



Wayne and Sharla Erickson were married on Nov. 24, 1972, in Baker City.

ANNIVERSARY

The Ericksons

Wayne and Sharla Erickson of Baker City will celebrate their 48th wedding anniversary today.

The couple met in Baker City and were married here on Nov. 24, 1972.

Wayne was a longtime teacher and coach, and Sharla was a longtime employee of the Oregon Employment Department.

They have two children, Jason and Staci, and a wonderful daughter-in-law, Robin.

If you see Wayne or Sharla you're invited to give them your best wishes.

Witty asks residents to comply with 'freeze' limits

By Chris Collins
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Baker School District officials believe it's no coincidence that COVID-19 is not spreading among students in classrooms.

Lots of time, attention, and money is being expended every single day to keep the classrooms, hallways and cafeterias as clean as possible, officials said. And buses are routinely disinfected.

The school staff has kept a focus on ensuring that students remain at least 6 feet apart, wear masks and wash and sanitize their hands as often as needed.

Superintendent Mark Witty credits the protocols with keeping students and staff well and thereby helping protect other community members as well.

That's why Witty is making a plea to community members to follow Gov. Kate Brown's executive order to observe a "freeze period" that began Nov. 18 and will continue through Dec. 2.

The freeze especially hopes to keep gatherings to a minimum

over the Thanksgiving holiday. Baker schools begin the holiday break Wednesday. Classes will resume on Monday, Nov. 30.

In-person instruction will continue Monday through Thursday for all preschool through sixth-grade students and hybrid instruction of one day a week in-person and three days of online instruction will continue for those in Grades 7-12.

The younger students returned to in-person classes full time on Oct. 14. The older students started the hybrid system on Nov. 9. All students must follow state guidelines regarding class sizes and social distancing while meeting in person.

Rising COVID-19 cases in Baker County are not coming from the reopening of the schools, Witty said.

Nancy Staten, Baker County Health Department director, has stated that contact tracing information points instead to social gatherings in the community.

Brown's executive order, among other restrictions, limits

at-home and social gatherings during the freeze period to 6 people from not more than 2 households.

If COVID-19 cases continue to climb, students will be required to return to comprehensive distance learning on Jan. 4 when the Christmas break ends, Witty said, unless state officials grant new exemptions.

Of Baker County's 259 total cases since the pandemic started in March, almost half — 127 — have been reported since Nov. 1.

After 12 new cases on Friday, Nov. 20, there were three cases on Saturday, two on Sunday and two on Monday.

In a press release Monday, Staten said that more Baker County residents have been hospitalized for treatment of COVID-19 recently.

Local residents who require hospital treatment typically are sent to an Idaho hospital, Staten said. Idaho's hospital capacity has been decreasing due to a surge in cases in both Idaho and Oregon, she said.

Crook Co. Sheriff asks Brown to lift restrictions

By Kyle Spurr
The (Bend) Bulletin

In a three-page letter, Crook County Sheriff John Gautney asked Gov. Kate Brown to lift her COVID-19 restrictions in his rural county and allow residents to celebrate Thanksgiving as they choose and decide how to protect themselves from the virus.

Gautney also said his office would not issue citations to those who ignore the mandates, and instead continue to seek voluntary compliance from citizens.

"I will not have my deputies issuing citations for not wearing a mask or based on who they have for Thanksgiving at their home," Gautney wrote.

"Their home is a sanctuary that the Government has no right under law, or the Constitution, to be able to violate."



Crook County Sheriff John Gautney.

Gautney said in his letter that Crook County is not experiencing the same surge as other counties across the state and should not have to face the same restrictions. The county has reported a total of 190 cases and six deaths, as of Sunday, Nov. 22.

"We cannot be placed in the same category as those counties," Gautney wrote. "The one-size-fits-all plan does not work on the rural side of the state."

Gautney wrote that Brown's restrictions are having a devastating effect on local businesses and the mental health of the local residents. He said suicide and mental health calls to law enforcement have skyrocketed 188% since January, compared to calls in the same time period last year.

Gautney told the governor that declaring a public health emergency created another state of emergency due to the shutdowns. Many businesses may not recover, he wrote.

Melanie Marlow, owner of Painted Hills Custom Leather on Third Street in Prineville, said she was thrilled to see

Gautney's letter.

The governor's ongoing shutdowns have been difficult for her business and the neighboring businesses in Prineville, Marlow said.

"It's much quieter," Marlow said. "It went from a flow to a drip."

Marlow counts on customers from out of state and in other parts of Oregon traveling to Prineville to pick up custom leather products that she creates. Usually, when customers come to town they shop at other stores, dine at restaurants and stay in the hotels, Marlow said.

"That is just not happening at all," she said.

In his letter, Gautney emphasized it's his job to protect the county's residents and their constitutional rights. Residents in the rural county are more independent and believe in taking care of themselves, he wrote. And it is their right to decide if they want to wear a mask.

"People have to be allowed to have the ability to use their common sense and get on with their lives," he wrote.

Gautney noted in the letter he is not speaking on behalf of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association or any other sheriff's office in the state when he says he would not enforce the governor's order. His office will only educate and ask for voluntary compliance, he wrote.

In Jefferson County, the

undersheriff Marc Heckathorn said on Saturday that the office is still enforcing the governor's orders, and prefers to do so through education, as it has since the pandemic started.

Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Jayson Janes said the office is also enforcing the order by starting with education.

"Our philosophy has remained the same," Janes said. "Education with the goal of voluntary compliance."

Gautney acknowledged the dangers of the virus and shared his condolences to families that have lost someone to the virus. But he concluded the letter by expressing concern that even more might die from mental health issues under the governor's shutdown.

"Governor Brown, you need to open our counties for business, allow churches to hold services and schools to open," Gautney wrote, "or I fear we will see something far worse than we have ever seen before."

Geiser Grand to donate to Compassion Center for each meal delivered on Thanksgiving

The Geiser Grand Hotel is offering free delivery of its full menu, including wine, beer and desserts from Sweet Wife Baking, and is donating \$1 for every delivery on Thanksgiving to the Northeast Oregon Compassion Center.

Customers can phone in their order by calling 541-523-1889 for evening delivery from 5 o'clock to 7 o'clock within the Baker City limits.

People who live outside the city limits can have contactless pick up by pulling into the hotel's loading zone from 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. daily.

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