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Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Ethan Wolston of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Leo Adler Foundation extends scholarship application deadline

The Leo Adler Foundation, which awards college scholarships to graduates of high school in Baker County and Powder Valley High School, has extended the application deadline from April 1 to April 3 at 11 p.m. PDT. To complete either a first-time or renewal application, go to www.leoadler.org. Adler, a longtime Baker City philanthropist who died Nov. 2, 1993, left his estate for scholarships and grants for community projects. Since 1995, a total of 8,977 students have received scholarships totaling \$21,891,373.

City Council cancels March 24 meeting

The Baker City Council has canceled its March 24 meeting due to coronavirus concerns. City Manager Fred Warner Jr. said there was no pressing business on the agenda. A pre-budget meeting set for March 31 has also been canceled. Planning commission meetings related to a development code update will be delayed until May.

WEATHER

Today
57 / 25

Sunny

Sunday
63 / 34

Partly sunny

Monday
57 / 27

Rain showers

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

Parents Deal With Unexpected School Closure

Learning & Playing

■ Families try to stay busy at home and with trips to outdoor parks



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Brianne Bain enjoys a Thursday visit to Geiser-Pollman Park along with daughter Brylee, 10, on swing, son Cooper, 8, and daughter Emma, 6.

By Samantha O'Conner

With schools, libraries, the YMCA, and other places closed due to the coronavirus, Baker County parents are striving to find ways to keep their children safe and entertained.

Harmony McAlpine, 45, decided not to go back to work and is staying home with her children.

A concern McAlpine shares with other parents is her children's education.

"We're more concerned about the school, if they are going to put them online for right now," she said.

"Them having their education is highly important to me," said Ashlyn Gazley, 29, who is working with her children to learn at home while Oregon public schools are closed through at least April 28.

Many parents are working on helping their children continue to learn outside of school with math, reading, and other subjects.

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S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Ashlyn Gazley says she lost her waitress job due to restrictions related to the coronavirus.

School chief's work a 'blur'

By Chris Collins
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Mark Witty did something Thursday that he hadn't done for the past three weeks.

He stepped away from his office for an hour-long lunch break.

As anyone who's spent much time around the Baker School District superintendent can testify, he's a busy man. And while he says it's not unusual for administrators to eat lunch at their desks, Witty acknowledges he has been more deskbound than usual this month.

"It is a bit of a blur," Witty said of the early morning to late night schedule he's worked under since schools were put on alert to prepare for the coronavirus about three weeks ago as it began moving through the Northwest.

Gov. Kate Brown announced on March 12 that instead of the usual week-long spring break, schools would be closed from March 16 through March 31. Then came Brown's March 17 order closing schools through April 28.

Witty and his administrative staff have been meeting daily since to plan ways to help ease the burden of students and families affected by the closures and to find ways to ensure that educational instruction continues.



Witty

See **Schools**/Page 6A

Union, Grant counties each have 1 virus case

Two of Baker County's neighboring counties — Union to the north and Grant to the west — each reported its first confirmed case of coronavirus on Thursday.

The Union County resident "had a recent history of international travel and is not considered to have acquired it from community spread," according to the Center for Human Development in La Grande.

The Grant County resident has not been hospitalized, and is staying home and self-monitoring for symptoms, according to the Grant County Health Department.

CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS TAKE TOLL ON RESTAURANT, BAR INDUSTRY

Brewer offers meals to idled food workers

By Jayson Jacoby
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For a couple of hours Wednesday evening, during a week of unprecedented upheavals for the restaurant and bar industry, Tyler Brown was again doing what he loves to do.

Serving food to customers.

Which is not to suggest the situation at Barley Brown's Brew Pub in Baker City was anything like normal.

Indeed Brown uses the adjective "eerie" to describe the experience of working at his pub on the second day of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's order that allows only takeout and delivery service from restaurants, one of a myriad of measures designed to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Instead of the usual scene — people sitting shoulder to shoulder in booths and at tables, a cacophony of laughter and conversation — Brown saw customers standing

outside, at arm's length or more, waiting for their food to arrive in boxes rather than on plates.

But amid circumstances that Brown calls "devastating" to the restaurant and bar business, he said there was a moment of levity after he and other employees served to-go meals from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

"The best thing was that at the end of the night, everybody was happy again," said Brown, whose

family also owns the Sumpter Junction restaurant in Baker City. "This was kind of fun. We'd rather be busy than sit around with food rotting in the cooler."

Brown, who said both the Sumpter Junction and Barley Brown's Tap House, across Church Street from the pub, are closed, emphasized that the takeout service in no way makes up for the losses due to the statewide order.

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TUESDAY — THE LATEST INFORMATION ON CORONAVIRUS EFFECTS