

# Baker City Herald

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**GO! Magazine**  
Your guide to arts, entertainment and other events happening around Northeast Oregon

**IN THIS EDITION:** Local • Business & AgLife • Go! magazine \$1.50

**QUICK HITS**

**Good Day Wish To A Subscriber**

A special good day to Herald subscriber Bill Lee of Baker City.

**BRIEFING**

**Free drive-thru event to drop off prescription drugs Saturday at Sheriff's Office**

Residents can drop off expired, unused or unwanted prescription medications in a drive-thru event this Saturday, Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Baker County Sheriff's Office, 3410 K St. There is no charge.

**Baker City looking for annual community Christmas tree**

The city of Baker City is seeking nominations for the 2020 community Christmas tree. Each year a request is made to property owners interested in donating a tree that meets the following minimum requirements:

- Tree is located within 3 miles of Court Plaza
- Tree does not exceed 40 feet in height.

If you are interested in nominating your tree for this year's festivities, please contact Robin Nudd at the city of Baker City, 541-524-2036 or via email at [rnudd@bakercity.com](mailto:rnudd@bakercity.com)

**WEATHER**

**Today**  
49 / 21



**Friday**  
53 / 31



Rain showers

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

**Three Sheep From Burnt River Canyon Herd Have Died**

## Bighorn Sheep Sick



Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald, File Photo

Bighorn sheep grazing in the Burnt River Canyon in this photo from 2009. A state biologist says three of the estimated 85 sheep in the Burnt River Canyon herd have died from pneumonia recently.

**By Jayson Jacoby**  
[jjacoby@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jjacoby@bakercityherald.com)

Eight months after a bacterial illness was confirmed to be spreading through one of Baker County's two herds of bighorn sheep, animals in the other herd are also getting sick and, in a few cases, dying.

The newest outbreak of pneumonia is affecting sheep in the Burnt River Canyon herd.

That's the smaller of the county's two groups of bighorns, consisting of about 85 sheep, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Baker City office.

The much larger Lookout Mountain herd, in eastern Baker County, has about 400 bighorns. ODFW biologists have been monitoring pneumonia in Lookout Mountain sheep since February.

The Burnt River Canyon sheep range mainly in the deep, steep and

exceedingly rugged canyon between Bridgeport and Durkee. The canyon is about 20 miles southeast of Baker City.

Bighorns were extirpated from the area early in the 20th century, but ODFW reintroduced the animals in the canyon in 1987, releasing nine ewes, four lambs, and two rams that were caught from the Leslie Gulch herd along Owyhee Reservoir in Malheur County.

ODFW released more bighorns in the canyon in 1997.

In the past 2 weeks, since a driver on the Burnt River Canyon Road reported seeing a sick bighorn near the road, at least three sheep from the canyon herd have died, Ratliff said.

An area resident found a dead ewe on the road, one lamb was found dead, and Ratliff said ODFW employees euthanized another lamb that was ill.

He sent tissue samples from all three sheep to a diagnostic lab at Pull-

man, Washington, to determine the source of the pneumonia.

Ratliff said many infectious agents can cause pneumonia in bighorn sheep, including multiple types of strains of viruses and bacteria — and even dust if a sheep is already in poor health.

As of today, Ratliff said he has received results from one bighorn, but those were inconclusive.

He's awaiting results from the two other sheep.

Ratliff said his most recent trip to the Burnt River Canyon, on Tuesday, yielded some reason for optimism about the herd's future.

His goal was to find a ewe that is fitted with a GPS collar, allowing biologists to track its movements.

Ratliff said he watched the ewe and its lamb, born this spring, and both were in "very poor" body condition.

See **Bighorns** / Page 3A

**11 Animals Found On Property Near Richland**

## Neglected horses rescued

**By Chris Collins**  
[ccollins@bakercityherald.com](mailto:ccollins@bakercityherald.com)

The Baker County Sheriff's Department is investigating a report of animal neglect involving 11 horses on private property about 3 miles west of Richland.

Officers executed a search warrant at 41577 Dry Gulch Road about 7 a.m. Tuesday and seized the 11 horses, which were moved to temporary placements, a Sheriff's Department Facebook post stated.

The property is owned by Charles Pickett, according to county records.

No arrests have been made. Ashley McClay, Sheriff's Department spokeswoman, said Wednesday that she could not confirm who the horses belong to, who was supposed to be caring for them, or other details because the investigation is ongoing.



Baker County Sheriff's Office / Contributed Photo

Eleven horses were seized Tuesday from a property near Richland.

The Sheriff's Department began seeking foster placements for the horses Tuesday and by Wednesday afternoon had found temporary homes for all 11

horses, McClay said. She expressed appreciation to those who volunteered to help with the animals.

"We would like to offer

special thanks to those who assisted with gathering, loading, and transporting the horses as well as the donation of hay," she stated.

**PINE CREEK ROAD**

## Road debate goes on

**By Jayson Jacoby**  
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The debate continues between Baker County commissioners and a property owner about whether the public has a legal right to use a road that runs through the landowner's property in the Elkhorn Mountains northwest of Baker City.

The controversy also contributed to an altercation Tuesday that involved the alleged theft of a camera and possible assault on the property owner.

The road follows Pine Creek from Baker Valley into the mountains to Pine Creek Reservoir, which is on national forest land, and beyond to near the crest of Elkhorn Ridge.

See **Road** / Page 5A

**SOUTH BAKER SCHOOL**

## Possible cougar spotted

**By Chris Collins**  
[ccollins@bakercityherald.com](mailto:ccollins@bakercityherald.com)

Principal Geno Bates alerted parents of children attending South Baker Intermediate School of a possible cougar sighting on the playground before classes started Tuesday morning.

Bates said the animal was seen by a woman riding her bicycle to her job at the Sinclair gas station on Highway 7 about 5:30 a.m.

See **Search** / Page 3A

## Halloween events this weekend at Sumpter

**By Lisa Britton**  
For the Baker City Herald

Sumpter turns into a Halloween town this weekend.

Friday is geared toward adults as the historic town turns a bit more haunted to scare visitors.

"It's going to be people jumping out from between buildings," said Laramie Shanks, owner of the Sumpter Stockade.

Saturday is the family-friendly "trunk-or-treat" event. This year it will not be at the Sumpter Dredge, as in the past, but instead downtown along the main street.

See **Sumpter** / Page 3A



**TODAY**  
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**SATURDAY — SPECIAL SECTION LOOKS AT LOCAL FARMING, RANCHING**