

Local & State



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

April Combes does a weightlifting workout on Wednesday, April 14 at the YMCA's fitness center in Baker City under the guidance of Elissa Morrison, the Y's health and wellness director.

WORKOUT

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"Our programs would include parent-taught swim lessons, all levels of swimming for adults and children, lifeguarding classes, then we have several different water aerobics classes for different needs," aquatics director Paula Moe said.

Pandemic precautions

YMCA officials have been trained to properly screen visitors for symptoms, sanitize equipment, keep class sizes to a manageable level and practice social distancing.

"Our style of cleaning, the products that we use, limiting the use of the locker rooms and limiting the use of the pool," Moe said.

She said the Y has instituted a different check in process for swim lessons.

"Instead of the whole group coming into the building and checking in, we are going to meet them outside and keep them in their cohorts and keep them safe," Moe said.

At the fitness center, consistent communication and sanitizing of equipment is a key, Morrison said.

"What we have done with every new mandate that has come out, we as a team sit down and analyze it very carefully and we did more than what was required of us as far as levels of sanitization, and people taking appropriate measures such as masking and that type of thing," Morrison said.

Versatile workout options

The Y's classes are designed to give members and visitors a variety of options that encompass all types of fitness objectives, Morrison said.

"We have five components of what



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

A hand-sanitizing station at Sam-O Swim Center in Baker City.

we call physical fitness, those five components are your cardiorespiratory, the muscular strength, flexibility, body composition and nutrition," she said. "Each piece has a reason, each piece of exercise contributes to particular parts of our body."

Mixing different types of exercises is vital both physically and mentally, Moe said.

"It's completely important because your muscles require different things, your mind requires change to keep going, and if you continue to do the same thing every single day, you are not going to grow outside of the box you put yourself in," she said.

Both Morrison and Moe said fitness classes often bring families together, with members cheering and inspiring each other.

"They get to know each other, they inspire each other, they have fun together, and by the way the byproduct is they are also getting their bodies in great shape," Morrison said.

The Y's facilities are also gathering places for groups of friends, Moe said.

"You are not going to find a friendlier group of people, more inclusive and willing to take somebody in," she said. "They've been those people on the outside and they love to have people to join them. They do their exercises and often go to coffee and lunch then branch out to all kinds of friendships."

Morrison urges newcomers, regardless of age, to begin their experience at the Y with strength training classes, which can help them figure out their own personal goals and the ways to achieve them.

"They are learning how to use the different pieces of equipment, they are learning what to focus on, why they are working out and what they are training on," Morrison said. "Then we actually help them with a workout plan so they get to try the actual equipment, and proper use of that equipment or it can be exercise of the body."

Membership fees vary depending on age. Starting April 18, members can work out on Sundays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. For more information on all Y programs, including classes schedules, go to www.bakerymca.org/.



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

State fines Black Bear Diners \$35,000 for COVID violations

By Michael Kohn

The (Bend) Bulletin

BEND — The Black Bear Diner locations in Bend and Redmond were fined \$35,000 for violating COVID-related restrictions, including allowing indoor dining when Deschutes County was in the extreme risk category due to high coronavirus caseloads.

Both diners, which are under the same ownership, "willfully" continue to potentially expose workers to the virus, despite a public health order of limited or zero indoor dining, according to a release from Oregon Occupational Safety and Health.

Oregon OSHA has been actively pursuing businesses that ignored the lockdown restrictions that limited restaurants, coffee shops and bars to takeout service only. Last month Kevista Coffee was fined \$27,470 for similar violations by OSHA.

Kathy Degree, the owner of the two Black Bear diners, has hired the services of Salem-based Kevin L. Mannix law firm to appeal the penalty.

Degree has 30 days to appeal the citation. She believes she was properly adhering to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rules and regulations for businesses that were permitted to be open at the time.

"We felt that we were following all the CDC guidelines of social distancing, face masks, sanitation as all businesses that were open," said Degree by phone. "We felt we were entitled to those same parameters. We took the safety of our employees to the highest priority, and the records will show that no employee tested positive for COVID."

FEES

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Dexter said city officials discussed the idea of forgoing rate increases last year.

But this year, she said, officials decided to propose increases identical to the Consumer Price Index because the city needs to cover its own costs for operating the water and wastewater systems.

Dexter noted that the proposed increase of 1.9% for water and sewer fees is lower than several recent increases the City Council has passed.

The Council boosted water rates by 10% in each of three years, 2016-18, and sewer rates by 10% and 12.8% during the past decade.

Dexter said the city has been trying to offer assistance for people who struggle to pay their bills.

Dexter said she has learned that The Salvation Army has not distributed all of the \$10,000 in federal COVID-19 aid that the City Council awarded the organization last fall, and that she extended the deadline for disbursing that money, including for utility payment relief, until June 30.

Councilor Lynette Perry said she has heard from residents who feel the current rates are unbearably high, and that another increase would be a hardship.

In reference to proposed increases in fees at the cemetery, including the cost for perpetual care rising from \$882 to \$899, Councilor Joanna Dixon asked if that price includes spraying and removing weeds.

Dexter said the fees cover about half the city's annual cost to hire a contractor to maintain the cemetery.

Dexter said the funds that go to support the cemetery cover about 50% of the actual expenditures to pay the contractors.

Michelle Owen, the city's public works director, said the contract does include weed control.

Dixon also asked about bike licenses, and whether the city has considered charging a fee for the license, which is free.

Dexter said the purpose of the license is to ensure that the city has a record of a bike and its owner so there's a chance to return a lost or stolen bike to its owner.

"They want to encourage the public to just come and get one," Dexter said. "So that's why we've never charged a fee for that."

In other business Tuesday, councilors:

- approved by a 4-3 vote the first reading of ordinance 3881, which adds two members to the city's golf board, bringing the total from five to seven.

Councilors Jason Spriet, Shane Alderson, Sells, and Perry voted in favor of the first reading.

Mayor Kerry McQuisten, and councilors Johnny Waggoner Sr. and Dixon voted against the first reading.

- declared the week of April 19 as the community's Arbor Day celebration to celebrate Baker City's 36th consecutive year of being recognized as a Tree City USA through the Arbor Day Foundation. That's the fifth-longest streak among Oregon cities.

THEFTS

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After investigation, police determined that an unknown person or persons had stolen mail from numerous mailboxes. It appears that the thefts began at Huckleberry Loop, in Sumpter Valley, spanning along Highway 7 to Griffin Gulch Road.

The Sheriff's Office encourages Baker County residents, in addition to checking their mail daily, to have a relative or friend retrieve mail when on vacation, or buy a locking mailbox.

Anyone with information about the mail thefts, or who believes they may be a victim, is encouraged to contact Sgt. Eric Colton at 541-523-6415.

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