

Community

Helping hands reach across Oregon to Baker

■ Members of the Southwest Church of Christ in Tigard travel to Baker City for the 12th year to help with local home projects

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Haggling over eggs is a serious business when you have 50 mouths to feed. Seven dozen? Twelve dozen?

When in doubt, Dusty Shannon pulls out her spreadsheet to make her grocery list.

Shannon, Terri Burnette, and Kristi Conway were the kitchen crew last week while members of the Southwest Church of Christ from Tigard completed projects around Baker City.

The connection is the Baker Valley Church of Christ and Pastor John Goodyear, whose brother is an elder at the Southwest Church of Christ.

In addition to their work in Baker City, a smaller team completes an international service trip every other year.

A total of 50 volunteers arrived in Baker City on July 27. Thirty are teenagers — 20 boys and 10 girls.

"We try to spoil them a little bit," Dusty said of the teenagers. "They're working really hard."

This is the 12th year members of the church have traveled to Baker City to help local residents. The teenagers are in charge of fundraising about \$14,000 which pays for food and supplies for projects.

They bring quite a bit with them — the food is packed in a U-Haul trailer — but they also make frequent trips to local businesses.

"The guys at Cashway know us, the ones at Ace know us, Burger Bob knows us," said David Burnette, who was helping paint the house behind the former In & Out drive-in. "We have great community support."

The group divided into four teams to tackle projects around town.

At Churchill School, the team fixed the ceiling in the east end by installing sheetrock. They also painted the walls.

Churchill's commercial kitchen became the place to prepare and eat meals. In the past, food prep was at Baker Valley Church of Christ, but this year the church's kitchen is being remodeled as one of the projects.

"This is our thank you to the church," said David Godfrey.

On 10th Street, another team painted the home that Yeni Arteaga purchased along with the In & Out. She will remodel the former drive-in for her business, MC Taco Bus.

The fourth team painted another house in Baker City.

The group headed home on Aug. 3. Each day began with breakfast, followed by a morning of work. They returned to Churchill for lunch, then headed back out to work.

After dinner they went bowling, or to a movie.

When asked about the hard work, Hugh Foster smiled.

"We took a nap at lunch," he said.

That was at Churchill, on



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

One project crew from the Southwest Church of Christ painted the house behind the former In & Out. Hugh Foster caulked a seam after the painting was finished.

"They are all here for the same purpose — to serve."

— Duane Stofan, Southwest Church of Christ

the concrete floor.

Although they don't have much construction to do this time, in the past the teenagers have often built ramps and decks, installed windows, and cleaned up.

After more than a decade of service, they receive suggestions about people who could use some help completing a project.

And they learn new skills along the way.

"Part of the fun is teaching the teens how to use power tools, and about different trades," said Duane Stofan.

Annika Pietzke, 16, installed a toilet for the first time in her life.

"It's been pretty great," she said of the work week.

At every work site, the teenagers were quick to smile, whether they were installing cabinets or caulking a seam.

"They are all here for the same purpose — to serve," Stofan said.



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

Ethan Cate, 14, left, and Paige Norton, 16, work on painting at Churchill School during a week of volunteer work with the Southwest Church of Christ.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Perseid Meteor Shower campout, astronomy talks, photography lessons

Go Wild: American Adventures of Baker City is planning an event to celebrate the annual Perseid Meteor Shower on Saturday night, Aug. 10 at the Copperbelt Winery near Keating.

Cost for people who bring their own tent is \$65 for adults, \$45 for ages 13 to 20, and \$20 for ages 2 to 12.

Go Wild also offers a luxury camp set up at \$399 for two people, plus the base admission costs listed above.

The event schedule includes food, drinks and a corn-hole competition from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., an astronomy talk and telescope viewing from 9 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., a night photography lesson from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m., and meteor and moon viewing starting at 11 p.m.

Base admission includes wood-fired pizza and two drink tokens.

Rick Rienks, an astronomer from Baker City, will lead the astronomy talk and demonstrate the use of a telescope. Professional photographer Clay Berthelsen will give attendees a lesson in night photography.

More at www.gowildusa.com/perseidcampout

POLE FIRE

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Although the fire, started by lightning on Monday, jumped control lines twice on Tuesday, as of this morning it was not growing, said Al Crouch of the BLM's Vale District. The fire was 25% contained this morning.

"There's still a lot of work to be done towards containment," Crouch said. "Our lines are better, and we're in a better position than we were yesterday."

The Baker County Sheriff's Office on Monday issued an evacuation notice related to the fire. Only one home — at the junction of Morgan Creek and Snake River roads about a mile and a half east of the fire — is in the "leave now" category.

Several other structures, including a ranch along Hibbard Creek northeast of the fire, were at a level 1 notice — "be ready."

Crouch said an abundance of dry grass, including the especially flammable cheatgrass, has proved to be a challenge for fire crews.

"This year's fuel loading on our grasses is higher than average," he said.

The steep terrain, most of which is not accessible to vehicles, also presents a challenge, Crouch said.

One advantage is the fire's proximity to Brownlee Reservoir, about 2 miles away, which provides a reliable water supply for helicopters to drop on hot spots. Cooler weather, and potential rain over the next few days, could also aid firefighters.

The campground at the BLM's Spring Recreation Site near Huntington was closed due to use by firefighters, but it was expected to re-open Wednesday afternoon. The parking lot and boat ramp remained open to the public.

An incident management team comprising officials from the BLM's Vale and Burns districts took over management of the firefighting effort this morning.

EAGLE CAP FIRE

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Choppers doused flames on the western and southern edges of the Granite Gulch fire, which was sparked by lightning on July 14 near the center of the 365,000-acre Eagle Cap Wilderness, Oregon's largest.

Under a policy that's been in effect for more than 25 years for the Eagle Cap, Forest Service officials decided to manage, rather than fight, the fire, which has burned an estimated 1,000 acres.

Nathan Goodrich, fire management officer for the Wallowa Fire Zone, said the fire has had beneficial effects, including burning fuel on the ground and creating a mosaic pattern of burned and unburned forest that replicates what fires have historically done in the Wallowa Mountains.

"So far I am pleased with the effects of this fire," said Goodrich, who has monitored several lightning fires in the wilderness over the past 12 years.

According to a press release from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Tuesday, the purpose of the helicopter water drops was to prevent the fire from crossing the Minam River and burning downstream to the west.

The fire, which started in Granite Gulch, has burned over a ridge to the east into the No Name Creek drainage. The fire has not crossed the Minam River.

According to the Wallowa-Whitman, helicopters could drop water again, and ground crews could be called in if the fire crosses the Minam River.

Although the fire remains about seven miles from the nearest boundary of the wilderness, it could produce smoke plumes visible from the Baker and Grande Ronde valleys on hot, dry days for the next several weeks.

During summer vacation, there's more people traveling, so give yourself more time and be safe!



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