

2520 Mitchell Avenue

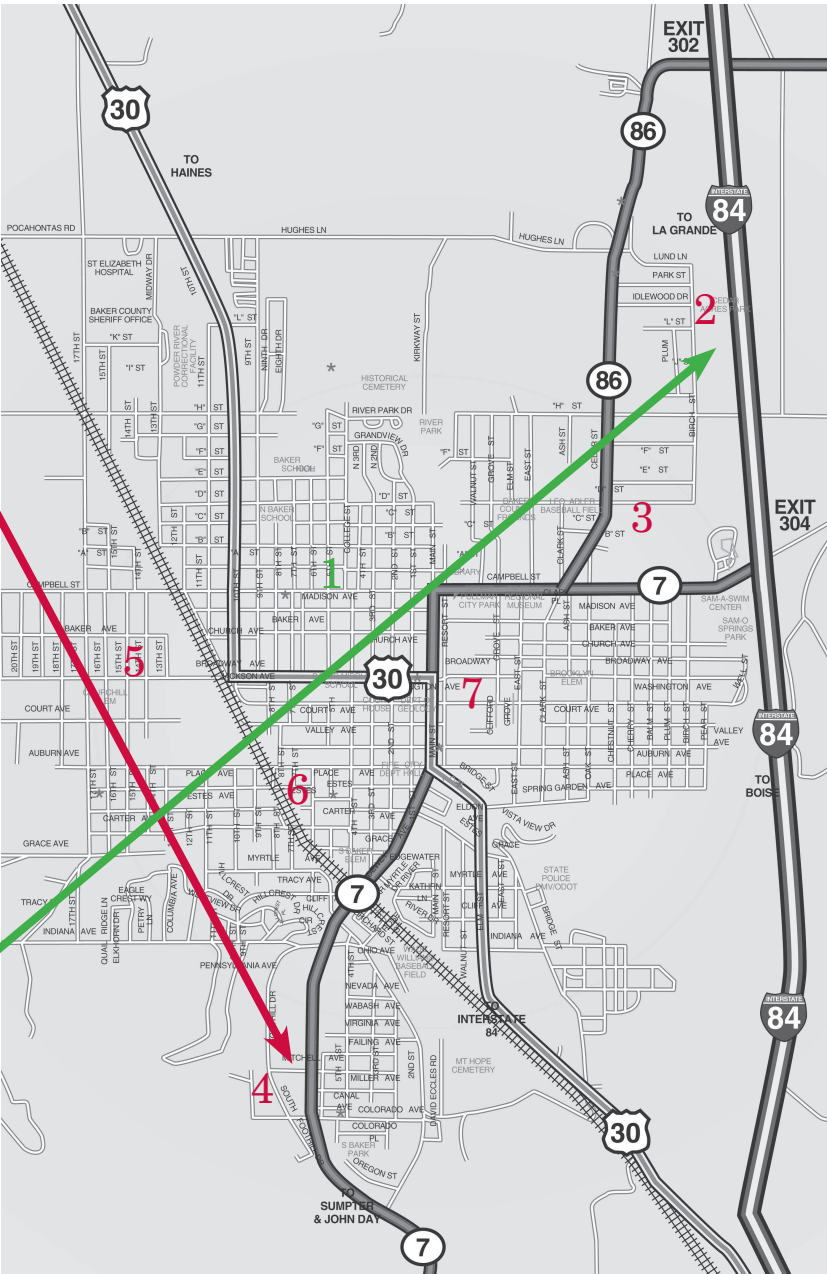


Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

675 L Loop



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald



Other entries marked by red numbers. Addresses: 2330 Campbell St. (1); 630 L Loop (2); 915 D St. (3); 35 Foothill Drive (4); 2110 14th St. (5); 1626 Seventh St. (6); 1717 Washington Ave. (7).

TRACER

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Peterson said it can be challenging to talk with people who have only recently learned that they have been exposed to a potentially dangerous virus.

Most, she said, are “thoughtful and quiet, still processing the situation.” Some have been upset, skeptical that they could have been infected.

And a very few were angry about the pandemic in general, dismissive of the recommendation, which Peterson gives as part of the contact tracing interview, that they quarantine during the period when they might be infectious.

But however the interview goes, Peterson said she is gratified to contribute to the county’s effort to stem the spread of the virus that has infected almost 400 county

residents and contributed to four deaths.

“I love talking with our community and being able to help them,” Peterson said. “I love being able to be part of helping our community through a difficult time. That’s important to me.”

Although the vast majority of people whom Peterson and the county’s other contact tracers interview already know they had been in close contact with someone who tested positive — often a relative or friend — Peterson said the people she talks with invariably ask for the name of the person who tested positive.

Due to health privacy laws, she can’t answer that question.

Indeed, Peterson said she often doesn’t know the name of the person anyway.

She doesn’t conduct case investigations, which involves interviewing people who test

positive. One purpose of case investigations is to identify people who are close contacts and need to be interviewed by contact tracers, ideally within 24 hours.

Peterson said contact tracing interviews often are not one-sided, with her asking all the questions.

Many people also have questions about the virus and its effects, the quarantine period, and what they should and shouldn’t do while they’re potentially infectious.

“I don’t mind answering questions — that’s what we’re here for,” Peterson said.

She said that in many cases the people she’s interviewed feel much differently about the pandemic after being identified as a close contact. That’s especially so when the person they were in close contact with is a family member.

“Once it affects your family it’s a whole new type of processing,” Peterson said. “It’s much different from just looking at the numbers.”

Among the more challenging situations, and interviews, are those in which one member of a household has tested positive, and the other members are close contacts.

Peterson said she understands how hard it can be for families to quarantine, and maintain social distancing, when there are several people sharing a relatively small

home. This is of particular concern, she said, to people who have family members who are elderly or otherwise at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19.

Peterson said some people she’s interviewed are concerned about doing basic daily tasks, such as grocery shopping, while quarantining.

Fortunately, she said, the health department can in some cases help people who face such quandaries.

“We’re asking a lot of people to have to quarantine, and it’s nice to be able to support those people,” Peterson said. She said interviews range from ones lasting five minutes or so, to ones in which the person “tells you their whole story.”

Peterson said she always indulges people who want to talk. She thinks it’s as important to listen to people as to give them information.

“I think it’s a big part of processing for some people, especially if they have a family,” she said.

Peterson said that even after interviewing dozens of people, she treats each conversation as an opportunity to help.

“I get really attached to some of the people I talk with,” Peterson said. “Their fears are real. I like being that person who can go that extra mile, to be part of the support system.”

Baker couple found dead in their home

■ Police Chief says both had ‘severe medical issues,’ and no crime suspected

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

A friend who routinely checked in on a Baker City couple found the man and woman both dead in their home Saturday morning, Police Chief Ray Duman said Monday.

The deceased are Wendi Page, 51, and Peter L. Cassinelli IV, 53, who both lived at 2985 Cedar St. Police were dispatched to the house at about 9:30 a.m. Saturday.

“There were no signs of forced entry and no signs of trauma,” Duman said, noting that Page and Cassinelli both had “severe medical issues.”

Dr. Eric Lamb, Baker County medical examiner, and District Attorney Greg Baxter responded as part of the investigation along with Duman and Baker City Police detectives.

Duman said blood was drawn from both Page and Cassinelli, and will be sent to the state medical lab.

Lamb had “no definitive cause of death” pending test results, Duman said.

“There is nothing to indicate any criminality,” Duman said.

The couple’s friend, whose name Duman declined to release at this time, had last seen Page and Cassinelli between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Dec. 16 and then found them deceased in their home Saturday.

“They had been dead for a period of time,” Duman said.

VACCINE

Continued from Page 1A

Settler’s Park in Baker City did not have a date for vaccinations as of Monday, Dec. 21.

Nicole Howerton, administrator at Memory Lane Homes in Baker City, said she expects to receive doses in February or March.

NEWS OF RECORD

Continued from Page 2A

Crime reports

FIRST-DEGREE THEFT:

Between Dec. 14 and Dec. 20, Justin Blair Langan, 35, of Baker City, reported that two firearms with a total value of \$1,250 were taken from his GMC pickup truck while it was parked in front of his house.

FIRST-DEGREE THEFT: From the work site at the Golden Crown restaurant at 1726 Campbell St.; Mony Pen, 56, of La Grande reported that he had

discovered theft of hand tools Thursday morning.

Baker County Sheriff’s Office

Arrests, citations

CRIMINAL MISTREATMENT, TWO COUNTS and THIRD-DEGREE ASSAULT, TWO COUNTS (Baker County Circuit Court warrant): Earl Dean Allen Hellman, 28, of 1905 Birch St., 3:16 p.m. Saturday, at the Sheriff’s Office; jailed.

APPLIANCES
More & MORE

Jay & Kristin Wilson, Owners
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mean icy spots in
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Joe Scott’s
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BREAKING
NEWS

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December 26,
2020

Baker City Herald

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