

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Bruce Hayes of Baker City.

Oregon, 3A

SALEM — Hundreds of people turned out at the Oregon State Capitol on Saturday for a “#ReOpenOregon” rally.

BRIEFING

County plans remote town hall to give coronavirus update Wednesday

Baker County officials will have their second remote town hall meeting to give updates on the coronavirus pandemic on Wednesday, May 6, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Officials will discuss the county's proposal to begin reopening the local economy, which the county sent to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on April 24.

The panel will include County Commissioner Mark Bennett; Shawn Berry, business operations and recovery lead; Baker City Manager Fred Warner Jr.; and Nancy Staten, administrator of the Baker County Health Department. To join by phone, call 1-408-418-9388 (toll-free) and enter meeting ID 962 840 289. Information on joining by computer is available at www.baker-county.org/webexmeetings.html Questions for the panel can be submitted in advance by emailing pio@bakercounty.org

WEATHER

Today

72 / 40

Mostly sunny

Wednesday

61 / 26

Rain showers

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

Motorcycle Rally, Shrine Football Game Canceled Due To Coronavirus

Throttling Down

■ Miners Jubilee, Bull and Bronc Riding events still planned



Kathy Orr / Baker City Herald file photo

The Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally is one of Baker City's signature summer events, bringing thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts to town.

By Jayson Jacoby
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Shelly Cutler knows how important Miners Jubilee is to Baker City.

But never has the summer event carried so much significance — economically and socially — as it does in 2020.

With the coronavirus pandemic prompting organizers to cancel some of the region's other signature gatherings, including the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally planned for July 9-13 and the East-West Shrine All-Star Football Game Aug. 1, Cutler, the executive director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, is optimistic that not only will the Jubilee happen July 17-19, but that it will help to begin resuscitating the local economy.

"We are still planning the event," Cutler said Monday morning. "We're hoping that if we're able to continue the Jubilee that it will be a real strong kickoff to the reopening efforts for the county. I just really hope we're able to do this."

Jason Mattox, who's organizing the Baker City Bronc and Bull Riding events for the same weekend as Miners Jubilee,

said he's also proceeding with plans to put on the rodeo events as scheduled July 17 (bronc riding) and July 18 (bull riding).

"We're gung ho and excited to be in Baker City," said Mattox, who owns the Coastal Farm & Ranch Challenge of Champions Tour, which has added the Baker City rodeo events to its roster. "We're pushing through and still planning on bringing it to Baker City."

Although that third weekend in July might still have a full complement of events, at least two other weekends, including the kickoff to the summer tourist season, will not.

Organizers of the Sumpter flea market and the Huntington Lions Catfish Derby, longtime fixtures of Memorial Day weekend, have announced that both events are canceled.

There are three weekend flea markets each year at Sumpter, the two others near the Fourth of July and over Labor Day weekend.

Cutler said she understands that Miners Jubilee will happen only if state restrictions related to the pandemic allow larger gatherings.

But she's confident that the

Chamber can put on the Jubilee even if some health guidelines remain in place.

"We can do it safely," Cutler said.

She said Geiser-Pollman Park is a "great venue" for the food and other vendors, with enough room to increase space between booths if necessary.

She's also working on other contingency plans such as making sure face masks are available to people as they enter the park.

Cutler said that although she understands why organizers have canceled events more than a month in advance, the Chamber has flexibility because it doesn't have any contracts.

She said she's been talking frequently with prospective vendors, and they have asked the Chamber to wait as long as possible before deciding whether to go ahead with the Jubilee.

Cutler said many vendors have already had their summer schedules slashed due to events being canceled.

She said her plan is to decide in early July whether the Jubilee will happen.

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Summer Academy classes planned

■ Coordinator says the Baker School District summer program will probably look 'significantly different' this year

The Baker School District's Summer Academy Community Partnership planning group met this morning to begin considering how the summertime classes will be scheduled during the coronavirus pandemic.

The District is dedicated to continuing its summer enrichment program while adhering to Oregon Health Authority health and safety requirements, Angela Lattin, Brooklyn Primary School dean of students and Summer Academy coordinator, stated in an email.

"For this year, it is likely our programming will look significantly different," Lattin said.

The plan at this point calls for the District to operate half-day sessions at multiple sites in groups of 10 to 12 students.

Lattin said she expects the District's ability to work with its community partners to be "drastically decreased" this year.

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Biologists monitoring sickness in bighorn sheep

By Jayson Jacoby
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A bacterial illness has spread through Baker County's biggest herd of bighorn sheep, but a state wildlife biologist said it won't be clear until later this year how severe the death toll is likely to be.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) employees continue to monitor sheep in the Lookout Mountain unit in eastern Baker County, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the agency's Baker City office.

Ratliff said he and other biologists have seen bighorns coughing — something the sheep rarely do unless they're suffering from pneumonia — throughout the range of the Lookout Mountain herd.

With close to 400 sheep, it's the largest herd of Rocky Mountain bighorns in Oregon.

The state also is home to California bighorns, mostly in the central and southeast parts of the state. Baker County has a herd of California bighorns in the Burnt River Canyon between Durkee and Bridgeport.

Until this winter the Lookout Mountain herd had apparently been healthy.

But on Feb. 13 ODFW received a report of a dead bighorn ram lying on the Snake River Road near Connor Creek, about 18 miles north of Huntington.

Ratliff said samples from the sheep were tested, and a lab confirmed the animal had been infected with a strain of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* bacteria that had not been found before in bighorns in Oregon.

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