

January 17, 2020

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In SPORTS, 7A

Baker girls win

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Lisa Phillips of Baker City.

Local, 3A

The Baker School District is employing a myriad of tactics, strategies and services to help students of all ages be successful not only in the classroom, but in their families and among their communities.

BRIEFING

Killer Keyz Dueling Pianos to perform Jan. 22 at Elks

Baker Orpheum Theatre will present a benefit concert of Killer Keyz Dueling Pianos. This all-request show is described as a “piano bar on steroids.” It begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22 at the Baker City Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St. Tickets are \$20, or free for those younger than 12. Space is limited. For tickets, call 541-523-9652 or visit Betty’s Books or www.bakerlivetheatre.com.

WEATHER

Today

32 / 24



Chance of snow showers

Saturday

35 / 24



Chance of snow showers

Sunday

38 / 23



Cloudy

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.

Correction: A story in Wednesday’s issue about the Baker City Council meeting misspelled the name of Arthur Chaput.

Storms, Crashes Lead To Frequent Closures Of Interstate 84 This Week

Freeway Frustration



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

A commercial truck on Interstate 84 at the Campbell Street interchange in Baker City.

By Jayson Jacoby

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

When the snowplow drivers pull off the highway to wait out the storm, it’s a sign that conditions have degraded from dismal to downright awful.

Plowing snow from the freeway is difficult when you can’t see the freeway.

Such was the case Wednesday night in Ladd Canyon, the gash in the divide between North Powder and La Grande that squeezes the air and can inflate routine breezes into fierce gusts.

“The wind was creating pretty severe conditions — low to no visibility,” said Allen Jensen, maintenance manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) Baker City station.

Severe enough to prompt ODOT to close Interstate 84 between Pendleton and Ontario for about 12



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Aleena Follett works at the Baker Truck Corral store.

hours between Wednesday evening and Thursday morning.

“It was just terrible,” Jensen said. “Mother Nature doing her thing and we’re kind of stuck in the crossfire.”

Winds gusted as high as 58 mph Wednesday at the Charles Reynolds rest area near La Grande.

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Marble Creek Pass Road In The Elkhorns West Of Baker City

Rough road could get makeover

By Jayson Jacoby

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

A scenic and popular, but extremely rugged, road in the Elkhorn Mountains near Baker City could be considerably smoother in a couple years.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is proposing a nearly \$1.3 million renovation of the Marble Creek Pass road, which ascends the east side of the Elkhorns to its namesake pass.

That gap in the Elkhorns, elevation 7,542 feet, is also the southern trailhead for the Elkhorn Crest National Recreation Trail.

The work, which could happen in 2022 or 2023, would make it possible for the Wallowa-Whitman to thin forests in the Baker City watershed with a goal of reducing the risk of wildfire, said Kendall Cikanek, Whitman District ranger.



Jayson Jacoby / Baker City Herald file photo

Marble Creek Pass is the southern trailhead for the Elkhorn Crest National Recreation Trail. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest plans to improve the rugged road that climbs to the pass.

“Currently that road isn’t to any kind of a standard that we could haul logs out to create a fuelbreak,” Cikanek said.

Reconstructing approximately 6 miles of the road, which is accessible only to high-clearance vehicles and in places

more resembles a stream bed than a road, would also make it easier for people to reach the Elkhorn Crest Trail, Cikanek said.

See Road / Page 8A

BAKER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bond will go to voters

By Chris Collins

ccollins@bakercityherald.com

After months of meetings to consider opinions, review plans, and devise strategies, the Baker School Board officially agreed Thursday night to place a \$7.5 million bond measure on the May 19 ballot.

The Board voted unanimously to seek approval of the measure that would focus mainly on safety and security improvements and relieving overcrowding.

The total \$16.5 million project would be bolstered by a \$2 million contribution from the District’s Capital Projects Fund, \$3 million from Student Success Act Funds approved by the 2019 Legislature and a \$4 million matching state grant from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Match program.

Property owners in the District would pay 66 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value over 10 years to repay the bonds.

Baker High School

• Remodel to include Grades 7-12

See Bond / Page 5A

Travel video producer visiting

By Jayson Jacoby

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Rick Dancer likes to tell stories, and some of his favorite chapters are from Eastern Oregon.

He’ll be adding several new ones over the next week and a half or so as he and his wife, Kathy, travel across Baker, Union and Wallowa counties to showcase, through videos on Facebook Live and Instagram, some of the region’s winter recreation pursuits.

“We feel like rural Oregon has all these great stories to tell, but they don’t have a voice in the Valley,” Dancer said.

He’s referring to the Willamette Valley.

Dancer lives in Eugene, where he worked for 25 years as a TV news anchor. He also ran against Kate Brown for Oregon Secretary of State in 2008.

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TODAY

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MONDAY — BAKER HIGH SCHOOL WEEKEND SPORTS ROUND UP