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home

# Baker City Herald

April 21, 2020

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IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Home & Living • Sports

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Todd Callaway of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Downtown cleanup set to start Friday

The Baker City Downtown design committee is organizing a downtown cleanup Friday, April 24, starting at 9 a.m. Social distancing guidelines will be observed. Volunteers should meet at Royal Artisan at 1912 Main St. to get assignments and spread out from there. Baker City Downtown is also coordinating with the City of Baker to schedule street sweeping.

Volunteers should bring gloves, brooms, dustpans, and any gardening and cleaning tools they have.

Volunteers will be working individually or in small groups to ensure that social distancing protocols are maintained throughout the day. Work will include weeding, cleaning and planting tree wells, cleaning sidewalks, storefronts, benches, bike racks and sidewalk fixtures.

"We know this is a challenging time for our community and we think this a great opportunity to come together (not too close) as a community and spend the day doing something really positive, and proactive for our town," stated a press release from BCD.

Those wishing to volunteer can contact Kate Reid at 541-465-4547 or by messaging the Royal Artisan's Facebook page.

WEATHER

Today

68 / 35



Sunny

Wednesday

60 / 41



Rain likely

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

# County joins in effort to reopen businesses

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County officials will ask Gov. Kate Brown to consider easing business closures and restrictions that have severely hampered the local economy during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We've been working all weekend on recovery plans, and our hope is to get it out by the middle of the week," Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett said Monday morning.

Baker County joined with several other counties, all east of the Cascades, in sending a letter

to Brown on April 13 noting that "our citizens and businesses have followed your Executive Orders and guidelines" and that "every business in these areas is considered 'essential' to us."

The next day the governor had a press conference during which she said that reopening busi-

nesses would happen "gradually, carefully and incrementally." Brown did not give a timeline.

The governor issued an executive order March 17 that banned indoor dining at restaurants, and closed bars.



Bennett

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## Coronavirus Prompts Pastor To Deliver Sermons Outdoors



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Pastor Nathan Neff of the Apostolic Lighthouse Church in Baker City delivers a sermon from a newly constructed podium at the Baker County Fairgrounds on Sunday.

# Sunshine Service

By Samantha O'Conner  
soconner@bakercityherald.com

Pastor Nathan Neff stood on a freshly made wooden podium Sunday morning as members of his congregation at the Apostolic Lighthouse Church gathered for the second time at the Baker County Fairgrounds for an outdoor service.

"With the whole coronavirus and everybody not being able to gather

together as much, I wanted to get out and do something," Neff said.

He said a friend and fellow pastor in North Carolina is doing something similar, and Neff thought, "well, let's give it a shot and see what happens."

Churches have closed their doors and many have been mainly offering live-streaming or pre-recorded services to comply with social distancing.

By having services outside at the

Fairgrounds, people can maintain a 6-foot distance while listening to the sermon.

"The driving thought of that was there's so many people that can't get to church right now with everything that's going on," Neff said. "But, in the world in general, church is what we need now more than ever before."

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Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Members of the Apostolic Lighthouse Church listen to Pastor Nathan Neff's sermon Sunday.

# Jobless claims rise again

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

After a one-week dip, the number of unemployment claims rose again in Baker County as the effects of the coronavirus pandemic continue to spread.

For the week ending April 11, the number of new claims in the county was 139, up from 111 for the week ending April 4.

The previous high this year had been 129 claims for the week ending March 28.

That was the first full week after Gov. Kate Brown signed an executive order restricting businesses, including allowing restaurants to offer only takeout and delivery meals.

During that week, initial claims more than doubled, from 61 to 129.

For the week ending March 21, weekly claims during 2020 had ranged from 8 to 27.

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# Local gas prices slower to plummet

As oil futures dropped below zero for the first time on Monday, gasoline prices continue to plunge as well.

But Baker County's average price is higher than all but one other county east of the Cascades in the region.

Baker County's average price for a gallon of regular unleaded on Monday was \$2.51, according to the AAA auto club.

Among the 17 Oregon counties east of the Cascades, only Wallowa County had a higher average price, at \$2.74.

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THURSDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE