

Baker City Herald

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

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Jim McElroy of Baker City.

Local, 3A

Baker School District parents and community members are invited to a Parent Advisory discussion meeting Thursday evening to review the goals of the Student Investment Account.

BRIEFING

Community Choir practice starting

The Baker Community Choir will start rehearsals for its spring concerts on Monday, Feb. 3. Participants are asked to arrive at 6:45 p.m. at the Baker High School choir practice room, 2500 E St. Rehearsals will be every Monday at 7 p.m. at BHS. Cost is \$15 per person. No experience is necessary and no auditions required. Singers in high school and older are welcome. Middle School students can join if accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Garden Club meeting Feb. 5

The Baker County Garden Club will meet Feb. 5 at Baker Botanicals, 3797 10th St., at 10:30 a.m. Topic will be herbs and how to winter over. Please bring a sack lunch, beverage and chair. New members are always welcome.

WEATHER

Today
39 / 30

Rain or snow showers likely

Thursday
42 / 36

Chance of rain showers

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.

Owen Family Has Distributed The Baker City Herald For 23 Years

Dedicated To The Delivery



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

The delivery route for Sarah Owen takes her mostly in the downtown area. She hand delivers the Baker City Herald inside businesses and at City Hall with hellos and smiles.

By Samantha O'Conner
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Bundled against the January chill, Sarah Owen makes her way through one of her last days as a Baker City Herald carrier.

Preparing to make 48 stops along her route, Sarah secures her two sided bag full of papers. She doesn't have long, as some businesses close between 3:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

"I always go fast on this route," Sarah said.

Sarah, 45, has had this route for nearly 16 years, and she often sees familiar faces. She begins her route on Second Street, then makes her way downtown on Main, smiling at every stop.

"I always smile because it always makes other people smile and be happy," she said.

In another part of town, Sarah's mother, Shirley, 68, is making her way to her 79 customers. She used to carry a holder similar to Sarah's, but

now uses a wheeled stroller.

Shirley has been a Herald carrier for 23 years, and she often helped her children when they had their own routes.

The Owen family has had a hand in delivering papers either together or on their own. Sarah's father, Gary, her two brothers, Mark and Emery, and her sister, Debrah, have each worked in some way to help deliver papers over the decades.

See **Delivery** / Page 6A

BHS grad rate dips

■ Baker High School principal Greg Mitchell believes the numbers don't accurately reflect the school's graduation rate in 2018-19

By Chris Collins
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Whereas last year's graduation rates at Baker High School soared above the state average, this year's statistics show BHS numbers down slightly while the state average hit an all-time rate of 80%.

But Greg Mitchell, BHS principal, says his numbers and those in the state report don't add up.

"I'm trying to figure out the numbers right now," Mitchell said Tuesday afternoon as he reviewed spreadsheets from last year and this year. "It doesn't add up."

According to the Oregon Department of Education's report issued last week, 88 of the 112 seniors received diplomas last year. The report shows 80 who received regular diplomas and eight who received modified diplomas, Mitchell said.

Using those figures, the four-year graduation rate for 2018-19 at Baker High School is 78.57%, leaving 19 noncompleters.

Mitchell says he believes the completion rate is more like 96 students, which would put this year's BHS graduation rate at around 85.7%, an improvement over last year's rate of about 84%.

"That's approximately where we should be living," Mitchell said. "I don't have 19 that should be missing."

Mitchell planned to meet with his guidance department staff to comb over the statistics more closely this week. A district office employee who is out on medical leave might have more insight into the matter when she returns to work as well, Mitchell said.

A breakdown of the numbers as provided by ODE shows a five-year BHS completion rate of 86.49% for a 127-student group.

See **Grad Rate** / Page 3A

Fostering help for local families

By Samantha O'Conner
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Baker City's Harvest Church hosted the first Families Helping Families event Thursday to help spur interest among people interested in serving as foster families or helping those who do.

The event was sponsored by the Oregon Department of Human Services Child Welfare office.

The event allowed officials to present information to community members about volunteer opportunities, and there was a panel of local officials to answer questions from prospective foster families.

Benjamin Potter introduced each speaker and gave statistics of foster children in Oregon. Potter is a foster parent of 16 years, and a trainer, recruiter, and retainer for DHS in Baker, Union and Wallowa counties.



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

See **Families** / Page 3A Marcus Gillette, left, talks with Michelle Miller during the Families Helping Families event.



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FRIDAY — VISITING THE PEOPLE WHO FORECAST BAKER WEATHER