

Baker City Herald

February 29, 2020

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In OUTDOORS, 1B
Cougar
hunting
study

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Health & Fitness • Outdoors • TV \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish
To A Subscriber

A special good day
to Herald subscriber Pat
Hinton of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Library to cut
down elm tree
on Monday

Baker County Public Library will be removing the large elm tree at the northwest corner of the library on Monday, March 2. This work will require partial closure of Resort Street, sidewalk, and library parking lot from about 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The tree is being removed primarily for protection of the library building roof, foundation, and walkways and to reduce grounds maintenance cost, according to a press release from library director Perry Stokes. This species of elm tree has brittle branches, is susceptible to insect damage, and is prone to breaking apart in storms. It is also an aggressive spreader through seedlings due to a high rate of seed germination. The library plans to have a different ornamental tree in this space that will be more safe and lower maintenance.

WEATHER

Today
42 / 24

Mostly cloudy

Sunday
45 / 21

Mostly sunny

Monday
48 / 30

Partly sunny

Full forecast on the
back of the B section.

The space below is for
a postage label for issues
that are mailed.

PILOT, PASSENGER
ESCAPE INJURY IN
EMERGENCY LANDING IN
FIELD NEAR BAKER CITY

Down safely

By Samantha O'Conner
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Tom Van Diepen and his passenger, Jason Dexter, took off from the Baker City Airport in Van Diepen's Cessna 170 single-engine plane Thursday afternoon intending on a short flight, just to warm the engine's oil prior to changing the fluid.

The friends' leisurely jaunt on a sunny day turned bumpy toward the end.

Literally.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Tom Van Diepen, fourth from left, works with Clint Morrison, right, Bowen Valley Rural Fire District volunteer, and a backhoe operator, Chase Giesbrecht, to raise the plane out of a field ditch in Bowen Valley Thursday. Three others shown, from left, are Sarah Rea, Dusty Brown and Jason Dexter. Dexter was alongside pilot Van Diepen as a passenger during the ordeal.

As they flew over the hills west of Baker City, Van Diepen, 71, noticed that the Cessna's engine was vibrating the entire aircraft.

Van Diepen, who has been a pilot

since 1975, said his initial reaction was: "This is not a good sign."

Dexter's response was similar: "I said, 'well that ain't good.'"

Van Diepen didn't think he could

make it back to the airport, which was several miles to the north, and he didn't want to risk trying to land on Highway 7.

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Baker City Young Life Celebrates 20 Years

Fun And Games



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

Wyatt Harris and Riggin Nedrow do anything to try and win the game that is similar to musical chairs (but with spaces on the floor) during a club meeting of Young Life. Also playing are Max Lyon, left, Kodi Crum and Taylor Gyllenberg.

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

Shrieks and giggles fill the small space as the teenagers walk in circles eyeing the shapes taped on the ground.

Suddenly the music stops and they rush to cram their feet into a space.

Those left without a shape are

out for this round, then the music starts again.

This is a typical gathering of the outreach ministry Young Life, where teenagers from all walks of life come together for an hour of games and time with adult mentors.

"Club night is a time to come and be safe, have fun, and hear

that God loves them," said Torie Andrews, who works part time as mission staff.

This year marks the 20th for Baker City Young Life, which was started by Eric and Kristy Sandefur. The Young Life organization began in 1941 and is now in 104 countries.

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County shelves ambulance contract proposal

■ Plan to award 10-year contract, possibly to entity other than Baker City Fire Department, will not happen by around June 1 as proposed

By Chris Collins
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Plans for hiring a new Baker City fire chief will be put on hold until after the city and county have settled negotiations about how to pay for ambulance services outside the city after a federal grant expires next year, City Manager Fred Warner Jr. said Tuesday.

Rather than immediately beginning a search to replace Chief John Clark, who Monday announced he will resign effective April 4, the city will rely on a part-time interim chief.

Clark has accepted a position as fire chief of the North Whidbey Island Fire-Rescue Department in the North Puget Sound area of Washington. As he prepares to leave his Baker City job, Clark will help to transition Sean Lee, chief of the Baker Rural Fire Protection District, into the part-time role. Lee will earn about \$40,000 a year for the work, Warner said.

And in the meantime, city and county administrators will continue to consider how to solve the financial dilemma facing the city's fire department.

The two entities are in negotiations about how to make up funding shortages that are currently being paid by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Resources (SAFER) grant, which will expire Jan. 6, 2021.

The \$426,099 federal grant has allowed the city fire department to add three additional 40-hour firefighter/emergency services positions. Baker County added a \$99,000 match over the three years to fund the positions that allow the city department to respond to calls outside the Baker City limits, including to the Huntington and Unity/Burnt River areas.

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TODAY

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TUESDAY — BAKER WRESTLERS COMPETE AT STATE TOURNAMENT