

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscribers Bill and Jane Reynolds of Baker City.

Nation, 5A

WASHINGTON — Angry supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in a chaotic protest aimed at thwarting a peaceful transfer of power, forcing lawmakers to be rushed from the building and interrupting challenges to Joe Biden's Electoral College victory. Trump issued a restrained call for peace but did not call on his supporters to leave.

State, 3A

BEND — Dick Higgins, the 99-year-old Pearl Harbor survivor from Bend, told friends and family last month he would beat COVID-19 just like he survived World War II and a childhood in the Dust Bowl. A month later, doctors confirmed Higgins' success. He has recovered from the deadly virus.

BRIEFING

Pet food available from Best Friends

Best Friends of Baker is offering free pet food for people affected financially by the pandemic. Food is available at Best Friends, 2950 Church St., Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

WEATHER

Today

38 / 31

Mostly sunny

Friday

36 / 20

Light snow

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

Baker City's Second Free COVID-19 Testing Clinic Wednesday

Lining Up To Test



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Vehicles lined up early Wednesday afternoon at Baker High School for a free COVID-19 testing clinic.

By Corey Kirk, Samantha O'Conner and Jayson Jacoby

Baker City Herald

Volunteers draped in medical garments were prepped and ready to go at noon Wednesday outside Baker High School as residents lined up in their vehicles to get a free COVID-19 test. The event, which ran from noon to 5 p.m., was the second in Baker City. During the first free testing clinic, on Dec. 16, 130 people were tested. Two of those were positive for COVID-19. The total of tests given Wednesday wasn't available by press time. Evelyn Spivey, 68, of Baker City, said her main motivation to get tested was to rule out the possibility that she's carrying the virus. "The assurance of not being COVID positive, and being safe for myself and my family and extended members," Spivey said. Baker City resident Celinda Linscott, who works at a health care facility, also said she was looking for reassurance. "I just want to make sure that I don't have it. I have been around a lot of people and it's just a preventative mostly," Linscott, 41, said. She said she was impressed with how she was able to get through the entire process with ease. "It was super easy, quick and not an issue at all," Linscott said. Though Spivey shares similar sentiment as far as the process, she believes improvements could be made on describing the testing location. "Several folks were a bit confused on where to go," Spivey said. Jason Yencopal, Baker County's emergency management director, said another free testing clinic is scheduled for Jan. 20, also from noon to 5 p.m. in the same parking lot at the northwest corner of the BHS campus. Yencopal said people who want to be tested that day should access the parking lot from G Street, north of the school, rather than from E Street. Spivey said she was grateful for this opportunity, and for all of the people who have worked in providing these services to the community. "We are so appreciative within the community for their reaching out to provide this service, that's incredible," Spivey said. See Testing / Page 3A

Just over 200 county residents vaccinated

By Jayson Jacoby

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Baker County ranks near the middle of Oregon's 36 counties in its rate of administering COVID-19 vaccines. As of Wednesday, Jan. 6, a total of 209 county residents had received the first of two doses of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). The county's rate of 124.27 per 10,000 population ranks 15th among counties. In Eastern Oregon, Baker County's vaccination rate trails Harney County (151 inoculations, a rate of 205.16 per 10,000) and Wallowa County (92 people vaccinated, a rate of 128.65 per 10,000). "I think it's progressing well," Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department, said on Tuesday. Staten said most vaccines have been administered at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center, with most doses going to doctors, nurses and other health care workers based on the OHA's vaccine prioritization plan. See Vaccine / Page 3A

County Public Information Officer, Sheriff and Police Chief Discuss Decision To Be Inoculated

Employees glad to have access to vaccine

By Chris Collins

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Ashley McClay says she's learned a lot about the COVID-19 vaccines being administered to frontline workers in Baker County, and she's confident that receiving the shot was the best choice for her. McClay's education on the matter came as she worked as one of two public information officers charged with working with the media to keep Baker County residents informed about the rollout of the vaccines and other issues related to COVID-19. As one of those frontline workers herself, McClay, who is employed as an executive assistant and public information officer at the Sheriff's Office, has already received her first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The 38-year-old McClay says she made up her mind to receive the vaccine after diligently combining what she'd learned on the job and through her own investigation of the issue. "I'd rather take that vaccine than risk getting COVID," she said Tuesday. "There was no pain, no side effects, and I felt really good," McClay said after receiving her first shot. She will receive the second dose on Jan. 20. McClay says she has focused on keeping herself healthy through the pandemic and has no underlying health conditions. Still she believes that getting the vaccine is just one more way she can protect herself and those she cares about. McClay said she has adopted the protective measures of social distancing, mask wearing and isolating herself from family and friends over the holidays all with this goal in mind: "Keep the numbers down and slow that spread, and for me, this was another way." McClay said she and her significant other also canceled out on a family gathering at the Oregon Coast in November, and she decided not to join friends on a trip to Mexico scheduled in February. "It wasn't worth the risk of contracting COVID," she said. McClay also thinks of her mother, who lives in Idaho. She's 76 and has congestive heart failure. Her mom is eager to roll up her sleeve for the vaccine, McClay said, and she will breathe easier herself knowing she's taken action to protect her mother by getting the vaccine as well. McClay said she was happy to be interviewed about her experience with the vaccine. "I'm hoping that lets other people see — that for me — I think that the vaccine is worth it, and that they won't be so concerned." See Employees / Page 5A

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TODAY

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SATURDAY — LOCAL RESIDENTS SALVAGING ROADKILLED DEER