

DRY SPELL

Continued from Page 1A

The warm stretch has shriveled the snowpack in the mountains, although it remains above average in many places.

Since May 1 the snow depth at a measuring site near Anthony Lake, elevation 7,160 feet, has shrunk from 50 inches to 26.

But warm, dry weather hasn't been the only factor.

Indeed, Ward doesn't even think that duo deserves the bulk of the blame.

The greater villain, he believes, is wind.

Spring tends to be a blustery season, to be sure. But Ward said that nearly incessant north gales that buffeted Baker Valley on many days

during the dry period played a major role.

"It has dried us out immensely," he said. "When you have consistent 17 to 20 mile an hour winds all day you can watch it just suck the moisture out of a wheat crop."

Researchers have shown that as wind velocity increases so does the rate of evaporation, as the wind blows away moist air near the ground surface.

During the 24 days without rain the average wind speed at the Airport topped 10 mph on 10 days, and gusts exceeded 30 mph on 13 days.

The combination of wind, heat and lack of rain prompted farmers and ranchers to start irrigating heavily, and that in turn forced the Baker Valley Irrigation District, which manages Phillips

Reservoir, to release a glut of water through Mason Dam.

For most of April the district was releasing a comparative trickle from the dam. Augmented by the inflow from the Powder River and tributaries such as Deer Creek, the reservoir was rising rapidly.

Phillips, which is considered full when it's holding 73,500 acre-feet of water, was gaining more than 810 acre feet daily in April, going from 12,700 acre-feet at the start of the month to 37,200 on April 30.

But on May 1 the irrigation district boosted the water release from Mason Dam from 42 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 167 to meet the demand from downstream irrigators.

The volume has continued to rise, reaching 345 cfs earlier this week before dropping to

310 cfs today.

That nearly equals the rate of inflow from the Powder River. And because tributaries bring in comparatively small volumes, the reservoir has been rising at a much slower rate during May — about 270 acre-feet per day, one-third the rate during April.

The bottom line, Ward said, is that Phillips, which in early April looked as though it might reach 75 percent of capacity or perhaps even higher, now probably won't go much above its current 57 percent.

"It's surprising and disappointing," Ward said.

He doesn't expect that the rainy stretch that started Wednesday will have a significant benefit because farmers will continue to need irrigation water from the

reservoir.

Ward said he and other members of the Baker Valley Irrigation District's board of directors recently made "a small wager" over how far the reservoir would rise this spring.

All the predictions were too optimistic, he said.

Ward doesn't believe the situation at the reservoir is due solely to the high demand for irrigation water.

He said he visited Sumpter Valley a couple weeks ago and talked to some residents who told him that much of the melting snow seemed to be soaking into the ground rather than trickling into streams.

Despite his disappointment, Ward emphasizes that the water outlook is more promising than it was a year ago, when

most of Baker County was dealing with drought.

Today, no part of the county is even rated as abnormally dry, the precursor to drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor index.

In late winter and early spring the prodigious amounts of rain and snow soaked into the soil, Ward said.

"We got a lot of water into the ground," he said.

That should help yield good crops this summer, he said.

And although Phillips won't come close to filling for the first time since 2011 (the reservoir almost filled in 2017 thanks the previous winter's near-record snowpack), it almost certainly will surpass its peak volume from 2013-16, and 2018.

CONTRACT

Continued from Page 1A

Witty said he appreciated the discussions that came out of meeting with a smaller, more informal contingent this year, which was a change from recent past practice.

"The dialogue between the management team and the BEA representatives was extremely useful," Witty said. "We achieved some of our goals on the management side and the BEA achieved some of its goals."

The increase moves the annual base salary for a beginning teacher with a bachelor's degree from \$33,530 to \$34,536 in 2019-2020 and to \$35,399 in 2020-2021.

The top salary will increase from \$63,557 in the current contract to \$65,464 in 2019-20 and \$67,101 the next year. Teachers earning the top wage have 15 years of experience and hold a bachelor's degree, plus 90 additional hours of education, or a master's degree and 45 additional hours of education.

Extra-duty contract increases for each category and step will be computed from the base of the 2018-19 salary schedule, the contract states.

The starting salary, which is paid to first-year elementary choral instructors and middle school intramural coaches, will increase from this year's \$1,878 to \$1,934 next year and \$1,982 in 2020-2021.

The top extra-duty pay will increase from \$5,701 paid this year to \$5,872 this year and \$6,019 the year after that.

Those payments go to Baker High School head coaches, the BHS athletic director, and high school band, choral and drama directors.

The athletic director will receive two stipends in his or her category. That includes one for fall sports and one for winter sports.

Staff members who volunteer to help or supervise school-related activities beyond the normal workday may be reimbursed for all pre-authorized expenses and paid 60% of the hourly base per diem salary, the contract states.

The insurance premium cap in the first year of the new contract will increase from the current \$1,075 to \$1,200 in 2019-2020, increasing to \$1,275 in the contract's second year.

The new contract also includes tuition reimbursement funds

(budgeted at the rate of \$15,000 per year) to encourage teachers to pursue master's degrees within their area of teaching assignment.

Teachers must hold master's degrees in their specific subject area, above a master's in teaching degree, in order to offer student courses that qualify for dual credit through a community college or university, Witty said. By providing incentives to help teachers gain master's degrees, the District will be able to offer more dual-credit classes, which provide a savings for students who earn college credits while still in high school, he said.

2019-20 School Calendar

Also during their special meeting Tuesday, School Board members unanimously approved a 2019-20 calendar that continues the four-day school week again sets the first day of school as the Tuesday after Labor Day.

Meetings will continue between administrators and staff to hammer out final details, but Witty said the District wanted to get the basic calendar dates out to families to help them with future planning.

He hopes to set the calendar two

years ahead in the future beginning next year.

"From parents' and families' perspectives it's nice to know and for the School District it allows planning to take place a couple of years out," he said.

The calendar, which determines class schedules for students and work days for teachers, begins with staff in-service training and staff work days on Aug. 26-29.

Students and staff will return to classes Sept. 3 and school will be in session that first Friday of Sept. 6 to make up for the Labor Day holiday.

Friday school days for students and staff also are scheduled on Feb. 21 to make up for the Presidents Day holiday on Feb. 17 and May 29 to make up for the Memorial Day holiday on May 25.

Thanksgiving break is set for Nov. 27-29 and Christmas break will begin on Dec. 20 and continue through Jan. 3. Spring break is scheduled the week of March 23-27.

Graduation will be on June 7, 2020, and the last day of school, with early release of students, is set for June 10. Staff will end the year with a work day on June 11.

The calendar includes 10 eight-

hour Friday workdays for teachers. The 10th teacher work day is an addition to the nine included in this year's calendar and was agreed to by both parties in the bargaining process. It has not yet been added to the draft of the 2019-20 calendar approved by the Board.

The addition of a 10th workday for teachers will provide more time for training, Witty said.

"We require more opportunities to be able to collaborate with staff to be able to move forward in a solidified way with kids," he said.

The bargaining teams also agreed to move the Friday workday historically scheduled in December to another time in the school year.

The contract calls for the District to retain decision-making authority over the content of the Friday workdays. Consideration will, however, be given to recommendations from a team composed of Association members and administrators.

The calendar also includes two in-service training days; three grading days; and three parent-teacher conference days.

There are eight holidays included in the schedule.

Baker County



CHURCH DIRECTORY

Baker United Methodist Church

Sunday Worship
Casual Service: 8:30 AM
Traditional Service: 10 AM

1919 2nd Street, Baker City
541-523-4201

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service
10:30 AM

1995 4th Street, Baker City
541-523-5201
firstpresbaker.blogspot.com

 Third & Broadway
541-523-3891

Sundays
10 AM Service
& Children's Church
6-7:30 pm Youth Group
(Grades 7-12)
Thursdays
5:30-6:30 pm
Free Community Dinner
www.bakercalvarybaptist.com

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

Sunday Service
11:00 AM

www.ChristianScience.com

3rd & Washington, Baker City
541-523-5911


Baker City
Church of the Nazarene

Sunday Worship 9:45 AM

Pastor Troy Teeter
1250 Hughes Lane, Baker City
(Corner of Cedar & Hughes)
541-523-3533
www.bakernaz.com

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Baker City 1st Ward
Sacrament Meeting 9 AM

Baker City 2nd Ward
Sacrament Meeting 10:30 AM

Baker Valley Ward
Sacrament Meeting 12 PM

2625 Hughes Lane, Baker City
541-523-2397

Elkhorn Baptist Church

Sunday School 10 AM
Morning Worship 11 AM
Evening Worship 6 PM
Discovery Kids Worship
6:30 PM
3520 Birch St, Baker City
541-523-4332

Harvest Church

& HARVEST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
(Preschool-12 Grade)
Harvest Cafe 9:15 am
Morning Worship 10:10 AM
3720 Birch St, Baker City
541-523-4233

The first Sunday of each month is Mission Breakfast. Donations and non-perishable donations for NEOCC are accepted.

New Beginnings Fellowship PC of G

Sunday Morning Worship
10:30 AM

Sunday Evening 6 PM
Weds Service 7 PM

Zan & Dawn Coen
1820 Estes, Baker City
541- 524-1394

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Service 11 AM

1734Third Street, Baker City
541-523-3922

firstlutheranbakercity@gmail.com

ST. BRIGID'S IN THE PINES COMMUNITY CHURCH

11:30 a.m. Services
1st & 3rd Sunday
Holy Eucharist

East Auburn Street, Sumpter
541-523-4812
A Mission of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Baker City


BAKER CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Sunday Worship

First Service 8:30 AM
2nd Service & Sunday School
10 AM

Jr. High & High School Youth
Tues 6:30 PM
Youth Pastor Silas Moe

675 Hwy 7, Baker City • 541-523-5425

SAINT ALPHONSUS HOSPITAL CHAPEL

Open to all patients, family and friends for reflection and prayer.

St. Alphonsus Hospital
in Baker City

AGAPE CHRISTIAN CENTER

Sunday Services
10:00 AM & 6:30 PM

South Highway 7,
Baker City
541-523-6586

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Saturday Worship
11:00 AM

www.bakercitysda.com
17th & Pocahontas, Baker City
541-523-4913


St. Francis De Sales Cathedral

Daily Masses:
M, T, Th, F 9 AM
Day Chapel in Cathedral
Wed Daily Mass 9 AM
at St. Alphonsus Chapel
Sat 8 AM at Day Chapel

Baker City Saturday Mass 6 pm
Baker City Sunday Mass 9:30 am
St. Therese in Halfway 2 pm Sat
St. Anthony's in North Powder 11:30 Sun

541-523-4521
Corner of First & Church, Baker City


St. Stephen's Episcopal

Services at 9 AM
1st & 3rd Sundays, Holy Eucharist
2nd & 4th Sundays, Morning Prayer
5th Sunday, Morning Prayer

2177 First Street • Baker City
Entrance on 1st Street
Corner Church & First Streets
541-523-4812

Faith Center Foursquare

A Four Square Gospel Church

Worship Service
10:45 AM

1839 3rd St, Baker City
541-523-7915

The church directory is published the third Friday of every month. Information for this directory is provided by participating churches, please call 541-523-3673 for more information.

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