

# RESTROOMS

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In the past, the city's parks maintenance contractor unlocked restrooms around 6 a.m. daily. An officer from the Baker City Police Department then locked them at night, although in some cases not until after midnight, Bornstedt said.

She said many of the incidents over the past two months or so happened after 8 p.m. — in some cases the city could pinpoint the damage by reviewing photos from the security cameras the city installed in both parks earlier this year.

There are six cameras in each park. The city received a grant of \$18,745 from the Leo Adler Foundation to help pay for the cameras. The city's total cost, including installing electric lines and poles, was \$36,319.

Among the problems city officials have dealt with recently, in addition to graffiti, are:

- someone tried to rip the urinal off the wall in the men's restroom at Geiser-Pollman Park
- fires have been lit in restrooms in both parks
- people have plugged sinks in restrooms, apparently to facilitate bathing, leading to flooding
- people have been found sleeping inside restrooms

Bornstedt said graffiti has been an occasional problem in restrooms — and elsewhere in the parks — over the past few years.

"But it's been escalating," she said. "This year it seems like almost every day we've had something. We can't keep up with it."

Bornstedt estimated the city has spent around \$2,000 to repair damage over the past two months or so.



Baker City Public Works Department/Contributed Photo

This image from a security camera shows a person prying open the locked door of the restroom at Central Park around 8:20 p.m. on June 18.

The city's parks department budget has \$1,000 allocated for dealing with vandalism during the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. The budget for the next fiscal year boosts that amount to \$3,000.

The security cameras have yielded limited success, Bornstedt said.

On June 14, Baker City Police cited two girls, ages 11 and 12, on criminal mischief charges for graffiti in Geiser-Pollman Park after Bornstedt recognized the girls from a video captured by a city camera.

A camera at Central Park also recorded a person who used a tool to pry the plate off the door handle of the restroom around 8:20 p.m. on June 18. The person, who has not been identified, also damaged the vent at the bottom of the door, Bornstedt said.

She noted, however, that the cameras are of little use in identifying people who

cause damage inside restrooms, since the cameras only cover areas outside.

Bornstedt said issues are not limited to the parks themselves.

The two bridges over the Powder River on the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway between Madison and Broadway streets have been tagged with graffiti, she said.

And Baker City Police have removed homeless camps from beneath the bridges.

Bornstedt said the city plans to place concrete rubble beneath the bridges to make them less attractive.

She noted that an Oregon law, which takes effect July 1, 2023, could affect the city's ability to restrict camping on public property.

The law mandates that any city or county law must be reasonable if it regulates "sitting, lying, sleeping or keeping warm and dry outdoors on public property."

# APPEAL

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Documents from the DEQ outline two types of violations, both related to the discharge permit the agency issued to the city in 2004.

The first type involves four separate instances in 2019 and 2020 when the city allegedly failed to monitor wastewater either as it arrived at the treatment facility or before treated wastewater was released into the Powder River.

The monetary fine is for those alleged violations.

The second type of violation involves the release of wastewater into the river — what's known as the effluent — and allegations that in four cases the effluent exceeded permitted limits of certain pollutants.

The DEQ is not proposing to fine the city for any of those instances.

Owen said she plans to challenge the agency's contention that the city failed to monitor

wastewater as required by its permit — the alleged violations for which the city would have to pay the \$8,924 fine. Owen said she believes the issue involves how the agency, and city officials, interpret the permit.

The specific allegations in the DEQ notice include:

- That the city failed to monitor the temperature of wastewater; prior to its discharge into the river, during January 2019. The permit requires that measurement to be done weekly, according to DEQ.
- That the city failed to monitor wastewater; prior to its discharge into the river, for "excess thermal load" during January 2019. The permit requires that measurement to be done weekly, according to DEQ.
- That the city failed to monitor wastewater; prior to discharge, for three factors during the week of June 2, 2020. Those factors are "biochemical oxygen demand," total

dissolved solids, and E. coli bacteria. The permit requires each of those parameters to be measured twice weekly, according to DEQ.

Biochemical oxygen demand is a measurement of how the wastewater could affect the amount of dissolved oxygen in the river. Fish and other aquatic life need a certain amount of dissolved oxygen to survive, and bacteria and other microorganisms that can exist in wastewater can reduce the concentration of dissolved oxygen because they consume oxygen as they decompose.

- That the city failed to monitor wastewater entering the treatment plan for biochemical oxygen demand and total dissolved solids during the week ending April 4, 2020. The permit requires those two parameters to be measured twice weekly, according to DEQ.

Owen said she doesn't dispute that the city's effluent exceeded limits in four cases, as

those are based on lab results. The specific violations listed in the order:

- That during October 2019 the city's effluent was 3% over the monthly average permitted limit for the amount of biochemical oxygen demand.
- That during October 2020, the city's effluent exceeded the monthly average amount of biochemical oxygen demand by 55%.
- That on Oct. 21, 2020, the city's effluent exceeded the daily maximum amount of biochemical oxygen demand by 19%.
- That during the week of Oct. 18, 2020, the city's effluent exceeded the weekly average limit of biochemical oxygen demand by 63%.

# NEWS OF RECORD

## DEATHS

**Rowena Royal:** 89, of Baker City, died June 24, 2021, at her home. Arrangements are under the direction of Coles Tribute Center. To leave an online condolence for her family, go to [www.colestributecenter.com](http://www.colestributecenter.com).

## FUNERALS PENDING

**Mildred A. Wall:** Memorial Mass Sunday, June 27 at 2 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, 2235 First St. Friends of Millie are welcome. If you wish, Millie would always appreciate a donation to the Oregon Humane Society or the ASPCA.

**Elizabeth 'Liz' Riseley:** Graveside service Saturday, July 3 at 11 a.m. at Mount Hope Cemetery. For those who would like to make a memorial donation in honor of Liz, the family suggests either St. Jude's Children's Hospital or Heart 'N Home Hospice (Opal Foundation) through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at

[www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

**James Oliver (J.O.) Maxwell:** Graveside memorial service with Air Force military honors, Monday, July 5 at 10 a.m. at the Haines Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Haines Elementary School or a charity of your choice through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. Pam Maxwell is compiling a memory book for the family. If you have a fond memory or copy of a photo, please send them to Pam Maxwell, 15177 Muddy Creek Lane, Haines, OR 97833.

## POLICE LOG

**Baker City Police**  
FAILURE TO APPEAR (Baker County warrant), OUT-OF-COUNTY WARRANT: Pearl Naomi Adair, 40, Baker City, 4:11 p.m. Thursday, June 24 in the Highway 7 underpass; jailed.  
PROBATION VIOLATION: Jason Lee Troyer, 45, Baker City, 12:06 p.m. Thursday, June 24

in the 1200 block of Campbell Street; jailed.

SECOND-DEGREE CHILD NEGLECT (Baker County Circuit Court warrant): Amelia Josephine Idalski, 29, 11:51 p.m. Wednesday, June 23 in the 2900 block of East Street; cited and released.

## Baker County Sheriff's Office

PROBATION VIOLATION (Wallowa County Circuit Court warrant): Stephan Lee Austin, 19, Joseph, 1:56 p.m. Thursday, June 24 in Haines; jailed.  
CONTEMPT OF COURT (Baker County warrant), DRIVING WHILE SUSPENDED: Frank Nathan McNair, 41, Baker City, 3:31 p.m. Wednesday, June 23 on Dewey Avenue; cited and released.

# POWER

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Joe Hathaway, communications manager for OTEC, said power transmission and distribution lines would be de-energized only if the fire threat and other risk factors, such as strong winds, posed an abnormally severe threat.

"The thing we really want to reiterate is we're not saying the sky is falling or anything like that," Hathaway said. "This is a last resort option. We know losing power is a big deal and it's the last thing we'd ever want to do. But in the interest of protecting our communities, it could be a possibility."

"There's a lot of factors that go into that — the red flag warnings, wind speed, conditions on the ground, the fire threat to our infrastructure that would definitely be one of the ones that would make us decide which lines to initiate," Hathaway said. "And then, on-the-ground observations from some community partners, from the Forest Service and other agencies."

OTEC officials pointed out in a press release that other power providers have used intentional outages over the past few years including some during the Labor Day fires that devastated parts of western and southern Oregon.

If OTEC decides an intentional outage is necessary, the cooperative will try to notify its members as soon as possible through a variety of channels, including automated phone calls, press releases and posts on social media and the cooperative's website — [otec.coop](http://otec.coop).

If an outage is necessary, OTEC workers will inspect lines and other equipment, once the extreme weather has passed, to ensure there is no damage.

If so, repairs would be made before the power was restored. Outages could last for hours or up to several days.

OTEC recommends

its members — in Baker, Union, Grant and Harney counties — prepare for potential outages.

"Our whole point is just to say be as prepared as possible," Hathaway said. "And be prepared because, you know it's a last resort, and these outages could last a day or more. We just want people to be ready."

## OTEC's tips

- Update your contact information with OTEC via your online account or by calling 541-523-3616.
- Have a personal safety plan in place for every member of your household, including a plan for your pets and/or livestock.
- Sign up for your county's emergency notification system. You can find that by calling your county or you can find a list of OTEC-served counties at [otec.coop/safety-first](http://otec.coop/safety-first).
- Plan for any medical needs like medications that need to be refrigerated or devices that require power, such as oxygen tanks.
- Create or restock your emergency supply kit including food, water, flashlights, a radio, fresh batteries, first aid supplies, and cash.
- Identify backup charging methods for phones and medical equipment.
- Know how to open your garage door manually.
- Ensure any backup generators are ready to operate safely.
- Identify the unique needs of your family and loved ones in the area for your emergency plan.
- Designate an emergency meeting location.
- Make sure to disconnect from OTEC's system using an approved disconnect switch before using a generator to prevent backfeed, which could be deadly to utility workers attempting to turn power back on.
- Do not overload the generator; use it to only power essential appliances or equipment.
- Only operate the generator outside, not indoors.




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## 2021 EASTERN OREGON PHOTO CONTEST

**Voting for 'People's Choice' NOW OPEN**

Vote online for People's Choice from 12:01 am Monday, June 21 through 11:59 pm Wednesday, June 30.

The winners will appear in the July 8th edition of Go Magazine; the top 25 will appear online.

Gift cards to a restaurant of your choice will be awarded for first, second and third place.



All photos online at: [bakercityherald.com/photocontest](http://bakercityherald.com/photocontest)