

Baker City Herald

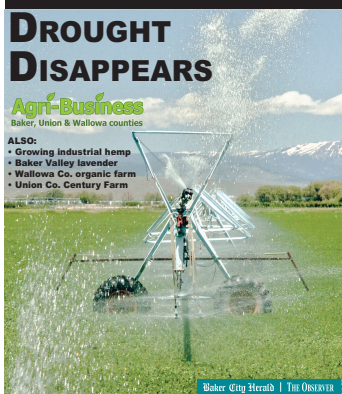
October 23, 2019

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Baker freshman Jozie Ramos moved up to the varsity Tuesday

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Business & AgLife • Go! magazine **\$1.50**



DROUGHT DISAPPEARS

Agri-Business
Baker, Union & Wallowa counties
ALSO:
• Growing industrial hemp
• Baker Valley lavender
• Wallowa Co. organic farm
• Union Co. Century Farm

COMING FRIDAY

The 3rd of our 3 annual special sections devoted to the agriculture industry. The 28-page section includes stories about a drought-free 2019 growing season, an industrial hemp farm in Eagle Valley and a lavender farm in Baker Valley.

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Amanda Steele of North Powder.

BRIEFING

Downtown trick-or treating set for Halloween

The annual Baker City Kiwanis Downtown Trick-or-Treat event is set for Thursday, Oct. 31 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Main Street will be closed to traffic between Auburn Avenue and Church Street. Businesses and organizations both on and off Main Street are invited to participate. More information is available by calling Debbie Poe, Kiwanis president, at 541-403-0483.

WEATHER

Today
55 / 23
Sunny

Thursday
59 / 28
Sunny

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.

5J bond idea: \$7.5 million

School Board to discuss Nov. 21 whether to ask voters to approve the measure in the May 2020 election

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

Representatives of an 11-person advisory committee presented to the Baker School Board Monday their scaled-back recommendations for remodeling Baker High School to accommodate seventh- and eighth-graders and making other improvements to the school district's buildings.

The committee recommended the District ask voters, probably in the May 2020 election, to approve a \$7.5 million bond measure to address overcrowding at the middle school and elementary schools, and improve safety and security at all Baker schools.

The project budget would include \$3 million from the Student Success

Act fund allocated to schools by the Oregon Legislature, and another \$2 million from the District's capital projects fund.

The District also has received a matching \$4 million OSCIM (Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program) that will be available if the bond measure passes. That would put the total project at about

\$16.5 million.

The Board is scheduled to discuss the committee's recommendation and to hear public comment Nov. 21.

The proposed bond measure is much smaller than the \$48 million proposal district voters soundly rejected in November 2018.

See **Schools** / Page 2A

OTEC Plans To Install Charging Station For Electric Cars



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative plans to install a charging station for electric vehicles on the east side of Resort Street between Thatcher's Ace Hardware and the Dollar Tree.

Charging Ahead

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative hopes to have a charging station for electric cars installed by the end of the year on Resort Street.

The Baker City Council on Tuesday approved a resolution designating one diagonal parking space on the east side of Resort Street, near Church Street, for an electric vehicle while it's using the charging station.

The station could accommodate one vehicle at a time.

The parking space is between

Thatcher's Ace Hardware and the Dollar Tree.

Charlie Tracy, director of engineering for OTEC, said the station will cost about \$40,000 to install. Some of the money will come from Oregon's clean fuels program, he said.

Tracy said OTEC has budgeted to install three charging stations — one in Baker City, one in John Day and one in Burns.

"We think it's the right thing do for our members," he said.

The cost of installing the chargers in Baker City, John Day and Burns

will have no effect on OTEC's power rates, Tracy said.

The cooperative, which is based in Baker City and has 23,000 members in Baker, Grant, Harney and Union counties, isn't planning at this point to install a charging station in La Grande.

The reason, Tracy said, is that an Electrify America charging station, which can accommodate most models of electric vehicles, is in place at the WalMart in Island City.

See **Charging** / Page 3A

Council will retain Warner

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

The Baker City Council has agreed to keep Fred Warner Jr. working as city manager after he retires through the state's pension system.



Warner

The Council on Tuesday approved a new contract with Warner, who has been city manager since May 2016.

The Council discussed the plan in a work session Monday night before voting on the matter Tuesday.

One change in the agreement was the move of Warner's planned retirement from the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) from Dec. 31 to Nov. 30.

See **Warner** / Page 3A

Police looking for arson suspects

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

A video camera captured images of two suspects in an arson fire outside a downtown business Tuesday evening that burned mattresses and box springs and produced enough heat to partially melt a metal enclosure for a cardboard recycling bin.

The fire, which also scorched the camera, started about 7:01 p.m. on the east side of the building that houses Appliances and More, at the corner of Main and Broadway streets, Fire Chief John Clark said.

See **Arson** / Page 3A

School Board backs train quiet zone

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

The Baker School Board agreed Monday to submit a letter supporting a community movement to establish a quiet zone that would, in most cases, prohibit Union Pacific freight trains from sounding their horns as they travel through town.

The Board agreed unanimously (director Andrew Bryan was absent) to direct Superintendent Mark Witty and his staff to work with director Julie Huntington to draft a letter asking the City Council to file a "Notice of Intent to establish a Quiet Zone." The letter will be presented

to the Council in advance of its Nov. 12 meeting.

The request for support came from Baker City residents Peter Fargo and Dennis Dougherty. Dougherty was accompanied to the meeting by his sixth-grade son, Landon Dougherty, who attends South Baker Intermediate School.

The District's interest in the quiet zone is heightened because of the school's proximity to the tracks, which run along the south side of the school and are just a short distance from the southern edge of the playground.

(Witty noted that his south Baker City home

also is close to the tracks.)

In expressing her support for submitting a letter to the Council, Huntington noted the noise and the shaking created by multiple trains that travel past the school daily.

"It's loud. It's really loud," Huntington said. "But, for me, I want to make sure we don't compromise safety here to have quiet."

Witty said he would suggest a letter stating the District "believes this should be considered; we think it is an issue that has value."

In addition to Fargo and Dougherty, Jessica Anderson, who teaches physical

education at South Baker, told the Board about the challenges she faces instructing her students, especially when they take to the field for class.

"The minute a train goes by, we have to stop," Anderson said of the disruption the train horns add to her ability to teach her classes. "The train interrupts me. It affects hundreds of kids just from an education standpoint.

"Not to mention those who don't get a good night sleep — hundreds of kids — safety, instruction, sleeping," she said.

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FRIDAY — KEATING STUDENTS GET A GLIMPSE OF OUTER SPACE