

# SCHOOLS

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Alan McCauley was among the BMS staff who enforced social distancing among the small groups of students who gathered Wednesday morning.

McCauley is BMS dean of students and athletic director. He's also taken on the role of working with middle school students enrolled at Eagle Cap Innovative Middle School and High School this year.

McCauley sees the move to increased in-person classes for students as nothing but positive.

"I love it," he said Wednesday morning. "I think we need to get kids in the building and get kids back to normal — as normal as we can get."

McCauley agrees with his students about the value of in-person instruction that brings them together not only with their friends, but also with their teachers.

"The biggest benefit is the social piece," he said. "Kids have been isolated for nine, 10 months. For these kids to come back to see their classmates and their teachers, it will be a whole different learning environment."

McCauley believes that student-staff contact is important to help measure the students' social and emotional well-being as well as their academic progress.

"When they are in the classroom you get to visit with kids face to face and get an understanding of where they're at, and whether it's a dark place or a good place," he said.



Chris Collins/Baker City Herald

Alan McCauley is dean of students at Baker Middle School.

"That's hard to do with distance learning."

Skye Flanagan, BMS principal, is busy attending meetings, fielding phone calls and working with staff to prepare for Monday's big shift to having twice as many students — still only 50% of usual — in the school.

"It will mean more in-person time and connection ... and we're super excited," Flanagan said Wednesday.

With the move to two days a week of in-person instruction, more than half of the 45 families that had previously chosen total online classes might be returning to in-person instruction, Flanagan said.

Many of the students in those families have done well with all online instruction, he noted.

But for others, including Flanagan's own daughter, Makenzie, who

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— Alan McCauley, dean of students, Baker Middle School

has done well with the hybrid system with just one day of in-person instruction, studying from home is not as enjoyable.

"For a lot of kids, home is home and school is school," he said.

And that opinion is shared by his daughter, Flanagan says.

"She likes the (school) environment better," he said. "She likes the social piece."

And that includes all aspects of what makes school appealing to students such as walking the halls, having lunch with friends and interacting with their teachers.

The new semester will be a fresh start in many ways, Flanagan said.

"Grades will be reset, they'll have new electives — there's a different buzz around that kind of stuff," he said.

Flanagan plans to schedule assemblies on Monday and Tuesday next week to remind students of the health protocols.

"We'll reiterate expectations, goals and how to maintain the guidelines and stay safe," he said.

"We'll remind them they are here because we're doing the right thing and not spreading the virus in the schools."

That really is a buy-in factor for students, who realize their actions have an impact on whether they will be allowed to continue to come

to school in person, he says.

"This is an experience unlike any other," Flanagan said. "We want to get back to a normal scenario — we're not there yet — and they know their actions and our actions dictate that."

Witty said Tuesday that Baker County Health Department officials are on board with the plan even though it might increase the number of contact tracing calls required if a positive COVID-19 case is diagnosed.

"We are prepared to lend additional contact tracing support to the Health Department should it be needed," Witty stated.

School staff is continuing its efforts to screen students daily. Those who have been exposed to the virus are quarantined and moved to distance learning in compliance with state guidelines.

"Moving to more in-person time has worked well for us," Witty said.

"Contact tracing data show positive cases among staff and students have resulted from interactions outside the school environment."

A mobile testing station has been established on the BHS parking lot to offer rapid tests for staff and students daily from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Witty added that the state has designated early learning and K-12 educators as among the first to receive vaccinations.

"We have been contacted by the Baker County Health Department to begin working out the details for administering vaccines to staff," Witty said. "We anticipate the first round of shots being delivered sometime in February."

# LOCAL BRIEFING

## Jan. 31 deadline to apply for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative 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, a partnership between OTEC and Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Incoming EOU freshmen 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](http://otec.coop/scholarships).

## Virtual meeting planned Jan. 27 to discuss transportation improvements

Baker City has scheduled a virtual public meeting for Jan. 27 to discuss possible transportation improvements to sections of 10th Street, Hughes Lane and Cedar Street.

The virtual meeting will run from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. To join the meeting, use the link on the city's website, [www.bakercity.com/2289/NBTIP](http://www.bakercity.com/2289/NBTIP)

# COVID-19

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For the first week of the two-week measuring period — Jan. 10-16 — Baker County had 52 new cases, said Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department.

Nine of those 52 cases are inmates at the Powder River Correctional Facility, and those cases won't count toward the county's total if they would push the county into a higher risk level.

Deducting the Powder River cases brings the county's one-week total to 43. That means that if the county

has 17 or more new cases, not including any Powder River cases, from Jan. 17-23, it would exceed the threshold and remain in the extreme category.

The county recorded three new cases on Monday, Jan. 18, and two on Tuesday, Jan. 19. The prison also had two new inmates test positive on Tuesday; it's not clear whether those are the two new cases for the county.

Even if the county remains below the 60-case threshold for the extreme-risk category, the test positivity rate could keep the county at that level.

As of Tuesday the county's positivity rate for the previous week was 17.1%, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Staten said case investigations and contact tracing done by health department employees continue to show that parties and other social gatherings, as well as residents traveling outside the county and being infected, are the largest sources of the county's new cases.

Staten said she understands that people want to get together — particularly during the recent holiday season.

"We're a social society," she said.

Staten said she wants to remind people that gathering with people from multiple households brings a risk of infection.

The difference in restrictions between the high- and extreme-risk levels applies largely to restaurants, bars, fitness centers and gyms, theaters and museums.

### Restaurants and bars

- Extreme risk: Indoor dining prohibited; outdoor dining allowed with a maximum of 50 people, six people, from no more than two households, per table. Required closure at 11 p.m.

- High risk: Indoor dining allowed, with a limit of 25% of capacity or 50 people, including customers and staff, whichever is fewer.

### Indoor fitness centers, theaters and museums

- Extreme risk: Prohibited
- High risk: Maximum of 25% of capacity or 50 total people, whichever is fewer

### Long-term care facilities

- Extreme risk: Outside visits only
- High risk: Visits allowed, including indoors

# OBITUARIES

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## Robert Butler

Baker City, 1929-2020

We will never be able to thank the care team enough, his family said. Our hearts are full.

Bob is survived by his son, Dennis Butler of Scio; his four daughters, Kathy Carey and her husband, Virgil of Helena, Montana, Carol Hammon of Baker City, Lori Ultsch

and her husband, Kyle of Calimesa, California, and Letta Benner and her husband, Archie of Pocatello, Idaho.

Bob was preceded in death by both of his wives, Lois and Millie; his parents, brothers and one great-grandson.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Wounded Warriors Project or to the American Heart Association through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To leave an online condolence for Bob's family, go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com)

# NEWS OF RECORD

## DEATHS

**Mae Fuzi:** 83, a longtime resident of the Baker City area, died on Jan. 18, 2021, at her home. Services are under the direction of Coles Tribute Center. To light a candle in memory of Mae, go to [www.colestributecenter.com](http://www.colestributecenter.com)

**Mary Louise "Mary Lou" Wirth:** 85, of Medical Springs, died on Jan. 18, 2021, at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise. Mary Lou will be buried alongside Bucky at the Big Creek Cemetery near their home in Medical Springs. To leave an online condolence for Mary Lou's family, go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com)

**Taran Arthur Moothart:** 23, of Baker City, died on Jan. 15, 2021. A memorial service will take place at the Harvest Church, the date and time to be announced soon. Memorial contributions can be made to the Taran Memorial Fund in care of Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To leave an online condolence for Taran's family, go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com)

## FUNERAL PENDING

**Agnes Heck:** Saturday, Jan. 23 at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, 2335 First St. The rosary will be said at 9:30 a.m., with Mass of Christian burial at 10 a.m. Masks and social distancing will be required. Interment will follow at Mount Hope Cemetery. For those who wish to make a donation in Agnes' memory, the family suggests either Memory Lane (outside bench), the Alzheimer's Association or St. Francis de Sales Cathedral through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543 Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences may be shared at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

## POLICE LOG

**Baker City Police**  
CONTEMPT OF COURT (Baker

County Justice Court Warrant): Trevor James Heath, 24, transient, 1:58 p.m. Tuesday, in the 1200 block of Washington Avenue; cited and released.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE, two counts, and UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY INTO A MOTOR VEHICLE (Baker County warrant) and FAILURE TO APPEAR (two Union County warrants): Kyle Andrew Waldron, 35, of Baker City, in the 1200 block of Washington Avenue; cited and released.

PROBATION VIOLATION (Baker County Justice Court warrant): Kaitlan Miranda Galvan, 22, of Baker City, 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, in the 2300 block of Baker Street; cited and released.

FAILURE TO APPEAR (Two Baker County Circuit Court warrants): Kenzie Sherman, 20, of Baker City, 2:40 p.m. Tuesday, in the 3500 block of Kirkway Drive; cited and released.

**Baker Co. Sheriff's Office**

FOURTH-DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSAULT, MENACING CONSTITUTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT: Wayne Anthony McFadden, 51, of Huntington, 6:09 a.m. Tuesday, at

Huntington; jailed.

FAILURE TO APPEAR (Baker County Circuit Court warrant): Isaac J. Kolb, 20, Huntington, 1:40 p.m. Monday in Huntington; cited and released.

**Oregon State Police**  
POSSESSION OF METHAMPHETAMINE, POSSESSION OF HEROIN, FELON IN POSSESSION OF FIREARM: Makayla Paige Lafferty, 23, Baker City, 1 p.m. on Jan. 16 at Highway 7 and David Eccles Road. Lafferty was cited and released after OSP Trooper Dakotah Keys stopped the GMC Sierra pickup truck in which Lafferty was a passenger. In his report, Keys wrote that he stopped the car for a traffic violation and noticed "multiple signs of impairment" He arrested the driver, Jason Lee Troyer, 44, of Baker City, on a charge of driving under the influence of intoxicants. During a search of the pickup, Keys found less than 2 grams of meth and less than 1 gram of heroin, as well as a firearm and other unlawful weapons. Troyer was also cited for possession of meth and being a felon in possession of a firearm and an illegal weapon.



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## PROCEDURES OFFERED

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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| Gallbladder Removal           | Wound, Burn or Infection Surgery |

## GENERAL SURGEONS



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Christopher Liby, DO

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