

Local

BAKER COUNTY CALENDAR

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

■ **Baker City Council:** 7 p.m., City Hall, 1655 First St.; some councilors will attend in person while others will participate via Zoom video conferencing; members of the public may attend as social distancing limits allow.

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

50 YEARS AGO from the Democrat-Herald June 12, 1970

The Baker County Community Chest has changed its name to the Baker County United Good Neighbors. This change was made final at the June 4 meeting of the Community Chest, reported Jean Simpson, publicity chairman. Baker was the last “Community Chest” in the State of Oregon and the last to include the Red Cross.

25 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald June 12, 1995

The Baker City Council on Tuesday will consider changing two streets near Wade Williams Field to alleviate traffic and dust problems. Several residents of Main Street and Kathryn Lane have complained about the problems, said Randy Jones, the city’s public works director.

10 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald June 11 2010

A proposal to close the Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City announced Wednesday by the Oregon Department of Corrections was dismissed on arrival by Gov. Ted Kulongoski. DOC officials proposed to close Powder River and two other minimum-security prisons, eliminating 232 jobs and releasing nearly 1,000 inmates, in response to Kulongoski’s call for agencies to submit plans to cut 9 percent from their budgets.

ONE YEAR AGO from the Baker City Herald June 12, 2019

Baker County Commission Chairman Bill Harvey and Commissioner Bruce Nichols say their decision to not extend the county’s contract with economic developer Greg Smith is based on declining revenue, not on Smith’s performance as the county’s contractor over the past several years. Both commissioners also said they were not concerned about potential conflicts of interests based on Smith’s contracts as an economic developer with adjacent counties, or his service as a state legislator. The Baker County Economic Development Council, which advises Harvey, Nichols and the third commissioner, Mark Bennett, voted Thursday not to renew Smith’s \$96,000-per-year contract when the new fiscal year starts July 1. The reason, both Harvey and Nichols said on Monday, is that revenue from a tax collected from guests at motels and other lodging establishments has dropped substantially over the past fiscal year. That lodging tax revenue is the source of the money for Smith’s contract.

OREGON LOTTERY

MEGABUCKS, June 8
4 — 11 — 18 — 33 — 38 — 44
Next jackpot: \$2.5 million

POWERBALL, June 6
1 — 17 — 38 — 68 — 69 PB 18
Next jackpot: \$22 million

WIN FOR LIFE, June 6
1 — 13 — 29 — 33
LUCKY LINES, June 9
3-6-9-15-20-24-27-32
Next jackpot: \$12,000
MEGA MILLIONS, June 9
1 — 5 — 9 — 10 — 23 Mega 22
Next jackpot: \$20 million

SENIOR MENUS

- **FRIDAY:** Baked cod, cup of clam chowder, mixed vegetables, roll, coleslaw, cheesecake
- **MONDAY (June 15):** Spaghetti with beef sauce, cauliflower, garlic breadsticks, green salad, bread pudding
- **TUESDAY (June 16):** Chicken-fried steak, potatoes and gravy, broccoli-blend vegetables, bread, sauerkraut salad, cake
- **WEDNESDAY (June 17):** Barbecued chicken, parslied red potatoes, peas, roll, cottage cheese with fruit, cinnamon roll
- **THURSDAY (June 18):** Breaded pork loin, potatoes and gravy, mixed vegetables, roll, broccoli-bacon salad

Public luncheon at the Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St., 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; \$4.50 donation (60 and older), \$6.75 for those under 60. Due to the coronavirus crisis, meals must be picked up; there is no dining on site.

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HAINES STAMPEDE RODEO, FIREWORKS SHOW BOTH PLANNED FOR HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Haines ready to roll for the 4th

By Sam Anthony
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The Haines Stampede Rodeo and the Friends of Haines Fourth of July fireworks show will both take place, bucking the trend of many traditional summer events canceled in Baker County due to the coronavirus pandemic. The rodeo itself, on July 3 and 4, will be the same event as usual. But the entertainment, beer garden and kids games that are usually put on during and after the rodeo will likely be canceled to comply with social distancing guidelines. “We’re going to try to do as much as we can to keep people safe,” said Ken Bain, one of the event organizers. “We’re going to mark off the grandstands so people know how far apart to sit.” Bain said there will also be hand sanitizer available, and a plastic barrier across the ticket booth window to protect both the workers and the attendees. Bain said the rodeo might be televised on Blue Mountain Translator District for those who won’t or can’t attend. The rodeo schedule:

- Friday, July 3 — 5 p.m. (slack at 9 a.m.)
- Saturday, July 4 — 1:30 p.m.

There will be a work party at the rodeo grounds on Saturday, June 13, from 9



Kathy Orr / Baker City Herald file photo-2016

Bareback rider Austin Williams hangs on for a wild ride during the Haines Stampede rodeo in 2016. a.m. to noon. The Friends of Haines firework display will follow the rodeo on July 4, starting about 10 p.m. at the rodeo grounds. However, due to the pandemic Friends of Haines volunteers haven’t been able to raise money as in the past, and the group needs help to reach its \$15,000 goal to pay for insurance and other costs. Garla Rowe, a member of Friends of Haines, has started a GoFundMe on Facebook where residents can contribute to the show. They are also doing mail-in contributions, and Rowe said any amount helps. Attendees are asked to not bring fireworks of their own or leave trash on the side of the roads.

Mosquitoes keeping crews busy

By Sam Anthony
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Summer is in full swing, and while for most people that means swimming, camping and fishing, for Matt Hutchinson it means something that can interfere with all those activities — mosquitoes. Hutchinson is the manager of the Baker Valley Vector Control District, a property tax-funded district that includes Baker City and most of the Baker, Keating and Bowen valleys. The District was formed by voters in 1975. Voters in the May election decided to extend for another

4 years the tax levy that supplies some of the district’s budget (it also receives property taxes from a permanent levy that doesn’t go before voters periodically). Hutchinson said the recent increase in mosquito numbers, both inside Baker City and elsewhere, are “pretty typical for the time of year.” While it’s impossible to eradicate mosquitoes, Hutchinson said he and his crew of seasonal employees do all they can to make sure the problem doesn’t get out of hand. “Every week we check all of our larvae sites and try to get

them ahead of time,” he said. Hutchinson’s top priority is to kill mosquito larvae before they hatch into adults. Hutchinson said mosquitoes are mostly popping up in areas with heavy flood irrigation, such as Chandler Lane and Wingville Lane between Baker City and Haines, so that’s where the District staff has been focusing its efforts. Employees routinely examine mosquito traps set up around the District, including in Baker City. Hutchinson said he hasn’t found enough mosquitoes in traps in and near town to warrant widespread spraying.

But he encourages residents to take simple steps to prevent mosquitoes from hatching on their own properties. “With all the rain lately, it’d be a good idea for homeowners to dump things that hold water, like cans, bird baths and bucket — anything that can hold stagnant water,” Hutchinson said. Residents can report mosquito infestations by calling the District at 541-523-1151, or online at www.bvvc.org. The website also has information about the District’s tactics, West Nile virus and other related topics.

Senior Center still serving meals

By Sam Anthony
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It’s no secret that COVID-19 has hit older people the hardest, but senior centers, including Baker City’s, are striving to ease the problems many of the elderly may face. Joe Hayes, manager of Community Connection of Baker County, which operates the Senior Center at 2810 Cedar St., said that although the Center had to switch in March from in-house dining on weekdays to providing takeout meals only, demand has remained relatively high. Hayes said that before the pandemic, the Center served 60 to 80 meals per day, with a peak of about 110 meals. Takeout meals have averaged 45 to 55 per day, up to a maximum of 82 meals. The fluctuation in daily numbers is often due to what entrees are being served, Hayes said. “Our cod and clam chowder is our most popular entree,” he said. While many restaurants

are struggling to get beef at a reasonable price because of shortages, Hayes said that thanks to some foresight and quick thinking, Community Connection stocked up on hamburger, which has allowed the Center to maintain its regular menus during the pandemic. In addition to its takeout meals, Community Connection has continued its Meals on Wheels program, and Hayes said demand for that service has “stayed consistent, as it’s vital and often the only hot meal many of them get.” The Senior Center requires all employees and drivers to wear masks and gloves when interacting with the public, and when seniors ride the Community Connection buses they are required to

wear face masks to protect both themselves and their fellow passengers. With stores running out of critical supplies at the beginning of the pandemic, Hayes said the situation was looking bleak. But now that they’re starting to restock and things are starting to go back to normal, the situation is looking brighter. “The hardest thing is this is an activity center for seniors, and our doors are closed,” Hayes said. He doesn’t expect the Senior Center to reopen until phase 3 of the state’s reopening plan. Baker County started phase 2 on Saturday, and state epidemiologist Dean Sidelinger said in a recent press conference that he expects phase 2 will last for “several months.”

OBITUARY

Rex Weems

North Powder, 1959-2019

Rex Weems, 60, died on Nov. 4, 2019, while working on his home in North Powder. A graveside interment and memorial service will take place Saturday, June 13, at 3:30 p.m. at the North Powder Cemetery. Those who knew him are welcome to attend. Rex was born on April 9, 1959, at Prescott, Arizona, and graduated from Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon. He was a hardworking caring man and loving father who sacrificed much to give his children, Erin, Thomas and Josh, a good start in life. He is also survived by his mother, Veronica Weems; his sisters, Monica and Wendy; his brothers, Daniel, Brian and Shawn; and seven grandchildren.



Rex Weems

Rachel Pregnancy Center

2192 Court Avenue, Baker City • 541-523-5357

Services Provided:

Free Pregnancy Tests
Referrals for Free Ultrasounds
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Adoption Referrals
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