD** PG  
FRI & SAT: (4:10) 7:10, 9:50 SUN: (4:10) 7:10  
MON-TH: 7:10

**GRETA** R  
FRI & SAT: 7:20, 9:55 SUN-THURS: 7:20

**FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY** PG-13  
FRI - SUN: (4:20)

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