

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Karen Frakes of Baker City.

Oregon, 5A

SALEM (AP) — Oregon taxpayers will see the largest-ever state income tax refund next year, thanks to state revenue coming in at more than 9% above projections, state economists said Wednesday. The median refund will be \$346.

BRIEFING

Fiddlers to perform at Sumpter during flea market

The Blue Mountain Old-Time Fiddlers will be at the little white schoolhouse in Sumpter this weekend during the Labor Day flea market. The show starts at 1 p.m. Saturday. Entry is \$5, or \$4 for members of the Blue Mountain Fiddlers. Ages 12 and younger are free.

Bingo starts on Sunday at St. Francis Cathedral

Weekly bingo games are planned every Sunday afternoon from September through May in the social hall at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, 2235 First St. Doors open at 1:30 p.m., with bingo from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

WEATHER

Today

87 / 52

Mostly sunny

Saturday

93 / 52

Mostly sunny

Sunday

91 / 50

Mostly sunny

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Traffic Projects Planned On 10th Street, At Pocahontas Intersection

Talking About Traffic



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald

The Oregon Department of Transportation is planning to revise this intersection at the north of end of town where 10th Street meets Pocahontas Road, at left, and Hughes Lane, at right. The project, which includes “squaring off” the intersection that’s now offset, is planned for 2024.

By Samantha O’Conner
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A project that would change the way traffic flows on the 10th and Broadway street business districts, and redesign the intersection of 10th Street and Pocahontas Road/Hughes Lane, is tentatively planned for 2024.

Officials from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the city have discussed the project for several years, and ODOT made a presentation to the City Council during its Tuesday night meeting.

ODOT plans to combine several smaller projects into one so it can award a single contract. The estimated total cost is about \$9 million.

“What we call the 10th street project, we’ve been talking about it for several years with ODOT,” said Michelle Owen, the city’s public works director. “It is currently in the 2024 STIP — State Transportation Improvement Program — and so we’re scheduled for construction in 2024.”

One of the project’s components involves the traffic configuration on 10th Street from Broadway to Pocahontas, and on Broadway from Main to 10th.

ODOT plans to change from the current striping, with two travel lanes in each direction, to a single lane in each direction with a center turn lane that would be at least 14 feet wide.

“We’re after safety first and foremost at that intersection, Hughes and Pocahontas and 10th.”

— Michelle Owen, Baker City’s public works director

That’s the configuration in place now on Campbell Street from Main Street east to Birch Street.

According to ODOT data, in the five years after Campbell was restriped to three lanes in 2000, the number of crashes on that section of street dropped 15%, from 62 to 53, compared with the previous five years.

On-street parking would be allowed on the restriped sections of 10th and Broadway, and a bicycle lane would be added.

“The state’s focus is on all forms of transportation and they have to incorporate something other than just vehicular traffic movement when they work on a roadway,” Owen said. “It’s kind of required now that you consider bicycles and pedestrians because not everyone has a car.

Owen said public meetings will be scheduled next year to outline the proposed changes.

In 2015 a series of meetings took place, involving 10th Street busi-

ness owners as well as city and state officials, to gather opinions about possible traffic changes.

“But it’s time to renew that and put in more of a formal study,” Owen said.

The initial impetus for the 2015 meetings was concern about the intersection of 10th Street and Pocahontas, which had a higher-than-average crash rate based on ODOT data, Owen said.

“I think the biggest factor is safety,” she said. “We’re after safety first and foremost at that intersection, Hughes and Pocahontas and 10th. That flashing light hasn’t done enough and it’s really an offset intersection, so that’s what they’re looking to make some improvements there, maybe square it up, put appropriate turn lanes in.”

The 2015 conversations also included the possibility of improving pedestrian access from Baker High School to 10th Street and north to Pocahontas.

“When we went through our TSP in 2013 (Transportation System Plan) we identified that we wanted to have some multi-use paths or some sort of pedestrian, bike-ped, connection to that end of town because of the health department, YMCA, medical facilities.”

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Group to help 5J with bond ideas

■ Voters last November rejected a measure to build a new school, but district officials are looking at a less-expensive option

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

Superintendent Mark Witty has appointed a new committee to provide guidance on developing a bond measure to fund school improvements that he hopes will find favor with Baker School District voters.

The committee includes representatives of the business and agriculture communities, the medical community, senior citizens and parents.

Committee members are: Martin Arritola, Tori Brown, Jess Blatchford, Travis Cook, Stacy DeLong, Riley Hall, Coby Mastrude, Bob McKim, Lynette Perry, Wes Price, Angela Robb and Danae Simonski.

“Some of these people, I’m pretty confident, voted no on the original bond, and some voted yes,” Witty said in speaking to the Board at its Aug. 15 meeting. “We’re trying to cover various sectors.”

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Probation for mother of toddler who shot himself

By Chris Collins
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The mother of a 2-year-old Baker City boy who died in November 2018 after shooting himself in the head with a handgun he got control of has been placed on three years’ formal probation.

Diana Goodman, 33, of Baker City will avoid an 18-month prison term and possibly be able to raise her surviving son, who is about a year old, if she’s successful on probation, District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said Thursday.

Two-year-old Liam Mankins died Nov. 4, 2018, when a loaded .380-caliber semi-automatic pistol he was playing with discharged at his father’s home.

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ERIN GRUWELL,WHO INSPIRED THE FILM ‘FREEDOM WRITERS,’ SPEAKS TO BAKER TEACHERS

A teacher’s inspirational tale

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Erin Gruwell watched videos of Baker kids flying drones, coloring with chalk, and building robots during the school district’s summer programs.

Then she took the stage to talk about *her* kids, the students who showed up to her class — some with no parents, some with no food in the pantry, some with no homes.

Gruwell spoke to school district staff Tuesday morning. She shared her story from Long Beach, California, a tale that later made it to the big screen in the 2007 film “Freedom Writers.”

“When I started this journey I was an ordinary teacher walking into a chaotic place,” she said. “I had extraordinary students — but they didn’t know they were extraordinary.”

It was 1993. She was teaching English at Woodrow Wilson High

“I had extraordinary students — but they didn’t know they were extraordinary”

— Erin Gruwell

School in Long Beach.

Her 150 students came from rough backgrounds. Some had joined the Los Angeles riots the year before; many had attended funerals of friends who had been killed. One girl came with an ankle bracelet and probation officer.

They all were, she said, “wondering if I’m going to be another nameless statistic.”

“I was getting 150 kids who weren’t supposed to make it. They didn’t think they’d make it to their 16th birthday.”

She spoke of two students in particular: Carlos and Sharaud.



Submitted photo

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Erin Gruwell



TODAY

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MONDAY — OREGON, OREGON STATE, BOISE STATE FOOTBALL RESULTS