

Baker City Herald

June 17, 2021

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



Local Businesses Struggle To Fill Vacancies

Jobs Go Unfilled

GO! Magazine

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

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Mary Brooks of Baker City.

BRIEFING

P.E.O. Chapter awards four scholarships

The Baker City P.E.O. Chapter CJ Foundation has awarded \$500 scholarships to Bailey Cole, Rebekah Davis, Hollie Mays and Kylie Siddoway.

Bailey, of North Powder, will attend Eastern Oregon University and major in multidisciplinary studies. Davis, of Baker City, will attend Oregon State University with a major in nutrition and minor in business. Mays, of Baker City, will attend Carroll College in Helena, Montana, as a pre-med student with a minor in theater. Siddoway, of Durkee, will attend Texas A&M, majoring in animal science with a minor in agri-business.

WEATHER

Today
85 / 47
Sunny

Friday
90 / 52
Sunny

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



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Marvin Wood Products on 17th Street in Baker City is among the local businesses that have had difficulty hiring employees over the past several months.

By Jayson Jacoby and Lisa Britton
Baker City Herald

Sandi Fuller has worked at the Marvin Wood Products plant in Baker City for almost three decades and she never found it especially difficult to hire employees.

Until the pandemic, COVID-19 has caused multiple economic upheavals, and the most pressing current problem is filling vacancies and expanding the workforce, said Fuller, who is the plant's manager and previously worked as its human resources director.

"This is the most challenging hiring environment we've had in my experience," Fuller said.

She'll mark 29 years with Marvin Wood Products in September.

Fuller said the Baker City plant employs about 170 workers, and she'd like to hire about 30 new production employees.

"This is the most challenging hiring environment we've had in my experience."

— Sandi Fuller, plant manager, Marvin Wood Products

Prior to the pandemic, that task would have been relatively simple, Fuller said.

But attracting employees this year has been difficult, she said, despite the company boosting its entry level wage to \$17.73, plus a 50-cent bonus for people who accept rotating shifts, and other incentives including signing bonuses of \$500 and up to \$1,500 to help people move to Baker City.

"These (incentives) are helping with our recruitment, but we aren't where we want to be yet," Fuller wrote in an email to the Baker City Herald on June 10.

Fuller said that when the pandemic started more than a year ago, the initial concern was that Marvin Wood Products would need fewer workers, not more, as the economy was constricted by COVID-19 restrictions.

But demand for the company's products rebounded much more quickly than it did after the 2008-09 recession, Fuller said.

By late summer 2020 the market had returned to pre-pandemic levels, and the Baker City plant needed to bolster its workforce, she said.

Thus started the struggles.

Fuller said multiple factors have contributed to the company's challenges at finding workers, and she acknowledges that it's not always possible to know why more people aren't applying for jobs since she never actually talks to those people.

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County OK's Pine Cr. Road survey

By Samantha O'Conner
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Baker County Commissioners on Wednesday, June 16 took the first step toward potentially declaring as a public road a section of Pine Creek Lane that's the subject of a lawsuit in which the county is the defendant.

Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution "declaring the necessity for the legalization of Pine Creek Lane."

Commission Chairman Bill Harvey emphasized that the resolution is a preliminary action.

"All we're doing today is establishing a resolution that says that we're going to put together a survey," Harvey said. "We are going to have public hearings on anything else after that. And we will notify the public and any landowners in the area that we will be having that meeting over at the Event Center so we have plenty of room for people to come and give their comments."

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Graduate to intern in 2 days

■ Joanna Mann, a University of Oregon graduate, working at the Baker City Herald

By Lisa Britton
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In just two days, Joanna Mann went from college student to newspaper intern in the smallest town she's ever lived in.



Mann

Mann, 22, received her college diploma Saturday, June 12, at the University of Oregon.

By Monday, June 14, she began a 10-week internship at the Baker City Herald as part of the Charles Snowden Program for Excellence in Journalism.

Mann grew up in Las Vegas.

"It was pretty normal. I lived in a suburb," she said.

But she didn't stay away from the famous city.

"We'd take advantage of the shows, concerts, and restaurants," she said.

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Competitors Pass Through Baker City On 4,210-Mile Trans Am Bike Race

Crossing America by pedal power

By Joanna Mann
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If you have seen more bicyclists than usual zooming down Baker City streets, chances are they're passing through town on the Trans Am Bike Race, an annual cross country race from Astoria to Yorktown, Virginia.

Only the most seasoned and adventurous cyclists will attempt the 4,210-mile race, which kicked off at 6 a.m. on June 6.

Taylor Anthony, a 25-year-old from New York City, is one of the 56 cyclists competing in this year's race. He had planned on participating last year, but the 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19.



Joanna Mann/Baker City Herald

Taylor Anthony, left, is one of 42 bicyclists competing in the 4,210-mile Trans Am Bike Race. He visited with Brian Vegter, right, a longtime cycling enthusiast and race supporter, on Monday, June 14 in Baker City.

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SATURDAY — PREPARING FOR MINERS JUBILEE, BULLS AND BRONCS