

Baker City Herald

April 3, 2021

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In SPORTS, 5A
Badgers sweep Baker

IN THIS EDITION:

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Mike Wilson of Baker City.

Oregon, 3A

Another gun regulation bill is headed for a legislative debate and vote, this time in the Oregon House.

House Bill 2510, approved Tuesday, March 30 by the House Health Care Committee, would require the storage of firearms with trigger or cable locks, in a locked container or in a gun room.

BRIEFING

Easter sunrise service planned

There will be an Easter sunrise service this Sunday, April 4 from 6:30 a.m. to 7:15 a.m. in the parking lot at the Harvest Church, 3720 Birch St. in Baker City. This service is for all in the community. Participants can hear the service on the radio from their vehicle if they choose.

Haines Fire Protection District board meeting set

HAINES — The Haines Fire Protection District's board of directors will have its monthly meeting on Monday, April 12 at 6 p.m. at the main station, 816 Cole St. The meeting is open to the public, and COVID-19 safety procedures will be in place.

WEATHER

Today

71 / 38



Partly sunny

Sunday

68 / 31



Partly sunny

Monday

54 / 30



Morning showers

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

Vaccine count overstated

■ Problem with state reporting system inflated Baker County's vaccination numbers by about 50%

By Jayson Jacoby
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The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) estimates that its website had recently exaggerated by about 50% the number of Baker County residents who have been partially or fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The agency on Wednesday, March

31, temporarily blocked the section of the website listing county vaccination statistics due to the Baker County error.

Earlier this week the website showed that more than 10,400 Baker County residents — about 62% of the county's population — had been partially or fully vaccinated.

That was by far the highest rate among Oregon's 36 counties.

The Baker City Herald on March 23 sent an email to OHA noting that the website showed that more Baker County residents in certain age groups, including 80 and older and 75 to 79, had been vaccinated than there are residents in the county in those

age ranges based on a state-supplied spreadsheet.

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett told the Herald last week that he believed the OHA website overstated the number of county residents who have been fully or partially vaccinated.

See Vaccine / Page 2A

Program Designed To Prevent Co-Sleeping Deaths



Cribs for Kids/Contributed Photo

The Cribs for Kids organization emphasizes that having babies sleep on their backs and in cribs, rather than with parents in a bed, is the safest method and a way to prevent baby deaths from co-sleeping.

Sleeping Safely

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

The Cribs for Kids program is going on five years in Baker County with the number one goal of saving babies.

"We want to reduce the number of deaths postpartum and out of the hospital," said Sommer Sargent, OB supervisor at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City.

Cribs for Kids was founded in 1998 to provide education on "safe sleep" for infants. According to the organization, about 3,500 babies die in their sleep every year.

These deaths are classified as SUID, or Sudden Unexpected Infant Death. Some are due to SIDS — Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, of which the cause is unknown.

However, the organization reports that many infant deaths are due to suffocation or strangulation in unsafe sleeping environments, including babies sleeping with a parent or other adult.

Saint Alphonsus adopted the

Cribs for Kids program in 2016.

In 2009 the Baker County medical examiner, Dr. James Davis, said seven babies in the county had died over the past seven years after sleeping beside a parent, including three deaths in three months in 2009.

Two other babies died in similar circumstances in 2015, and one in 2016.

The education about safe sleep relies on community partnerships, Sargent said.

"We (the hospital) should never be the first or last place they hear about safe sleep," she said.

Providing information about safe sleep is part of pre-natal and post-natal appointments with doctors. The Department of Human Services, Baker County Health Department, Rachel Pregnancy Center and first responders also dispense recommendations on keeping infants safe while sleeping.

At the hospital, patients are provided with printed materials, as well

as a HALO sleep sack to take home thanks to grants from the Saint Alphonsus Foundation and hospital auxiliary.

"The whole hospital helps keep the program going," Sargent said.

The sleep sacks are also sold in the hospital gift shop, although that has been closed during the pandemic.

A large part of the program is right in the name — cribs.

The Northeast Oregon Compassion Center can provide a free crib to a family in need. Instead of an actual crib that is difficult to relocate, the center provides play yards, which are an approved sleeping environment.

"That's another big piece that makes this program successful," Sargent said.

The cost of cribs is covered by donations.

"Community members donate funds to the Compassion Center specifically for this program," Sargent said.

See Safe Sleep / Page 3A

COVID cases have nearly tripled

■ Due to state's new 'caution period' the county's risk level won't change despite rising cases the past two weeks

By Jayson Jacoby
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A recent change to Oregon's COVID-19 risk level system should allow Baker County to remain at the lowest level, with the least severe restrictions, through most of April even though the county's case rate has nearly tripled in the past two weeks.

Oregon's four-tier system imposes restrictions on businesses and events based on the number of new virus cases and the test positivity rate in their county.

Risk levels are subject to change every two weeks, based on statistics from the previous two-week measuring period. Baker County has been in the lowest of the risk levels since March 26.

The current measuring period ends today, April 3, and will determine counties' risk levels starting April 9.

Through Thursday, April 1, Baker County had recorded 65 new cases during the current measuring period. Prior to the recent change, that number of new cases would have pushed the county from the lowest risk level to the highest (known as "extreme") starting April 9.

See COVID / Page 6A

Lodging tax working group begins meeting

By Samantha O'Conner
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A work group comprising Baker County and Baker City representatives has started reviewing the lodging tax program that helps pay for tourism promotion and economic development.

The six-member group plans to meet every week or two, said Baker

City Mayor Kerry McQuisten.

She is representing the city in the group, along with City Councilor Joanna Dixon and City Manager Jon Cannon.

The county's representatives are Bill Harvey, chairman of the county board of commissioners; Martin Arritola, chairman of the county's Economic

Development Committee; and Tyler Brown, chairman of the county's Transient Lodging Tax Committee.

The work group's next meeting is set for Wednesday, April 7, at 5 p.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St.

Jason Brandt, president of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, also will be participating in

the work group's discussions.

County commissioners voted 3-0 on March 3 to propose that county and city officials create the group to review, and consider possible changes, to the lodging tax system that's been in place since 2006.

See Lodging / Page 2A



TODAY
Issue 139, 12 pages

Classified.....2B-4B
Comics.....5B
Community News....3A

Crossword.....2B & 4B
Dear Abby.....6B
Horoscope.....4B

Jayson Jacoby.....4A
News of Record.....2A
Obituaries.....2A

Opinion.....4A
Outdoors.....1B & 2B
Senior Menus.....2A

Sports.....5A
Turning Backs.....2A
Weather.....6B

TUESDAY — NORTHEAST OREGON SNOWPACK STAYS ABOVE AVERAGE