

SNOWPACK

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Colton would welcome that weather pattern after a January that at times seemed more reminiscent of early spring than of winter.

The average high temperature during the month at the Baker City Airport, for example, was 41.5 degrees. That’s the third-warmest January at the Airport, where records date to 1943. Only January 2018 and January 1953, both with an average high of 42.9 degrees, were milder.

Fortunately, Colton said, the balmy conditions that prevailed in the valleys weren’t replicated in the mountains, where the snowpack is actually measured.

As of Monday, the water content at 14 sites around the region was 89% of the 30-year average.



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

The mountain snowpack is the main source of water for irrigation and recreation in Northeast Oregon.

That’s the automated snow-measuring station that Colton pays particular attention to, as it lies in the upper drainage of the Powder River, which flows into Phillips Reservoir.

That reservoir, which is holding just 9% of its capacity following the 2020 drought, supplies irrigation water to more than 30,000 acres in Baker Valley.

The water content at Bourne as of Monday was 77% of average.

But that figure, though troubling for Colton as he ponders this spring and summer, is also just a snapshot.

Besides the potential for storms to bolster the snowpack, he said rain in the cultivated valleys in April and May can also have major benefits.

In a general sense, Colton said, the more rain that falls in the lowlands in the spring, the more snowmelt from the mountains he can store in Phillips Reservoir. The reason is that rain can keep fields irrigated without the need for more water to be released from the reservoir.

“It makes a huge difference,” Colton said of spring rain.

A pair of storms last week largely bypassed Baker Valley, but they dumped heavy snow on southern parts of the county.

That includes the cattle ranch that Suzan Ellis Jones and her husband, Keith, own in the Clarks Creek area south of the Burnt River and east of Bridgeport.

Suzan Jones said the storms dropped about 18 inches of snow at their home, elevation 4,200 feet.

Warm south winds over the next several days melted much of that snow, however, turning their daily task of feeding hay to cattle from a snowy but clean operation to a messy, muddy one.

“We need more snow, and I hope we get it,” Jones said on Monday. “If we don’t get some more it could be pretty grim later this year.”

She said their ranch relies on a creek fed by snowmelt, and its flow dwindled during the 2020 drought.

Police arrest suspected porch pirate

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

A wary Baker City neighbor helped police foil the plans of a porch pirate who is accused of taking two FedEx packages from a Riverpark Drive home Saturday afternoon, Jan. 30.

The crime was reported about 3 p.m. and led to the arrest of Kyle Andrew Waldron, 35, who police describe as a transient, on charges of second-degree theft and second-degree criminal trespassing, Baker City Police Lt. Ty Duby stated in a press release.

Waldron is accused of entering the property of Richard and Barbara Scrivner and removing two FedEx boxes from their porch, according to court documents.

Baker City Police officer Zach Thatcher wrote in his report that a neighbor saw a man walking away from the Scrivner property with the packages and getting into the front passenger seat of a four-door sedan. The neighbor called police to initially report the crime and then called a second time after seeing the man and the vehicle while arriving at Albertsons for a routine shopping trip, police said.

Thatcher responded to the call to the Albertsons parking lot about 3:25 p.m. The officer identified the male suspect as Waldron and then spoke to the driver, Pearl Adair, 40, also described by police as a transient.

During the arrest, police recognized Waldron as a person filmed in video surveillance from Safeway committing the crimes of second-degree burglary and second-degree theft earlier in January, Duby stated.

During the arrest for allegedly taking the packages, Waldron also was charged with second-degree burglary and second-degree theft for allegedly taking \$404.05 worth of merchandise from Safeway on Jan. 11. Waldron was lodged in the Baker County Jail Saturday and was arraigned on the charges Monday afternoon in Baker County Circuit Court. Duby said officers cited and released Adair on a charge of possessing a user amount of methamphetamine.

CANNON

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“Right off the bat we had to make sure that was in order and would continue on,” Cannon said. “Michelle Owen, our public works director, has done a phenomenal job at working on that.”

Elsewhere in public works, the city is continuing a long-term project to replace sections of its water supply pipeline, and a contractor is drilling a new backup well near the city-owned Quail Ridge Golf Course.

“Those are some things

“How do we plan what our future is when we don’t know if we can plan this wedding or this event? Are we going to get shut down again? Those are concerns that I know a lot of people have.”

— Jonathan Cannon, Baker City manager

right off the bat that need to keep happening and proceeding on,” Cannon said.

Police Chief Ray Duman plans to retire, and Cannon said he will be working on filling that impending vacancy.

Cannon, 43, who came to Baker City from Saluda, North Carolina, said moving to a new state, with its dif-

ferent regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, has presented challenges.

Oregon’s current system, with four risk levels and associated restrictions on businesses, have had a significant effect locally, particularly on restaurants and bars, theaters, gyms and museums.

“This high versus extreme

category, it’s one thing to say what it is but it’s another to look at its components and say, ‘oh, wow, this really impacts this particular type of business, how is it going to affect us long term as it keeps jumping back and forth between these two categories?’” Cannon said.

“So, that’s kind of a challenge; coming from another state and knowing there’s a whole different set of rules in place.”

Effects of the pandemic, and the state restrictions, is one of the main issues Cannon has heard from residents

and business owners during his month at City Hall.

“How do we plan what our future is when we don’t know if we can plan this wedding or this event?” he said. “Are we going to get shut down again? Those are concerns that I know a lot of people have.”

Cannon, whose contract with the city includes an annual salary of \$105,000, said he has also fielded questions about COVID-19 vaccines, including the schedule for administering doses.

Other concerns he has heard from residents involve

OBITUARIES

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Barbara Cropp

Baker City, and formerly of North Powder, 1937-2020

Barbara enjoyed growing gladiolas, petunias and roses. Barbara loved animals. She had poodles, Poquito

Diablo and Kona. She had also become buddies with her daughter’s Doberman, Freya May.

Throughout her life she enjoyed playing card and board games with family

and friends. She also enjoyed watching birds. All those who knew Barbara knew there would not be a day that could go by without watching her beloved soap operas. A “go to” phrase she lived by was, “If it is meant to be, it will be.”

Barbara is survived by her children, Cathy Murray, Robin (Pamela), Bradley (Lisa),

Donald (Brenda) and Ronald Hughes, and Tanya (Nathan) Williamson; her grandchildren, David Murray, Kristi Merideth, Clarissa Winn, Christina Minor; Christopher; Heather; Brianna, and Austin Hughes; Christopher Winters, Brandon and Bobby Kately, William Christie, and Eriq Williamson; 23 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Barbara was preceded in death by her husband, Bill

Cropp; her parents, Rita Edison and Lloyd Blalock; her sister, Evelyn Edison; and her great-grandson, Elijah Winters.

For those who would like to make a donation in memory of Barbara, the family suggests Heart ‘N Home Hospice through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at

www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Winter is here!
Cold weather can mean icy spots in shaded areas!



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NEWS OF RECORD

DEATHS

Alex Sackos: 86, owner of Sackos Excavating in Baker City, died on Jan. 30, 2021, at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City. Services are under the direction of ColesTribute Center, 1950 Place St. To light a candle in Alex’s memory, go to www.colestributecenter.com

FUNERALS PENDING

William ‘Bill’ Gorbet: His funeral will take place at 11 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Richland Christian Church. Interment with military honors will follow at the Eagle Valley Cemetery in Richland. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com

Lloyd Harry Bigler: A military honors ceremony will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 20, at Union Park. Those attending must wear a mask and practice social distancing. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to the Union VFW Post, 518 N. Main St., Union, OR 97883. Online condolences may be made at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com

POLICE LOG

Baker City Police Arrests, citations
VIOLATION OF RELEASE AGREEMENT and RESISTING ARREST: Jonathon Dale Fields, 33, of Baker City, 11:27 p.m. Sunday, in the 1700 block of Valley Avenue; jailed.

Baker County Sheriff’s Office Arrests, citations
MENACING: Chad Clinton West, 44, of Richland, 6:09 p.m. Sunday, at the Sheriff’s Office; jailed.

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF INTOXICANTS, RECKLESS DRIVING and SECOND-DEGREE CRIMINAL MISCHIEF (Baker County warrant): Thomas Doyle Owsley, 56, of Baker City, 11 a.m. Friday at the Sheriff’s Office; cited and released.

Oregon State Police Arrests, citations
RECKLESS DRIVING, RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING ANOTHER PERSON and UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM: Douglas Ole Olsen, 60, of Kuna, Idaho, 12:08 p.m. Friday, on Interstate 84, about 5 miles north

of Baker City; Sr. Trooper David Aydelotte wrote in his report that Olsen reportedly was stopping on the highway in front of other vehicles in a “road rage” incident. After Aydelotte stopped Olsen, he discovered Olsen was carrying a loaded handgun in his pocket, the report stated; Olsen’s vehicle was towed from the scene, the handgun seized as evidence and Olsen was transported to the Baker City OSP office where he was cited and released due to COVID-19 restrictions at the Baker County Jail.

NO OPERATOR’S LICENSE, NO INSURANCE, FAILURE TO INSTALL IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICE and FAILURE TO REPORT CRASH: Taryn Leigh Kruger, 44, of Halfway, 3:47 p.m. Saturday, near Halfway; cited and released. Sr. Trooper Timothy Zinn wrote in his report that Kruger was cited after investigation of a crash in which she missed the highway corner after stating that she was distracted by her phone. Zinn wrote that Kruger’s vehicle then struck a delineator post and a school bus stop sign. Her vehicle next crossed over a county road and struck a snow embankment and a tree. Kruger was not hurt in the crash.

APPLIANCES
& MORE

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