



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

# Baker City Herald

May 13, 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 Ralph Ward of Baker City.

**State, 3A**

Gov. Kate Brown's signature awaits a bill that gives tenants more time to pay past-due rent stemming from the coronavirus pandemic and protects their future ability to rent.

The Oregon House sent Senate Bill 282 to the governor on a 39-17 vote on Tuesday, May 11.

**Nation, 6A**

WASHINGTON — Republicans launched an all-out assault Tuesday, May 11 on sweeping voting rights legislation, forcing Democrats to take politically awkward votes spotlighting the increasingly charged national debate over access to ballots.

**BRIEFING**

**Baker Heritage Museum reopens**

The Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St., has reopened after being closed while Baker County was in the extreme risk category under state COVID-19 guidelines. The Museum, which has a display titled "Extraordinary Women" in its Central Gallery, reopened Monday, May 10. It is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

**WEATHER**

**Today**  
75 / 43 

Sunny  
**Friday**  
73 / 42 

**Full forecast on the back of the B section.**

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

**Baker City Downtown Hangs Flower Baskets Along Sidewalks**

## Basket Beauty



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker City Downtown spearheaded a project to hang baskets of flowers along Main, First and Resort streets.

**By Lisa Britton**  
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Flowers are brightening Main Street this year thanks to a pilot project by Baker City Downtown (BCD).

"We're jealous of all the other downtowns and their big beautiful flower baskets," Kate Reid said.

Reid and Tom Novak headed the project by the BCD design committee.

A grant from Transient Lodging Tax enabled BCD to buy brackets — fabricated by Baker Welding — to go on the concrete lamp posts along Main St.

Baker City Public Works installed two brackets on each post.

As for the flowers, Novak talked to business owners, who committed to watering their own basket throughout the

*"We wanted big, bold baskets. And our goal is to keep the money local."*

— **Kate Reid, who worked on project to install flower baskets along Main Street**

summer season.

Once she had a number, Reid placed orders for flower baskets in the fall of 2020 from Rock Garden Greenhouse and Eagle Cap Nursery.

"We wanted big, bold baskets," Reid said. "And our goal is to keep the money local."

Each business paid for the basket or baskets. Thirteen were delivered last week.

"They look amazing," Reid said.

For locations that do not have a lamp post, brackets were installed on the buildings along

Main Street, as well as First and Resort streets. Those flowers — another 40 baskets — will be delivered this week.

Reid said the design committee wants to continue the flower basket project, but needs to raise funds for a dedicated watering system. This could be either a four-wheeler or golf cart equipped with a water tank. As for the watering, that could be done by a volunteer or possibly be a paid part-time position, Reid said.

She said BCD received several donations during the spring clean-up event held in April.

Anyone who would like to support the flower basket project can donate to Baker City Downtown by mailing a donation to 1655 First St., Baker City, OR 97814 or PO Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814.

## Council queries county on virus

■ Four county officials attended Tuesday's Council meeting to answer questions

**By Samantha O'Conner**  
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Baker City Council members queried county officials on a variety of topics involving the COVID-19 pandemic during the Council's regular meeting Tuesday, May 11.

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett, who has served as the county's incident commander throughout the pandemic, attended Tuesday's meeting.

Bennett was accompanied by three other senior managers from the county:

- Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department.
- Jason Yencopal, emergency management director.
- Holly Kerns, public information officer.

See Council / Page 3A

**INSIDE, PAGE 2A**

Baker County's vaccination rate well below new state threshold to move to lower risk level starting May 21.

## Why is the river so full?

■ Irrigation district official says dry spring has led to high demand for water before mountain snow has melted

**By Jayson Jacoby**  
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Jeff Colton has heard the question many times over the past couple weeks: Why is the Powder River running so high, so early in spring?

The answer is simple, even though the complete story involves multiple factors, said Colton, who manages the Baker Valley Irrigation District and is responsible for releasing water from Phillips Reservoir, on the Powder about 15 miles upstream from Baker City.

The math is working against him right now.

But Colton also knows the two sides of the equation will soon swap places.

And when that happens, he said, the Powder River flowing through Baker City will recede, and the reservoir, depleted from the 2020 drought, will begin, albeit likely slowly, to refill.

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## BHS student talks about getting vaccinated

■ Sarah Plummer, a 17-year-old junior, will have her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine this Saturday

**By Jayson Jacoby**  
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Sarah Plummer, a 17-year-old junior at Baker High School, had no qualms about getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

But there was one other thing she didn't have, and it was a vital one.

An appointment. Sarah was determined, though, to protect herself, and potentially others, from the virus that has

wreaked such havoc on her penultimate year of high school.

So after talking with her parents, Faith and Dave Plummer, both of whom were fully vaccinated earlier in the year, Sarah decided to drive

to Meridian, Idaho, where doses of the Pfizer vaccine — the only one approved for people younger than 18 — were available.

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**TODAY**  
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**SATURDAY — COUNTY CLERK CERTIFIES BALLOT-COUNTING MACHINE**