

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber David Justus of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Christmas bazaar goes virtual

This year's 4-H Christmas Bazaar in Baker City has moved to a virtual format due to current restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The idea is to keep everyone safe and healthy," said Katherine Hauser, 4-H program coordinator.

The traditional bazaar was scheduled for Dec. 4-5 at the Baker County Fairgrounds. An advantage to this year's virtual version, Hauser said, is that she'll keep the online bazaar open for at least a week.

"We understand that a virtual event isn't quite the same as an in-person one, but we are still committed to providing customers the opportunity to shop locally and support community members," she said.

The bazaar goes live on Dec. 4. The website is <https://hauserk3.wixsite.com/bakerbazaar>. Shoppers can scroll through the vendors and click to contact the seller to arrange payment and pick up of the items.

Vendors pay a \$20 fee. The money pays for scholarships and 4-H programs.

Items that will be available in the virtual bazaar include jewelry, collectables and handcrafts, home decor and food.

— Lisa Britton

WEATHER

Today

40 / 16

Sunny

Wednesday

39 / 16

Sunny

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

Pneumonia Affecting Baker County's Two Bighorn Sheep Herds

Bighorns & Bacteria

■ Lab confirms same strain infected sheep in both of county's herds



Baker County Sheriff's Office

Bighorn sheep along the Burnt River Canyon Road about 20 miles southeast of Baker City.

By Jayson Jacoby
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State biologists have confirmed that the outbreak of pneumonia that has sickened and in some cases killed bighorn sheep in both of Baker County's herds was caused by the same strain of bacteria.

Lab results last week showed that a sheep from the Burnt River Canyon herd that died in October was infected with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* bacteria.

That's the same strain of bacteria found in tissue samples from bighorn sheep in the Lookout Mountain unit that died last winter and spring, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Baker City office.

The confirmation that the same bacterial strain infected sheep from both herds answered one question, but others remain, Ratliff said.

Biologists don't know the source of the bacteria, which had not been confirmed in bighorn sheep in Oregon until February 2020, when a lab test detected the strain in a dead sheep found along the Snake River Road. That sheep was from the Lookout Mountain herd, which ranges north of Interstate 84 and west of Brownlee Reservoir.

There are more than 50 strains of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, and they have varying levels of lethality, Ratliff said.

He said biologists don't know how many sheep have died, from either the Lookout Mountain or the Burnt River Canyon

Bighorn Sheep in Baker County

Bighorns were extirpated from the area early in the 20th century, but the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) reintroduced sheep in the county in the 1980s and 1990s. Oregon has two subspecies of bighorns — California and the larger Rocky Mountain sheep — and both live in Baker County.

- Lookout Mountain herd, Rocky Mountain bighorns. Herd was started when ODFW released sheep at Fox Creek in 1994 and 1995.
- Burnt River Canyon herd, California bighorns. Herd was started with releases in 1987.

herds. At least a dozen Lookout Mountain sheep died this winter and spring, and at least three Burnt River Canyon sheep died in October.

Ratliff said biologists found a dead sheep in the Burnt River Canyon on Nov. 17.

Ratliff said he hopes to have a more precise death tally later in December after taking helicopter flights in both areas to count sheep.

The Lookout Mountain herd has been Oregon's biggest herd of the Rocky Mountain subspecies of bighorns, with about 400 sheep.

The Burnt River Canyon

herd, which lives in the rugged canyon about 20 miles southeast of Baker City, consists of the California bighorn subspecies. The herd numbered about 85 animals.

Ratliff said bighorn sheep from both subspecies are susceptible to many types of bacteria and viruses that cause potentially fatal pneumonia. He said sheep can be infected by nose-to-nose contact with domestic livestock, typically sheep or goats.

Ratliff said the *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* is not known to be carried by cattle.

There are domestic sheep herds on private land in the Durkee Valley within a few miles of the mouth of the Burnt River Canyon, Ratliff said. None of those sheep has been tested for the strain of bacteria that infected the bighorns.

Ratliff said domestic sheep have lived near the Burnt River Canyon since ODFW reintroduced bighorns to the canyon in 1987, and there's been no evidence of widespread pneumonia in the herd until this year.

Domestic sheep also graze on a public land allotment, overseen by the Bureau of Land Management, in the Lookout Mountain unit, Ratliff said. He said that allotment is actually closer to the Burnt River Canyon herd, albeit with Interstate 84 in between. None of the domestic sheep that graze on that allotment has been tested for the bacteria.

Parade probably canceled

By Jayson Jacoby
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Baker City's annual Twilight Christmas Parade probably won't happen, the latest in a series of events canceled due to restrictions designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The annual kickoff to the holiday season was scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5.

But with new state guidelines starting Thursday, including limits on the number of people attending outdoor events, as of Monday it seemed all but certain that the city wouldn't issue a parade permit to the Baker County Chamber of Commerce.

"I doubt very much whether the city will sign off on a permit," City Manager Fred Warner Jr. said on Monday morning.

Shelly Cutler, the Chamber's executive director, said she is disappointed, but not surprised.

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City manager salary set at \$105,000

By Jayson Jacoby and Samantha O'Conner
Baker City Herald

Jonathan Cannon is eager to move most of the way across the country and settle in to his new office in historic Baker City Hall.

"I am very excited for this opportunity," Cannon, 43, said of his selection as Baker City manager, which the city announced on Nov. 25. "Baker City is a beautiful place with an amazing history. I look forward to working with (the Baker City) Council."

Cannon has worked as city manager of Saluda, North Carolina, a town of about 700, since August 2015. Saluda is in the Blue Ridge Mountains, just north of the South Carolina border.



Cannon

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New Directions opens walk-in health clinic

New Directions Northwest today opened a walk-in clinic in Baker City designed to provide better access to behavioral health services in the community.

Those services will range from mental health and addiction assessments, individual counseling, family counseling, case management services and more, a New Directions press release stated.

The walk-in service will be provided at the agency's new building at 3425 13th St. Clinic hours will be Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon.

No appointments will be needed during the walk-in clinic hours.

The agency has also geared up to provide telehealth services. Telehealth, which allows clients to meet with a provider online from the convenience of their homes, is highly encouraged to ensure social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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