

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.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

■ **Baker County Board of Commissioners:** 9 a.m., Baker County Courthouse, 1995 Third St. The meeting will be streamed live. Due to occupancy limits, the public is encouraged to attend using the link on the county's website, www.bakercounty.org/webex. Written testimony is encouraged and can be emailed to Heidi Martin at hmartin@bakercounty.org prior to the meeting.

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

50 YEARS AGO from the Democrat-Herald June 23, 1970

PORTLAND — The Oregon Game Commission made one important change in the arms and ammunition regulations, a change which liberalized the use of certain rifles for big game hunting.

For elk, bighorn sheep and mountain goats, the commission changed the minimum rifle caliber legal to use on these big game animals from .25-inch to a new minimum of .24-inch.

25 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald June 23, 1995

The U.S. Forest Service has hired a Boise company to apply liquid magnesium chloride to keep dust down on three roads near Phillips Reservoir.

10 YEARS AGO from the Baker City Herald June 23, 2010

Richard Chaves and his partners are investing \$1 million to launch Synergy Data Center and Services in the historic Baker Tower building, with hopes of eventually bringing 100 high-tech jobs to Baker City.

Chaves said three Oregon companies, including his own, Chaves Consulting of Baker City, along with Arikan Inc. of Salem, and Sace Inc. of Bend, are forming Synergy Data Center and Services (Synergy DNS).

ONE YEAR AGO from the Baker City Herald June 24, 2019

A group of Baker City residents has created an online petition gauging local interest in trying to establish a “quiet zone” in which freight trains wouldn’t sound their horns at crossings within the city except when the train operator sees a vehicle on the tracks or other dangerous situation.

Cities can apply for a quiet zone designation, although they must also pay to install concrete medians on streets at railroad crossings to prevent drivers from trying to drive around a crossing gate arm.

According to a press release from the Baker City group, its effort was inspired in part by La Grande.

In April the Federal Railroad Administration granted La Grande’s request for a quiet zone, culminating a campaign that began in that city about 20 years ago, according to a story in The Observer newspaper.

OREGON LOTTERY

MEGABUCKS, June 20

6 — 12 — 18 — 40 — 44 — 47
Next jackpot: \$3 million

POWERBALL, June 20

10 — 31 — 41 — 63 — 67 PB 5
Next jackpot: \$33 million

MEGA MILLIONS, June 19

11 — 34 — 36 — 52 — 66 Mega 7
Next jackpot: \$35 million

WIN FOR LIFE, June 20

1 — 12 — 13 — 69

PICK 4, June 21

• 1 p.m.: 9 — 8 — 1 — 8
• 4 p.m.: 0 — 1 — 1 — 8
• 7 p.m.: 6 — 3 — 9 — 5

• 10 p.m.: 8 — 9 — 9 — 1

LUCKY LINES, June 21

1-6-11-15-20-23-28-30
Next jackpot: \$12,000

SENIOR MENUS

- **WEDNESDAY:** Beef tips over fettuccine, carrots, bread, beet-and-onion salad, birthday cake
- **THURSDAY:** Chicken Kiev with hollandaise sauce, parslied red potatoes, mixed vegetables, roll, gelatin with fruit, cookie
- **FRIDAY:** Barbecued pork ribs, baked beans, corn, roll, coleslaw, tapioca
- **MONDAY (June 29):** Swedish meatballs over fettuccini, mixed vegetables, biscuits, cottage cheese with fruit, cookies
- **TUESDAY (June 30):** Old-fashioned steak, rice pilaf, corn, rolls, fruit ambrosia

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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circ@bakercityherald.com

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Baker City Herald

ISSN-8756-6419

Serving Baker County since 1870

Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays except Christmas Day by the Baker Publishing Co., a part of EO Media Group, at 1668 Resort St. (P.O. Box 807), Baker City, OR 97814.

Subscription rates per month are: Baker City (97814), \$10.80; all others, \$12.50.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814.

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pendleton, Oregon 97801

Island City church remains silent about big coronavirus outbreak

■ At least 236 of the 263 infections in Union County tied to Lighthouse Pentecostal

Editor's Note: This article was originally published by The Oregonian / OregonLive, one of more than a dozen news organizations throughout the state sharing their coverage of the novel coronavirus outbreak to help inform Oregonians about this evolving health issue.

By Celina Tebor

The Oregonian/OregonLive

LA GRANDE — A church in a small Eastern Oregon county linked to the state’s largest coronavirus outbreak held worship services in the weeks before hundreds fell ill.

At least 236 coronavirus cases are tied to Lighthouse Pentecostal Church, near La Grande in Union County. The number of cases in Union County increased tenfold, from 22 to 240, in three days after the outbreak came to light. The outbreak led Union County to voluntarily return to Phase 1 of Gov. Kate Brown’s phased reopening plan — the county had been at Phase 2 when the outbreak happened. There are now 263 coronavirus cases in the county of 27,000 people.

Leaders of Lighthouse Pentecostal Church have remained silent for the most part about the outbreak. Yet social media posts and interviews with other faith leaders shed light on how the church came to be at the center of Oregon’s largest coronavirus outbreak, and how it has responded since.

Church held graduation, religious services before the outbreak

The church, which operates in Island City near La Grande, has held several gatherings since May that appear to have violated Brown’s restrictions to limit the spread of coronavirus.

In a May 22 Instagram post, Lighthouse Pentecostal Church said it would begin in-person services Memorial Day weekend “in accordance” with President Donald Trump’s demands that states allow churches to open. At the time, Union County was still in Phase 1 of reopening, in which religious groups are not allowed to convene in large groups. The governor allowed faith groups to meet in gatherings of 25 people if congregants stayed a certain distance apart.

A Facebook video uploaded May 24 by the church showed



Ronald Bond / The (La Grande) Observer

Lighthouse Pentecostal Church in Island City is tied to most COVID-19 cases in Union County.

hundreds of worshippers in the church dancing, singing and moving around in close proximity. The video was later deleted.

A faith leader at the church wrote in a Memorial Day Facebook post that he was proud to be an American, listing one of the reasons as being “able to attend church in our building.”

One day later, May 26, the church held a graduation ceremony for some Lighthouse Academy students. Facebook photos posted by church members show the front row seats of the church filled as the church’s leader, Bishop Jesse Parker, shakes hands with graduates as they walk across the stage. The school is a part of the church and uses Abeka curriculum, a Christian educational program for Pre-K through 12th grade students, according to a video on the church’s website. The school’s principal, Robin Parker, said the school has between 100 students and 120 students in the video.

There’s a larger organization behind the Union County church

Lighthouse Pentecostal Church is part of a larger organization called the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship, based in Oklahoma. The fellowship is linked to six other churches in Oregon, including in Pendleton and The Dalles.

Parker, the head pastor of the Island City church, is listed as the fellowship’s regional director for Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Alaska.

Ministers must apply to be part of the organization by answering questions such as “Do you have a television?” and “Do you allow women to cut, trim or shorten their hair in any way?”

The church’s articles of faith require tithing and modesty

by women and insist on maintaining distinctions between males and females. According to the articles of faith, one way this can be accomplished is by only allowing sexual relations between men and women.

The Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship emphasizes these beliefs should be viewed as modern.

“These guidelines clearly cannot be dismissed as local cultural biases of days gone by. Nor can they be classified as parochial issues germane only to a certain day or time. They are, instead, connected to the permanent ground and order of Creation and should not be abrogated due to whim and fancy of a worldly society,” the articles of faith read.

Church’s theological beliefs may also have influenced decision to hold services

Pastor James Parker, the son of Jesse Parker, explained key parts of the church’s doctrine in a welcome video on the church’s website. The church is Pentecostal, meaning its members believe in what was preached on the day of Pentecost, and apostolic, meaning it follows what Jesus’ apostles preached.

“We believe that Jesus Christ gave (the apostles) the commission, he gave them the keys, he told them what he wanted them to preach,” Parker said in the video. “And so that’s what we preach, that’s what we believe, that’s what we try to live, that’s what we promote — that’s what the Lighthouse Church is all about.”

Pastor Dan Satterwhite, who leads an affiliated Lighthouse Church in Pendleton, pointed to a Bible verse that he said may have guided the decision to hold services in Union County: Hebrews 10:25.

The verse instructs Chris-

tians to have personal contact with each other in order to live out the faith they proclaim, Satterwhite said. It tells believers how to help each other move toward love and good deeds, “Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Satterwhite also said his peers in Union County exercised their First Amendment rights when they decided to reopen, citing the freedom of religion.

Another pastor associated with the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship drew nationwide attention for refusing to stop holding church services.

A San Diego church in the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship has also faced scrutiny for a video in which its members seem not to be social distancing.

The leaders of the church are father and son

Bishop Jesse Parker, 65, leads Lighthouse Pentecostal Church with help from his son Pastor James Parker, 30. Both preach often during weekly services and in daily devotional messages posted to Facebook.

Court documents show James Parker served two years of probation that ended in April 2018 after he was arrested in late 2015 with the possession of methamphetamine. A note in the Union County Circuit Court files said he was uncooperative at the jail and under the influence.

Parker pleaded guilty to resisting arrest and unlawful possession, but court records show the latter count was discharged after he completed the conditions of the county’s drug treatment court.

See Church / Page 3A

NEWS OF RECORD

DEATHS

Marvin “Marv” Jensen: of Richland, died June 22, 2020, at his home with his wife at his side. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

FUNERAL PENDING

Betty Myers: Celebration of life, Saturday, June 27, at 11 a.m. at Mount Hope Cemetery. For those who would like to make a memorial donation in honor of Betty, the family suggests Hillary’s Benevolent Fund through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Maurice ‘Mac’ McKinnis: Private family service Tuesday, June 30, at Coles Tribute Center, with vault interment to follow at Mount Hope Cemetery. A celebration of life will take place later at the Baker City United Methodist Church for family and friends of Mac. To light a candle in memory of Mac, go to www.colestributecenter.com

POLICE LOG

Baker City Police Arrests, citations
DOMESTIC MENACING and SECOND-DEGREE DISORDERLY CONDUCT: Jason Lloyd Dinger, 41, of Baker City, 6:43 p.m. Saturday, at 10th and Estes streets; booked at the Baker County Jail and released on bail.

CONTEMPT OF COURT (Baker County Justice Court warrant): Juan Pablo Burgos, 59, transient, 8:25 p.m. Saturday, on East Street near the Fairgrounds; cited and released.

FIRST-DEGREE THEFT: Kimberly Holt, 52, of 2093 17th St., Saturday, cited and released. Police Chief Ray Duman said Holt took a service dog belonging to Wendy Johnson, 48, of Baker City; the dog was recovered after police executed a search warrant at Holt’s home.

Crime reports
SECOND-DEGREE BUR-

GLARY: Wilma Phegley, 76, of Baker City, reported Friday that her home was entered and a DVD player valued at \$70 and four McDonald’s gift cards valued at \$5 each were taken. Police said there was no sign of forced entry.

Oregon State Police Arrests, citations
DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, POSSESSION OF METHAMPHETAMINE, DRIVING WHILE OPERATOR’S LICENSE SUSPENDED and DRIVING UNINSURED: Gage Michael Nie-

haus, 20, of Baker City, 5:23 p.m. Thursday, at Birch and D streets; cited and released.

PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION TO A POLICE OFFICER: Kenzie Renae Sherman, 19, of Baker City, 5:23 p.m. Thursday at Birch and D streets; cited and released.

DRIVING WHILE OPERATOR’S LICENSE SUSPENDED, (Misdemeanor): Mayling Lariza Lozano Molina, 26, address unavailable by press time today, 3:44 p.m. Friday, in the westbound lanes of Interstate 84 near Durkee; cited and released.



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