



In **OUTDOORS**, 1B
Early spring hike with a view

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Kelly Hardy of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Money being raised to buy rings for BHS girls hoops

There is a community-wide fundraising effort to help purchase state championship rings for the Baker girls basketball team. If you would like to donate, you can drop off your contribution at Lew Bros. Les Schwab tires or mail to Baker Girls Hoops, P.O. Box 593. Any amount is appreciated.

Greg Walden sets town hall in Baker

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., has scheduled a town hall in Baker City for Saturday, March 30, at 8:30 a.m. at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St.

WEATHER

Today

60 / 37



Isolated showers

Saturday

51 / 32



Rain showers

Sunday

55 / 30



Partly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

A story on Page 1A of Wednesday's Baker City Herald about the Hells Canyon Junior Rodeo mis-identified two people.

The rodeo queen's name is Emma Beard. Josie Huston is Kaylie Henderson's mother.

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Rockhounding Group Helping Revamp Baker Heritage Museum Displays

Revising the Rocks



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Myra Skidgel of Baker City, right, and Anna Stafford figure ways to rearrange rock collections to put similar kinds together, for instance, and make certain everything is plainly named.

By Jayson Jacoby
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Maggie Schirack and Anna Stafford agree that the hundreds of rocks, minerals and fossils displayed at the Baker Heritage Museum constitute a world-class collection.

They concur on a couple other matters as well. First, that the displays can be improved to make them more relevant, and educational, to museum visitors.

See **Rocks** / Page 5A

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Sticky notes help rockhounds, including Jarri McClarin of Baker City, to suggest what needs to be done to various collections.



Bennett serving on Wildfire Council

By Jayson Jacoby
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Mark Bennett is pleased to serve on Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's new Wildfire Response Council, although after the group's first meeting on Monday, he feels a bit like a student who just aced calculus and then enrolls in remedial algebra.



Bennett

Bennett, a Baker County commissioner and cattle rancher in the southern part of the county, said the effects

of big blazes that prompted Brown to create the Council, by executive order in January, are depressingly familiar to him and to other residents in Central and Eastern Oregon.

Valleys clogged with lung-irritating smoke.

Green forests transformed into swathes of black bark and ashy soil.

Rural residents forced to evacuate as flames threatened their homes and, potentially, their lives.

In just the past five years wildfires have scarred more than 150,000 acres in Baker County. The 2015 fire season

was the worst, statistically, with the Cornet/Windy Ridge fire spreading across 104,000 acres south of Baker City. The lightning-sparked blaze was the biggest in county history.

But since then major fires have burned much closer to Oregon's population centers west of the Cascades.

The Eagle Creek fire, started in the Columbia Gorge by a teenager playing with fireworks in September 2017, burned about 49,000 acres and closed Interstate 84 for more than a week.

See **Bennett** / Page 5A

Haines worker claims violation

By Casey Crowley
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The public works director for Haines claims in a letter sent to city councilors that the mayor ordered him to send falsified sewer system records to a state agency and to drive vehicles he wasn't licensed to operate.

Brandon Fry, who is the city's only public works employee, has worked for Haines since January 2017.

Fry contends that Mayor Jim Brown, who was re-elected in November 2018 as the only candidate on the ballot, told him to send sewer discharge statistics to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that didn't represent actual recordings of the daily discharge volumes.

Fry said Brown told him to do that rather than work overtime on weekends and holidays to take the daily readings.

See **Haines** / Page 5A

Baker wins contest for playground

In the end, it wasn't even close.

Baker City dominated a month-long online voting contest sponsored by Moda Health and the Portland Trail Blazers and will win a grant of about \$35,000 to buy equipment for an all-abilities playground at Geiser-Pollman Park.

Baker City received about 63,600 votes, more than 24,000 more than second-place Prineville. Independence was the third competing city.

Blazers' star Damian Lillard congratulated Baker City in a video message posted Thursday on Moda Health's Facebook page. You can watch the video on the Baker City Herald's Facebook page.

Baker man thankful after surviving crash

By Chris Collins
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The first day of spring started out much like any other day for Jay Wilson.

But it would end with a trip to the hospital and a prayer of thanksgiving that although he was sore, no bones were broken and he was going home to his family.

Wilson, 43, who with his wife, Kristin, owns Appliances and More, was back on the job Thursday after being blindsided by a driver who police say was under the influence of drugs and alcohol when her Ford Aerostar van rammed Wilson's pickup truck as he prepared to get into it.

See **Crash** / Page 3A

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

A Baker City woman was arrested on multiple charges, including drunken driving, after a Wednesday crash.



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MONDAY — ROUNDUP OF WEEKEND HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS ACTION