

Baker City Herald

April 15, 2021

Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com



GO! Magazine
Your guide to arts, entertainment and other events happening around Northeast Oregon

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Business & AgLife • Go! magazine **\$1.50**

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Christina Witham of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Baker City working on housing needs analysis

Baker City residents are invited to share their thoughts about the city's housing needs for the next 20 years as part of a needs analysis.

The Baker City Planning Department has scheduled an open house on the topic for Monday, April 19. Residents have two options for participating:

- Zoom meeting, 3:30 p.m. To access the meeting, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81819675944>. Or call 1-253-215-8782 and use meeting ID 818 1967 5944.
- Attend an open house at 5:30 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall, 1655 First St.

Fundraiser for Carmelita Holland

RICHLAND — A fundraising lunch and auction are set for Saturday, April 17 in Richland for the Carmelita Holland family, who lost their home in New Bridge to a fire on March 20.

Lunch starts at noon at the Eagle Valley Grange Park. Tickets are \$10 for roast pork, or \$5 for a hot dog meal. A silent auction starts at noon; a live auction, with auctioneer Mib Dailey, starts at 1:30 p.m.

WEATHER

Today
60 / 29
Sunny

Friday
64 / 29
Sunny

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

COVID surge worsens

■ Baker County recorded 14 new cases on Tuesday, the highest one-day total since Dec. 28

By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker County's COVID-19 surge continued on Tuesday, April 13 with 14 new cases, the highest one-day total since late December, and the third-most in any day during the pandemic.

Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department, described the situation as "alarming" during an interview Tuesday morning, before

the day's case total was compiled.

Staten said a large majority of the county's cases over the past few weeks — including those reported Tuesday — have been traced to parties and other social gatherings.

She said she understands that



Staten

people, more than a year into a pandemic that has had such dramatic effects on previously normal activities, want to socialize.

"People have COVID fatigue," Staten said. "People want to gather."

But if too many residents cease taking precautions — as the recent rise in cases, and their origins, suggests is happening — the effects can be widespread, Staten said.

Besides increasing the risk for vulnerable people to suffer severe health effects — 13 county residents have died after testing positive — Staten pointed out that the surge could push the county into a higher risk level starting April 23, with associated limitations on businesses, particularly restaurants and bars.

See *Surge* / Page 2A

Baker County YMCA Offers Variety Of Workouts At Fitness Center, Pool



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Diane Wofford participates in a water aerobics class Wednesday, April 14 at Sam-O Swim Center.

Exercising Options

By Corey Kirk
ckirk@bakercityherald.com

Whether it's swimming laps at the Sam-O-Swim Center, or adding more weight on a squat rack in the free weight area at the fitness center on Pocahontas Road, the Baker County YMCA is striving to give their members ways to achieve their fitness goals safely during the pandemic.

"I really try to look for really targeted opportunities for people as they are pursuing maybe their favorite activity, but giving them information

to do it safely, enjoy it and not have injury," said Elissa Morrison, the Y's health and wellness director.

At the fitness center, Morrison and her staff offer a variety of group classes, which are free to Y members.

"That is the one thing about our staff, they do it because they love what they do, and they want to help people, that's their passion," Morrison said.

Members can take a karate class one day, a cardio dance class another, or choose tai-chi, a class Morrison

sees as beneficial to anybody.

"It's an excellent program to address balance — everyone has balance issues, especially when we age," Morrison said. "Any time you work on balance, you engage the brain so you are helping with brain function."

People who would rather strap on swim goggles have multiple options at Sam-O Swim Center, the city-owned pool that the Y operates at 580 Baker St.

See *Workout* / Page 3A

Council expresses concern over fees

By Samantha O'Conner
soconner@bakercityherald.com

Baker City Council members expressed concern about proposed increases in water, wastewater and other fees during their regular meeting Tuesday evening, April 13 at City Hall.

Jeanie Dexter, the city's finance director, presented the annual fee resolution.

Councilors are scheduled to vote on the resolution during their April 27 meeting. Any fee changes would take effect July 1, the start of the 2021-22 fiscal year.

In her report, Dexter said proposed increases in water and wastewater rates, and a variety of fees at Mount Hope Cemetery, are based on the federal Consumer Price Index, which increased by 1.9% for the 12-month period ending in February 2021.

Councilor Heather Sells asked whether city officials had discussed leaving water rates as they are since some businesses have been closed or severely restricted due to state-imposed guidelines designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

See *Fees* / Page 3A



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Paula Moe, shown here at Sam-O Swim Center, is aquatics director for the Baker County YMCA.

Sheriff's Office investigates mail thefts

The Baker County Sheriff's Office encourages residents to check their mailboxes daily after a rash of mail thefts along Highway 7 between Baker City and near Sumpter.

On Sunday, April 11, a citizen called Baker County Dispatch after noticing several mailboxes left open in the area of Griffin Gulch, about a mile south of Baker City, as well as mail scattered on Highway 7, according to a press release from the Sheriff's Office.

See *Thefts* / Page 3A



TODAY
Issue 144, 22 pages

Business.....1B & 2B
Classified.....3B-6B
Comics.....7B

Community News....3A
Crossword.....3B & 6B
Dear Abby.....8B

Horoscope.....3B & 6B
Letters.....4A
Lottery Results.....2A

News of Record.....2A
Obituaries.....2A
Opinion.....4A

Senior Menus.....2A
Sports.....5A
Weather.....8B

INSIDE, 6A — POWDER VALLEY VOLLEYBALL CAPS A PERFECT SEASON