

Baker City Herald

September 16, 2019

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Sydney Keller

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Home & Living • Sports Monday **\$1.50**

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Anna Lewter of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Powder River clean up planned for Saturday

The Powder Basin Watershed Council is planning a clean up of the Powder River in Baker City for Saturday, Sept. 21 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers should meet at Geiser-Pollman Park. Snacks and water will be provided. To pre-register, call 541-523-7288.

Traffic delays crossing Hells Canyon Dam

Travel across Hells Canyon Dam will be restricted today through Thursday as crews replace spillgate cables, a task that requires a large crane. Drivers planning to cross the dam should expect delays of up to two hours each day between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. PDT. In addition, work on the road between Oxbow and the dam will cause traffic delays from Sept. 23 through Dec. 1. Traffic will be restricted to a single lane on a half-mile section near Oxbow. Work will take place between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. PDT weekdays. Delays of 30 minutes, and up to 2 hours, are expected.

WEATHER

Today

63 / 36



Cloudy with rain showers

Tuesday

68 / 43



Mostly cloudy with afternoon rain

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

The space below will be blank on issues delivered or sold from boxes. The space is for a postage label for issues that are mailed.

Fire Season Unusually Quiet In Northeastern Oregon

More Fizzle Than Flame



U.S. Forest Service photo

The Granite Gulch fire in the Eagle Cap Wilderness was the largest by far on the Wallowa-Whitman this summer.

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

For the second straight summer Northeastern Oregon, even as it broiled beneath a scorching sun, stayed comparatively cool through the wildfire season.

But though both years were tranquil, there were significant differences between the 2019 season and its immediate predecessor.

Most notably was the number of fires.

The 2018 season stands out for the scarcity of blazes, said Noel Livingston, fire management officer for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Lightning, which starts most fires on the forest, ignited just 26 blazes last year, the fewest since at least 1970. Those fires burned just 17.3 acres, which ranks as the third-lowest annual total in the past half century on the Wallowa-Whitman.

The 2019 season has been much more active, with 68 lightning fires

“Obviously it’s a fairly quiet year from a large fire standpoint. Our starts were way up from last year but we had good success with initial attack.”

— Noel Livingston, fire management officer, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

on the Wallowa-Whitman — exactly the annual average from the previous 10-year period.

But with the exception of the Granite Gulch fire in the Eagle Cap Wilderness, which has spread across 5,555 acres, none of this summer’s lightning fires has burned more than 30 acres.

(The Granite Gulch fire is an anomaly because the Wallowa-Whitman has been managing the blaze rather than trying to put it out as quickly as possible. The forest has a policy that allows a variety of strategies for lightning-sparked fires inside the

Eagle Cap Wilderness. Fire managers say the Granite Gulch fire has had beneficial effects, including reducing the amount of combustible fuel in the forest and creating a natural firebreak that could slow or stop a future blaze.)

The total burned acreage from the Wallowa-Whitman’s 67 fires, again not counting Granite Gulch, is 98.5 acres.

That’s well below the average of 22,000 acres burned annually, and fewer burned acres than all but 12 years in the past 50.

“Obviously it’s a fairly quiet year from a large fire standpoint,” Livingston said. “Our starts were way up from last year but we had good success with initial attack.”

Livingston is referring to the early phase of firefighting, when the difference between succeeding and failing can mean the difference between a fire that burns a tenth of an acre and one that burns 10,000.

See **Fizzle** / Page 3A

Pot shops react to vape issues

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The owners of Sumpter’s two marijuana dispensaries temporarily removed some vaping products from their shelves due to nationwide reports of lung illnesses tied to vaping, but both said they quickly confirmed that most of their products don’t contain a thickening agent tied to the health scare.

Investigators have focused on vitamin E acetate, which dilutes vape oils.

Vitamin E is safe as a pill or when applied on skin, but when inhaled the droplets can trigger pneumonia.

See **Vaping** / Page 2A

Pilot of crashed plane was Idaho man

By Dick Mason
The (La Grande) Observer

The pilot who died in a plane crash Sept. 8 northwest of Anthony Lakes was David Emery Koeppen, 82, of Fruitland, Idaho, according to Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen.

Koeppen was flying from Kennewick, Washington, to Ontario when he “apparently got off course” Capt. Craig Ward of the Union County Sheriff’s Office said Thursday, and his plane crashed at Elk Willow Springs about 35 miles northwest of Baker City.

The UCISO’s Search and Rescue unit was notified at 11:23 p.m. on Sept. 10 that Koeppen’s plane was overdue and might have crashed.

See **Plane** / Page 3A



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Jordan Remien, left, Grady Lay and other choir members practice attaining a correct sound by feeling vibrations in their jaws.

He’s ready for the next stage

■ Baker High School senior Jordan Remien will attend a musical and dramatic academy in the fall of 2020

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Jordan Remien has loved singing and performing for as long as he can remember, and now he has the chance to make it a career.

“It always seemed like an unattainable goal,” he said. Remien, 17, is a senior at Baker High School. But he already knows where he is headed in the fall of 2020: the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

See **Remien** / Page 2A



TODAY
Issue 55, 14 pages

Calendar2A
Classified 4B-7B
Comics3B

Community News3A
Crossword5B & 7B
Dear Abby8B

Home1B & 2B
Horoscope5B & 7B
Lottery Results2A

News of Record2A
Obituaries2A
Opinion4A

Senior Menus2A
Sports 5A-8A
Weather8B

WEDNESDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE