



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

Baker City Herald

April 29, 2021

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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 Dan Freeman of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Locals on EOU winter honor roll

LA GRANDE — Several Baker County students were among the 629 named to the dean's list for the winter 2021 term at Eastern Oregon University. To qualify, students must maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale, while completing at least 12 hours of graded coursework.

Baker City students on the dean's list: Kayley Ah-Hee, Erin Blincoe, Boston Colton, Paige Pearce, Laura Price, Jayme Ramos, Joanie Sells, Mitchell Stephens.

Samuel Pointer of Haines was also named to the dean's list.

Baker City Parks Board meets May 3

Baker City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will meet on Monday, May 3 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St. Agenda items include the new security cameras in Geiser-Pollman and Central parks, and the ongoing online parks survey, results of which will help the city update its parks master plan. To participate in the survey, go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/CQ2KNDC

WEATHER

Today 80 / 44 Sunny

Friday 78 / 46 Partly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

Local and state officials blast COVID restrictions

By Jayson Jacoby jacob@bakercityherald.com

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett and the county's two state legislators have signed separate letters criticizing Gov. Kate Brown's decision to ban indoor dining in Baker County and 14 other counties starting Friday, April 30 due to a recent surge in COVID-19 cases.

Bennett was among commissioners from those counties who signed a letter to the governor co-sponsored

by the Association of Oregon Counties and the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association.

Meanwhile, State Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, and State Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, sent a letter to Brown and to Patrick Allen, director of the Oregon Health Authority.

Both letters chastised the governor for moving those counties to the extreme risk level for at least one week starting this Friday.

The letters focus on the resulting

restrictions on restaurants and other businesses.

For instance, indoor dining is prohibited in restaurants and bars in counties at extreme risk. Baker County hasn't been at that risk level — the most severe of the four in the state's system — since Feb. 4.

At the high risk level, where Baker County has been since April 23, restaurants and bars can have indoor dining up to 25% of capacity or 50 total people, including staff, whichever



Owens Findley Bennett

is fewer. Extreme risk also imposes more stringent limits on other businesses, including gyms and fitness centers, swimming pools, theaters and museums.

See **Extreme** / Page 3A

Measure On May 18 Ballot Would Allow Marijuana Businesses In Halfway



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Halfway is in the scenic Pine Valley, with the Willowa Mountains rising to the north. Halfway voters will decide in May whether to approve the opening of marijuana-related businesses in the town of about 300.

Marijuana Measure

By Jayson Jacoby jacob@bakercityherald.com

More than four years after voters in Halfway decided by a narrow margin that they don't want a marijuana dispensary in their town in eastern Baker County, the topic has returned to their ballots.

The 257 registered voters in Halfway will decide in the May 18 election whether to allow not only dispensaries but other marijuana-related businesses, including growers, producers and processors.

In November 2016, Halfway voters, by a margin of about 10 votes, approved a measure that banned marijuana dispensaries.

The measure on the ballot this May, by contrast, would allow such businesses.

Amy Olley of Halfway is one of the chief petitioners for Measure 1-107, along with Dianna and Josh Welch.

Olley said she and her husband, Derek, would like to open a marijuana dispensary in Halfway, which is about 55 miles east of Baker City.

The couple initially proposed to open a dispensary in Halfway in 2016, prior to voters passing the measure that banned such businesses.

Amy Olley, 40, said that after voters approved the measure in 2016, she waited to pursue the matter until her three children were school age.

"I'm a mom, and family came first for me," Olley said.

See **Halfway** / Page 3A

Council waits on water, sewer fee hikes

By Samantha O'Conner soconner@bakercityherald.com

The Baker City Council on Tuesday, April 27 decided not to increase water and wastewater rates by 1.9% as the city staff recommended.

Councilors decided to reconsider those fees in six months.

The Council unanimously approved the rest of the resolution that includes fees for other city services. It includes a 1.9% hike for fees associated with Mount Hope Cemetery.

According to a report to councilors from Jeanie Dexter, the city's finance director, the 1.9% proposal for water and wastewater fees equals the increase in the federal Consumer Price Index from February 2020 to February 2021.

The fee increase was proposed to keep pace with increasing operating costs for the water and wastewater systems, according to the report.

The 1.9% increase would boost the base monthly residential rate by 85 cents, from \$45.15 per month to \$46.

See **Council** / Page 5A

State investigator finds evidence that Harvey violated Oregon government ethics laws

By Jayson Jacoby jacob@bakercityherald.com

An investigator for the Oregon Government Ethics Commission found a "preponderance of evidence" that Baker County Com-

mission Chairman Bill Harvey tried to use his position to benefit himself, his son and his son's business and that he failed to disclose conflicts of interest last year.

In a report, investigator Susan

Myers recommends that the Ethics Commission make a preliminary finding that Harvey committed eight violations of state ethics laws.

The Ethics Commission was ini-

tially scheduled to review Myers' report during its meeting Friday, April 30, but Harvey said he has scheduling conflicts that day.



Harvey

See **Harvey** / Page 3A

Suspect arrested after drug trafficking probe

The Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team, with help from multiple other agencies, on Monday, April 27 arrested a suspect in the sale

of heroin, methamphetamine and fentanyl in Baker County and surrounding areas.

Jacob Kyle Grammon, 25, who

police say had recently been staying at 1604 Fourth St. in Baker City, was arrested Monday morning in an Ontario motel room, according to a

press release from Lt. Ty Duby of the Baker City Police Department.

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SATURDAY — RENOVATION PROPOSAL FOR BHS FOOTBALL STADIUM