



# Baker City Herald

April 28, 2020

Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com



In HOME, 1B  
Healthy,  
tasty  
snacks

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Home & Living • State News \$1.50

## QUICK HITS

### Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Phoebe Wachtel of Baker City.

### Oregon, 3A

WASHINGTON — After more than 20 years on the job, U.S. Rep. Greg Walden is preparing to retire. But until his term ends early next year, Oregon's only Republican in Congress is still deeply engaged in the business of writing laws and — most recently — advising President Donald Trump on reopening the U.S. economy.

## BRIEFING

### OTEC annual meeting will take place remotely

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's annual meeting on May 30 will take place remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic. The meeting was slated to happen in Baker City.

The virtual meeting will start at 10:30 a.m. Details about how members can participate will be posted at otec.coop/annual-meeting-board-elections later.

Ballots will arrive in the mail in May, and must be returned by May 22.

Candidates on the ballot:

- Baker County, Position 2 — incumbent Aletha Bonebrake running against Tamrya Keller
- Union County, Position 1 — incumbent George Galloway running against Cory Miller
- Harney County, Position 3 — incumbent Robert Cargill running against Laurie Draper.

## WEATHER

### Today

72 / 43



Mostly sunny

### Wednesday

81 / 49



Afternoon showers

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

# Lawmakers praise plan to reopen county's economy

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County's two representatives in the Oregon Legislature lauded the county's plan to gradually reopen its economy and encouraged Gov. Kate Brown to approve the proposal soon.

State Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, and Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, both endorsed the 15-page plan that county officials sent Friday to the

governor's office.

The plan calls for easing restrictions on businesses and some events, while continuing to encourage people to practice social distancing, over a period of about a month so long as parameters related to the coronavirus are met.

As of Monday Baker County had



Owens

yet to have a confirmed case.

Nancy Staten, administrator at the Baker County Health Department, said 75 residents had been tested.

In a press release, Findley said he is "thoroughly impressed with the preparedness of the Baker County Commissioners and their staff that



Findley

coordinated and put together this plan in such a short timeframe. This response should be used as an example for others to utilize during this pandemic."

Owens urged Brown "to approve this plan and allow Baker County to immediately begin implementation and reopening. Act now and do not delay this any further."

See Reopen / Page 2A

## Voters Will Decide On Extending Tax Levies For Weed, Mosquito Control



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald file photo

Standing water in agricultural areas is a major breeding area for mosquitoes in Baker County.

# Paying To Keep Pests Controlled

By Jayson Jacoby  
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County voters will decide in the May 19 election whether to continue boosting property taxes to pay for campaigns to control mosquitoes and noxious weeds.

Four-year extensions of the vector control and noxious weed tax levies are among the items on the ballot.

County Clerk Stefanie Kirby said mail-in ballots will be sent Wednesday.

For the first time, Oregon will pay the postage for ballots that are mailed back rather than taken to a drop-off location, Kirby said.

Both the vector control and weed levies are existing taxes — property owners have been paying them for more than 15 years.

Voters in 2016 approved the current four-year levies, which expire this June 30, by wide margins — 73% in favor of the weed levy, and 75% supporting the vector control levy.

### Noxious weed control

The current levy provides about 30% of the revenue for control of weeds such as whitetop, Scotch thistle and others that can reduce the value of farm and grazing land.

The weed control's budget for the

current fiscal year is \$270,000.

Arnie Grammon, who is retiring this week after working for almost 19 years as the county's weed control supervisor, said he understands that although the coronavirus pandemic means this is less than an ideal time to ask voters to approve a tax levy, he's confident that voters will continue to support the effort.

"People know this is a good program," Grammon said.

And because assessed valuation in the county has increased since voters approved the current four-year levy in 2016, the proposed new levy would raise more money — \$100,000 per year compared with \$90,000 — but with a lower rate for \$1,000 of assessed value.

The current levy's rate is about 6.5 cents per \$1,000. That equates to about \$9.75 per year for the owner of a property with an assessed value of \$150,000.

The proposed new levy has a rate of about 5.9 cents per \$1,000 — about \$8.85 per year for the owner of a \$150,000 property.

Jeffrey Pettingill will take over Grammon's duties.

Grammon said Pettingill, who has 20 years of experience in battling

noxious weeds in Bonneville County, Idaho, will "build on what I've done."

### Vector control

Unlike the weed control levy, which covers all of Baker County, the vector control district spans about 200,000 acres, including most of Baker, Bowen and Keating valleys.

The vector control district has two main sources of revenue. There is a permanent tax rate of 32 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, and the local option levy — the one voters will decide on in the May election.

The local option levy is proposed at about 15.3 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. On paper that levy would raise \$140,000 per year, but due to what's known as "compression" — a result of Oregon's limits on property taxes — the vector district actually collected about \$89,000 from the levy during the last fiscal year, said Kerry Savage, the county's assessor.

Compression also reduced the weed control levy's revenue by about \$18,000, meaning the county collected about \$72,000 rather than the \$90,000 that was levied, Savage said.

See Election / Page 2A

# Baker man accused of child porn

By Chris Collins  
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

A Baker City man has been charged with 48 crimes involving child pornography.

Oregon State Police officers arrested David Leon Cernazanu, 48, of 3435 Eighth Drive, at 1:45 p.m. Friday at his home and lodged him at the Baker County Jail.



Cernazanu

Cernazanu is charged with 11 counts of using a child in a display of sexually explicit conduct, a Class A felony, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 70 months in prison upon conviction.

See Charges / Page 3A

# Council to consider pay hike for longtime employees

The Baker City Council will consider a resolution this evening making some long-term, nonunion employees eligible for 2% pay hikes if they've worked for at least 10 years.

Mayor Loran Joseph will be at City Hall, 1655 First St., for the meeting starting at 7 p.m. The six other councilors will participate remotely via Zoom.

The public can view the meeting through a link on the city's website, www.bakercity.com, and there will be seats for 10 people at City Hall to watch a video of the meeting.

See Council / Page 3A



8 51153 00102 0

TODAY

Issue 160, 14 pages

Calendar ..... 2A  
Classified ..... 4B-6B  
Comics ..... 7B

Community News .... 3A  
Crossword ..... 5B & 6B  
Dear Abby ..... 8B

Home ..... 1B-3B  
Horoscope ..... 5B & 6B  
Letters ..... 4A

Lottery Results ..... 2A  
News of Record ..... 2A  
Obituaries ..... 2A

Opinion ..... 4A  
Senior Menus ..... 2A  
Weather ..... 8B

THURSDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE