

Baker City Herald

November 21, 2020

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In **OUTDOORS**, 1B
Sluggish steelhead season

IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Sports • Outdoors • TV

\$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Andrew Bryan of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Turkey Shoot canceled due to COVID-19 'freeze'

The Powder River Sportsmen's Club has canceled its annual Turkey Shoot, set for Sunday, Nov. 22, due to the statewide COVID-19 restrictions in effect through Dec. 2.

Home-buying aid for local veterans

Community Connection is seeking first-time veteran homebuyers in Baker, Grant, Union, and Wallowa counties for the Veteran's Down Payment Assistance Loan Program. The program can pay up to \$15,000 in down payment and closing costs. For more information call Debbie or Susy at 541-963-3186.

WEATHER

Today
40 / 19

Sunny
Sunday
38 / 24

Mostly sunny
Monday
42 / 25

Mostly cloudy

Correction: A story in the Nov. 19 issue stated that the Chamber of Commerce has operated the visitor center on Campbell Street for about 30 years. The center has been in that location for that period but it was operated by other organizations, including the Visitor and Convention Bureau, before the Chamber took over.

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

Baker City Couple Donates Colorado Blue Spruce

Trimming The Christmas Tree



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

A Colorado blue spruce on Bob and Cherie Ward's property on Foothill Drive in Baker City is this year's Community Christmas Tree. A crew from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative cut down the tree Friday morning, Nov. 20, and Superior Towing donated a truck to haul the tree, which is about 45 feet tall, to its traditional spot in the Court Street Plaza.

By **Samantha O'Conner**
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Bob and Cherie Ward have donated Baker City's Community Christmas Tree twice in the past three years, but their second spruce didn't succumb as easily as the first.

This year the Wards' donated blue spruce required reinforcements.

The couple, who live on Foothill Drive in south Baker City, donated one of the approximately 45-foot-tall spruces in their yard in 2018, and this year city officials again chose the Wards' tree.

But the truck that Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative sent to hoist the spruce wasn't quite up to the task. OTEC dispatched a second truck to help handle the heavy tree.

And even after the spruce was cut, employees had to unhook one wire to allow the tree to pass on its way to a flatbed trailer donated by Superior Towing.

Eventually the tree was on its way to its traditional spot in the Court Street Plaza, between Main and Resort streets.

See **Christmas Tree** / Page 2A



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Bob and Cherie Ward donated this year's Baker City Community Christmas Tree. This is the second blue spruce the couple has donated. In 2018 they also offered the city a veritable twin of this year's tree.

COVID-19 'FREEZE'

Officials call on Brown to change limits

By **EO Media Group**

Elected leaders from Eastern Oregon counties, including Baker, who signed a letter asking Gov. Kate Brown for changes to her approach to COVID-19 shutdowns say the letter was not in direct response to the current two-week "freeze," but was crafted over several weeks as an outline of what they hope to see happen as the state continues to address fluctuations in COVID-19 numbers.

The letter, dated Nov. 18 and signed by 51 county commissioners and state legislators, asks Brown to allow restaurants and bars to stay open throughout the pandemic, to fully reopen schools, to reopen state agencies such as DMV offices to the public and to allow religious leaders to use their own best judgment in operating their places of worship. It also urges her to allow local elected officials to work with county health departments to come up with their own versions of Phase 1 and Phase 2 for COVID-19 regulations.

"A one-size-fits-all approach to shutting down the state was logical and appropriate in March when the onset of this pandemic was new and was unknown," the letter states. "Over time, we have learned, adapted, adjusted and improved. Keeping counties and regions in a Phase II for an indefinite period of time is a one size fits all approach that does not work any longer."

All three Baker County commissioners — Chairman Bill Harvey, along with Bruce Nichols and Mark Bennett — signed the letter.



Bennett

See **Letter** / Page 3A

BHS senior tells board she's glad to be back

By **Chris Collins**

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Senior Renee Blincoe is happy to be back at Baker High School, even for one day a week.

Blincoe, who routinely attends the Baker School Board's monthly meetings in her role as student body president, shared her joy about the return to in-person classes with Board members during their meeting Thursday night.

"The highlight of the week for me is going back to school," Blincoe said.

And she's not the only student who feels that way, she told the Board.

"A lot of people actually are really positive about going back," Blincoe said.

As student body president, Blincoe and other members of the BHS Leadership group have worked hard to help students enjoy the experience since in-person classes resumed, on a limited basis, on Nov. 9.

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TODAY
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