



In LOCAL, 6A

More on Hells Canyon crash

# Baker City Herald

November 13, 2019

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### QUICK HITS

#### Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Steven Ritter of Baker City.

#### Community, 3A

Carmen Ott wants to find a loving home for every dog that comes her way, but sometimes that's not the hardest part. Just getting the dog can be the bigger challenge.

### BRIEFING

#### Pet supply collection drive under way

PayneWest Insurance is having a pet supply collection drive for Best Friends of Baker through Dec. 13. People can drop off adult dog and cat food (wet or dry), dry kitten and dry puppy food, kitty litter and kitten milk replacement powder and nursing bottles at PayneWest, at 2001 Main St. (corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue).

#### Garden Club meets November 20

The Baker County Garden Club will meet Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 10:30 a.m. in the back meeting room at the Community Connection Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St. Members will be planting paperwhites, so please bring containers. They will also be discussing the upcoming bazaar. Lunch is \$4.50 for seniors, \$6.75 for non-seniors.

### WEATHER

**Today**  
54 / 26  
Partly sunny

**Thursday**  
56 / 25  
Partly sunny

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## Baker City Council Agrees To Explore Potential Train Quiet Zone

# Whistle Worries



A Union Pacific freight train passing by South Baker Intermediate School.

S. John Collins / Baker City Herald file photo

By Samantha O'Conner  
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More than 50 people who support a proposal to stop freight trains from blowing their whistles at crossings in Baker City made their case to the City Council Tuesday night.

Councilors voted 6-0 to direct city staff to file a notice of intent to apply for a Quiet Zone designation.

There is no cost to file the notice of intent, and it doesn't obligate the city to file an application.

Dennis Dougherty and Peter Fargo, Baker City residents and members

of the group promoting a quiet zone, Neighbors for a Safer, Quieter and Healthier Baker City, presented a slideshow explaining what a Quiet Zone is, and listing ways that train whistles can affect people. They focused mainly on students at South Baker Intermediate School, which is next to the railroad tracks.

Anna Fargo, who's also a member of the group, discussed the health effects of train whistles. They can reach 110 decibels, she said, and the World Health Organization recommends 54 decibels "to avoid adverse health

impacts" and "44 (decibels) at night for good sleep."

Quiet Zone advocates submitted a petition signed by more than 230 residents, as well as several letters in support of the proposal.

Carrie Folkman, owner of Mountain View RV Park on Hughes Lane, submitted a letter and she also spoke to councilors Tuesday. In her letter, Folkman wrote that some of her guests, in online reviews, wrote that they were bothered by train whistles.

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# Council sells industrial land

By Samantha O'Conner  
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The Baker City Council agreed Tuesday to sell 14.28 acres in the Elkhorn View Industrial Park to Simplot AB Retail Inc., which plans to build a fertilizer storage and distribution plant on the site.

The company will not be producing fertilizer on the property, said Paul Simpson, an operations manager for Simplot.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Simplot is buying 14.28 acres in the Elkhorn View Industrial Park. This view is east across the city-owned parcel, with Marvin Wood Products in the background.

See Council / Page 6A

## Retired Army Chaplain And Iraq War Veteran Speaks At The Courthouse

# Witness to the horrors of war

By Samantha O'Conner  
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A bright Monday morning greeted a group of veterans, their families, and civilians who gathered outside the Baker County Courthouse for a Veterans Day ceremony.

The event took place in front of the monument that has plaques listing Baker County veterans who were killed during wartime.

Duncan Pierce, commander of the Baker American Legion Post 41, played a portion of Reveille, led an opening prayer, and introduced guest speaker Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Perry Schmitt, retired, who served in Iraq.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

At the Veterans Day service Monday morning, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Perry Schmitt (retired) from Salt Lake City, spoke about the tragedies of war he witnessed personally during his tours in the Desert Storm conflicts.

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# Former owner charged with theft from business

By Chris Collins  
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A former Baker City man was arraigned Tuesday in Baker County Circuit Court on charges of stealing money from Beehive Homes of Baker City, which he co-owned for about 3½ years.

Jeremy Gale Thamert, 48, of Prineville, has been charged with two counts of first-degree theft.



Thamert

The case is being handled by Deputy Attorney General Kurt Miller, who is serving as a special deputy district attorney for Baker County.

Thamert and his former wife, Traci, were business partners with Robert Whitnah and his former wife, Krischele Whitnah.

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# Sumpter employee hearings Friday

The Sumpter City Council has rescheduled for Friday a public meeting during which three city employees on paid leave since this spring will have a chance to defend their job performance.

The hearings were originally scheduled for Nov 7.

Sumpter City Recorder Julie McKinney and Public Works Director Jeff McKinney (who is Julie McKinney's husband) have been on paid leave since June 14, and assistant city recorder and bookkeeper LeAnne Wolf has been on paid leave since May 14.

Sumpter Mayor Greg Lucas said Wolf's hearing will start at 2 p.m., followed by the McKinneys, who will go before the Council separately.

Each employee chose to have the discussion take place during a public session, rather than during an executive session that's closed to the public as Oregon law allows.

Lucas said it's possible, but not certain, that the Council will take action on the three employees' status following the hearings.



TODAY  
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FRIDAY — PREVIEWING BAKER'S PLAYOFF FOOTBALL GAME AT BANKS