

Baker City Herald

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January 19, 2021

IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Home & Living • Sports

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In HOME, 1B

Bringing back the brunch

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Kim Eardley of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Jan. 31 deadline to apply for OTEC scholarships

The deadline to apply for one of Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's academic scholarships is Jan. 31.

Scholarships are available to high school students, returning college students and adults entering educational and technical programs.

Academic scholarships are for \$5,000 each. Four will be allocated to the OTEC-EOU Rural Scholarship Program, an partnership between OTEC and Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Incoming EOU freshman will have the opportunity to have their entire four years of tuition and fees paid for, if they commit to attend and graduate from Eastern Oregon University.

The other academic scholarships are for graduating high school students, returning college students or adults looking to begin college.

Applications and specific criteria for all the OTEC scholarships are available at otec.coop/scholarships.

WEATHER

Today

37 / 16

Sunny

Wednesday

32 / 19

Sunny

Correction: Due to an editor's error, a sports column on Page 6A of the Jan. 16 issues misstated the location of the NFL Hall of Fame. It is in Canton, Ohio.

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

Baker High School Girls Basketball Team Relishes Rare Chance To Practice

Still State Champs



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

After the graduation of Sydney Younger, Baker coach Mat Sand is looking for a point guard. Among the candidates is sophomore Sydnee Pierce. "She's not going to be a Syd Younger, she's going to be a Sydnee Pierce, but there is an expectation, there's a leadership in being the point guard, and she's learning that," Sand said.

■ The Bulldogs' bid for back-to-back state titles was thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Baker senior Sydney Keller is one of the Bulldogs' top returning basketball players. Baker coach Mat Sand said of Keller: "She knows her role, she's so disciplined because she's a cross-country runner, she's a very successful wrestler. She is self-motivated more than most and with that she becomes an effective basketball player." Keller, in addition to being a key player on the basketball team, won an individual state championship in 2020 as a member of Baker's first-year girls wrestling team.



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Mat Sand, Baker girls varsity basketball coach, leads players through a layin drill. Though this drill is well-suited to COVID-19 social distancing, Sand said he has been running this drill for years. "It's something we've always done, it just fit in with COVID-19 to keep our spacing, but what it does is whenever you go to the basket like that, there's always going to be contact, there's going to be distraction, and you got to teach the players to take that contact, but maintain a focus, maintain a concentration to finish the shot," Sand said.

By Corey Kirk
ckirk@bakercityherald.com

Ten months after its bid to repeat as state champions was stopped by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Baker High School girls varsity basketball team was able to practice again.

For nearly two weeks the Bulldog girls and boys worked out on school grounds while following strict social distancing and mask guidelines.

Practices ended last week when Baker County returned to the

extreme-risk level under state guidelines on Jan. 15.

Varsity girls coach Mat Sand said he was saddened that his players weren't able to compete for back-to-back Class 4A state titles last March.

The Bulldogs' final game was a 53-31 playoff win over Gladstone in the Baker gym on March 6, 2020.

The next week, while Baker was in Forest Grove, preparing for its first state tournament game, the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA), prompted by the brand-new pandem-

ic, canceled the tournament, a moment Sand described in an interview as "surreal."

"It was a real disappointment for the seniors, the community has watched us grow as a program, it's a program that has gained a lot of traction, a lot of success," Sand, who is starting his sixth year as Baker coach, said last week. "It's been fun to be a part of, our support was really really good from our community."

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Drilling continues on city's new well

By Samantha O'Conner
soconner@bakercityherald.com

Drilling continues on Baker City's new drinking-water well, but progress has been slower than expected since the \$677,000 project started in early October.

"It's definitely going slower than I had anticipated," said Michelle Owen, the city's public works director. "Part of that

is just due to the types of soil that they ran into is a little bit different than the well log that they have for the old golf course well."

Equipment breakdowns have also contributed to the rate of drilling, Owen said.

The City Council voted in April 2020 to hire Schneider Water Services of St. Paul, near Salem, to drill the well, which

is on the east side of the parking lot at the city's Quail Ridge Golf Course, 2801 Indiana Ave.

The company estimates the well will need to be drilled to a depth of about 700 feet, Owen said.

So far the well, which will have a casing 12 inches in diameter, has been sunk about 197 feet.

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Vaccine plans scaled back

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County's plan to start offering COVID-19 vaccinations to older residents later this week has hit a snag.

And Baker County isn't alone.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Friday that because an influx of vaccine doses isn't coming from the federal government, in contrary to what a federal official had said, Oregon's vaccination plan will change.

On Jan. 12 Brown announced that starting Jan. 23 the state, which thus far has focused on inoculating health care workers and residents of assisted living and other group facilities, would start offering vaccinations to teachers and other education workers as well as to people 65 and older.

But on Friday the governor, citing "deception on a national scale" by the Trump administration, said that because the expected increase in vaccine doses isn't forthcoming, the state won't be able to comply with the proposed priority schedule.

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Forest Service ends ban on logging large trees

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

A federal official has decided to cancel a rule that has banned the cutting of large live trees on national forests east of the Cascades in Oregon since 1995.

The new policy, signed Jan. 12 by Jim Hubbard, undersecretary for natural resources and environment for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, replaces what's known as the "21-inch" rule.

That rule has restricted, with rare exceptions such as for public safety, the cutting of live trees larger than 21 inches in diameter measured four and a half feet above the ground.

Forest Service officials proposed in June 2020 to replace the 21-inch rule with a new policy that will apply on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Northeast Oregon, as well as five other national forests — Ochoco, Umatilla, Deschutes, Fremont-Winema and Malheur. The rule change affects almost 10 million acres of public land.

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