

IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Outdoors • Sports • TV

\$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber
A special good day to Herald subscriber Joan Tracy of Baker City.

Oregon, 3A
SALEM — Police in Oregon can no longer arrest someone for possession of small amounts of heroin, methamphetamine, LSD, oxycodone and other drugs as a ballot measure that decriminalized them took effect on Monday, Feb. 1.

Nation, 5A
WASHINGTON — The Senate early Friday, Feb. 5, approved a measure that would let Democrats muscle President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief plan through the chamber without Republican support. Vice President Kamala Harris was in the chair to cast the tie-breaking vote, her first.

BRIEFING

Haines Fire Protection District meeting Feb. 8
HAINES — The Haines Fire Protection District will have its monthly meeting on Monday, Feb. 8, at 6 p.m. at the main station at 816 Cole St. in Haines. COVID-19 safety protocols will be followed.

WEATHER

Today

44 / 32

Mostly sunny

Sunday

41 / 27

A few flurries

Monday

39 / 24

A few flurries

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

Patrick And Beth Morrissey Celebrating 50 Years of Marriage

Major Milestone

■ After living through the Great Depression, combat in World War II, and prostate cancer, the pandemic, which has at times kept him from visiting his wife in a care facility, is the latest obstacle for 95-year-old



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Patrick Morrissey enjoys reminiscing as he leafs through a scrapbook at his Baker City home. Patrick, 95, and his wife, Beth, 92, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary today.

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Patrick Morrissey endured the Great Depression, he survived the German onslaught during the Battle of the Bulge, and he beat prostate cancer. The worst pandemic in a century will not prevent Patrick from celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary with his wife, Beth, today in their Baker City home. But the couple has not completely avoided the effects of COVID-19. And because they haven't, today's celebration, exactly half a century after they were married on Feb. 6, 1971, at West Linn, will be particularly poignant for the Morrisseys. In March 2020, just before the spreading coronavirus began to infiltrate most every aspect of society, Beth moved into Ashley Manor care center. That's right across Lund Lane from the home the couple have lived in for about 20 years at the northeast corner of town. For much of the winter, and at times earlier in 2020, Patrick wasn't able to walk across that street and see his wife due to pandemic precautions. "They keep changing the rules," he said. Recently, though, the couple have been able to spend time together in Beth's room at Ashley Manor. And now that both have received their two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, those visits should continue. But Patrick, who turns 96 in March, is just happy that Beth, 92, will be back in their home for one afternoon to celebrate their milestone anniversary. "It'll be nice," he said during a Feb. 4 interview in his living room, his face suddenly transformed by a grin that instantly erases a couple of decades.



Morrissey

See Milestone / Page 3A

County drops to high risk

■ County on pace to drop to the lowest risk level Feb. 12

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County dropped from the extreme-risk level under the state's COVID-19 guidelines to high risk on Friday, Feb. 5, Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett said. And based on the county's number of new virus cases and test positivity rate for the two-week measuring period that ends today, Feb. 6, the county is on pace to drop to the lowest of the four risk levels starting Feb. 12. That would allow restaurants, which have been limited to takeout and outdoor dining for all but two weeks since Dec. 3, to offer indoor dining up to 50% of their dining capacity starting Feb. 12. They can resume more limited indoor dining under the high-risk designation, too.



Bennett

See Risk / Page 5A

Local police leery of new drug law

■ Law, passed by voters in November, reduces penalties for possession of small amounts of meth, heroin and several other drugs

By Chris Collins
ccollins@bakercityherald.com

Monday, Feb. 1, marked a new day for Oregon to stand in the national spotlight. This time the state is gaining attention as the first to decriminalize multiple drugs under the Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act. The new law was passed by voters in November 2020 as Ballot Measure 110. Baker County's top law enforcement officers say that although they didn't support the measure, they hope it results in people who use drugs getting treatment. As explained in the ballot statement, the measure "eliminates criminal penalties for possession of specified quantities of controlled substances by adults and juveniles."

See Drug Law / Page 2A

Wyden focusing on farming, rural broadband



Wyden

By Samantha O'Conner
soconner@bakercityherald.com

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said on Friday, Feb. 5 that he's working on plans to benefit Eastern Oregon farmers and ranchers, and to improve access to high-speed broadband internet in rural areas. Wyden, Oregon's senior senator, hosted a virtual town hall for residents of Baker, Malheur and Harney counties. "We know that agriculture is so important in all three of these counties," Wyden said. He said one of his priorities is to encourage President Joe Biden to allow the Oregon Department of Agriculture to run its own meat inspection program rather than rely on the federal system. Some local ranchers have advocated for that change, saying it would make it easier to market their beef to local customers.

See Wyden / Page 5A