

# MAY

- Hig Temperature: 98, the 11th, 12th
- Low Temperature: 18, the 1st
- Total Precipitation: .90 (avg.: 1.43)

## Fire Levels Landmark 129-Year-Old Building In Huntington

# History Destroyed



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald

Marlee Garhart, 29, says her fond memories run deep for Howell's Cafe that burned in Friday's fire at Huntington.

By Chris Collins  
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MAY 29:  
HUNTINGTON — The town of Huntington is in mourning this week. The sadness came over the community of 440 after a fire swept through the downtown business district Thursday night, destroying iconic buildings that have been a point of pride for Huntington residents since they were constructed in 1890. The loss of the three-story brick building that housed Howell's Cafe and the Streamliner Lounge and the adjoining building that housed Grady's Tavern has left community residents stunned. Nearly everyone in the town, near the Snake River about 45 miles southeast of Baker City, seems to have fond memories of time spent in the buildings.

Mayor Richard Cummings, 76, who originally moved to Huntington with his family in 1949, said the buildings were always part of the town. "The buildings were (Thursday) like they were then," he said. "They stood the times." Cummings recalled how members of his Class of 1961 at Huntington High School would gather at Howell's Cafe after games for a hamburger and Coke. "All through high school — that was great," he said. Later on, the Streamliner Lounge was the place to be when a band would play for a dance through the night. Although Cummings moved away for a time, he and his wife, Susie, returned to Huntington to raise their family. "Our kids went to school and gradu-

ated here," he said. The effort that brought firefighting volunteers and paid staff from neighboring communities to Huntington Thursday night also has left Cummings, as well as longtime Fire Chief Eric Bronson, struggling to express their level of appreciation for the all-night effort put forth on their behalf. Twenty firefighters from Fruitland, Weiser, Ontario, Baker Rural, Haines and North Powder responded to join the two Huntington volunteers, including Bronson, as they worked to douse the flames. Another 10 helped with mop-up and two paramedics stood by in case they were needed. No one was injured as they worked overnight to contain the blaze. The Huntington Fire Department has just six volunteers, and four were unavailable Thursday night, Bronson said.

## Baker's State Championship Girls Basketball Team Receives Rings

# Bulldogs put on the bling

By Jayson Jacoby  
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MAY 22 — Mat Sand had one last chance to coach the state champion Baker girls basketball team and the Bulldogs, though they were wearing dresses and skirts rather than sweat-soaked jerseys, didn't disappoint. The group of young women gathered Tuesday night on the polished wood floor of the BHS gym, the site of eight of their 25 wins during a historic, record-setting season. Family and friends sat in the bleachers, bursting into applause regularly. But on this night the state champions didn't pass or dribble or shoot. Instead they slipped onto their fingers glossy rings commemorating their achievement, one last gift from a community that has supported many of these players since they were little girls tossing the ball toward the hoops in gyms around town.



Jayson Jacoby / Baker City Herald

The Baker girls basketball team received their state championship rings Tuesday.

# City Council OK's garbage rate increase

By Samantha O'Conner  
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MAY 15 — The Baker City Council approved an 18.75% increase in garbage collection rates Tuesday. The new rate schedule for Baker Sanitary Service, which boosts the monthly residential fee for weekly pickup of a standard rollcart from \$16 to \$19, takes effect July 1. The schedule includes a new option, at \$15 per month, for customers who only need to have their rollcars emptied once every two weeks. Councilors approved the

rate hike by a 5-2 vote, with Arvid Andersen and Randy Schiewe opposed. Andersen said this morning that he opposed the increase because he's "disappointed" with Baker Sanitary for not looking at different options for processing recyclable plastics. Andersen said companies can turn certain plastics into refined crude oil. "Instead of just raising rates and burying more plastic in the landfill, let's start thinking ahead of the curve," Andersen said. "There's more than one way to skin a cat."

# BHS grad speaker issue settled

By Chris Collins  
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MAY 24 — Members of the 2019 Baker High School graduating class have been frustrated in their attempt to honor one of their teachers as the keynote speaker during their commencement ceremony on June 2. That frustration has been eased somewhat, however, after a compromise was forged in meetings involving school officials, students and their parents. "The senior leadership

group did a phenomenal job working through that," Superintendent Mark Witty said. The issue arose after students decided last fall during Pep Week activities that they wanted to ask Adriene Oster to speak. Oster, who has taught social science at BHS since 1995, knows most of the upcoming graduates because they were required to take her Diversified Occupations class as juniors, said Emily Black, the 2018-19 student body president.

# 5J to hire full-time athletic director

By Chris Collins  
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MAY 31 — The Baker School District plans to hire a full-time athletic director who would work year-round. The salary range, on a 260-day contract, is listed at between \$95,193 to \$116,039. The current athletic director is Tim Smith, a 20-year teacher at Baker High School. Smith teaches science classes for three periods of his day and the other three are dedicated to his work as athletic director through an

extra-duty contract. Smith is employed on a 174-day annual contract as are other teachers. The current athletic director's extra-duty contract includes stipends ranging from \$4,956 to \$6,019 in two separate payments, one for fall sports and one for winter sports. Smith is at the top of that extra-duty scale. He receives a full-time teaching salary in addition to his athletic director stipends, Superintendent Mark Witty said.

# 5J teacher contract OK'd

By Chris Collins  
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MAY 17 — The Baker School Board has approved a two-year contract with its certified staff that includes salary increases of 3% in 2019-20 and 2.5% the next year. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the agreement when it met Tuesday night. Director Andrew Bryan was absent. Dawn O'Grady, Baker Education Association president, said a majority of the teachers also voted to ratify the contract. The District was represented in the contract talks by Superintendent Mark Witty, Board Chair Chris Hawkins and Peggy Stock, director of Labor Services for the Oregon School Boards Association. O'Grady, who teaches at South Baker Intermediate School, was joined on the bargaining BEA team by Toni Myers, a Keating Elementary teacher, and Britta Scott, an Oregon Education Association consultant.

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