



Baker City Herald

July 24, 2021

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In STATE, A6
COVID cases surging

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Health & Fitness • Outdoors • TV \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Patti Hall of Baker City.

Local, A2

Phoebe Wachtel is expecting hundreds of people for dinner on Tuesday, Aug. 3. Her projection is based on experience — every August, as many as 700 people spend a few hours in Geiser-Pollman Park for Community Night Out.

Local, A3

An 18-year-old Haines man was treated and released from a Boise hospital after the pickup truck he was driving near Haines struck a flatbed trailer parked on the side of Shurtleff Road Wednesday evening, July 21. Eric Newman was taken by LifeFlight helicopter to Saint Alphonsus Hospital in Boise, where he was treated and released.

WEATHER

Today

92 / 49



Sunny

Sunday

95 / 54



Sunny

Monday

96 / 60



Sunny

Clarification: A story in the Thursday, July 22 issue about the attorney for murder suspect Shawn Quentin Greenwood seeking to have the charges dismissed didn't make clear that the attorney's allegation that law enforcement officers listened to phone conversations between Greenwood and his attorney involved the Baker City Police Department, not the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

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

Officials Concerned That Fire Season, Which Started Much Earlier Than Usual, Will Persist Throughout Summer, And Even Beyond

'90-Day August'



Umatilla National Forest/Contributed Photo

The Elbow Creek fire burns on July 16 along the Grande Ronde River in northern Wallowa County. The blaze, which has burned about 20,000 acres, is the largest in Northeastern Oregon this summer.

By Jayson Jacoby
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Noel Livingston slides the cursor across the charts on his computer screen and what he sees, lurking behind the zig-zagging lines and the multiple colors, is trouble.

Wildfire trouble, to be specific.

Livingston, who is the fire management officer for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, focuses on two lines in particular — a pair of lines for each of six regions on the forest, ranging from different types of forests to the grasslands of Hells Canyon.

One line, rendered appropriately in bright flame red, depicts the highest daily measurements, from 2010-19 on the Wallowa-Whitman, of a statistic known as the energy release component. A computer model considers the moisture level in wildfire fuels, as well as temperature and humidity, to project how much energy a fire would release — in effect, how rapidly flames would spread on a given day.

See **Danger** / Page A3

Fireworks suspected in fire near Huntington

Firefighters from multiple agencies quickly doused a grass fire late Wednesday, July 21 near Huntington, a blaze that might have been sparked by the illegal use of fireworks.

The fire, which started on the north side of the Durbin Creek Road just west of Interstate 84, burned an estimated 10 acres, said Al Crouch, fire mitigation specialist with the Bureau of Land Management's Vale District.

Multiple drivers on the freeway reported the fire just after 10 p.m., Crouch said. The blaze was about a quarter-mile west of the freeway.

Firefighters from the Huntington Fire Department, the Burnt River Rangeland Fire Protection Asso-

ciation and the BLM worked on the blaze.

Crouch said the firefighters corralled the fire just before a stretch of gusty winds that could have caused the flames to spread quickly through the dry grass in the area.

The fire was contained at 1:50 a.m. on Thursday, July 22.

Crouch said Oregon State Police is investigating the fire, with assistance from BLM.

He said investigators have identified a person who might have been lighting fireworks in the area.

Fireworks are illegal on public land managed by the BLM. Crouch said the fire started near the boundary between BLM and private property.

— Jayson Jacoby

Wolves injure steer near Durkee

By Jayson Jacoby
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Wolves from the Lookout Mountain pack in eastern Baker County have attacked cattle in the Manning Creek area northeast of Durkee for the second time in a week.

In the most recent case, unlike the previous incident, the livestock survived.

On the evening of Tuesday, July 20, a rancher, while checking cattle, found an injured steer on a 2,500-acre private land pasture, according to a report from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The 950-pound steer is about a year and a half old.

See **Wolves** / Page A3

Car crashes, ignites small wildfire

By Jayson Jacoby
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The driver and lone passenger were both flown to a Boise hospital early Friday morning, July 23, after their car crashed into a tree along Highway 7 near Sumpter.

The impact started a fire that engulfed the car and spread a short distance into the forest, said Wes Morgan, chief of the Powder River Rural Fire Protection District, who arrived first at the scene.

The driver and passenger are both men, but their names weren't available by press time.

See **Crash** / Page A5

Baker Sanitary opens composting facility

By Joanna Mann
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Baker County's first large-scale composting facility has been operating for about a month at Baker Sanitary Service's landfill south-east of Baker City.

David Henry, president of Baker Sanitary Service, said the operation started composting its initial batch of yard debris about four weeks ago.

It takes about eight weeks to complete a batch, and Henry said the composting process is somewhat of a "pilot program" right now until he figures out the right combination of organic material, weather and temperature to produce the desired composted mulch.

"When you think of how many chances you get to tweak the

process, you're not getting a ton of chances," Henry said. "I expect for the first year or two, there'll be a lot of learning what works and what doesn't and taking the time to get to where we get the product that we really want."

Tree trimming services, yard cleaning services and the general public can bring brush, leaves and limbs to the landfill.

A worker combines the debris with organic materials and covers it with a tarp for about a month.

The batch is then completely turned over in order to remix the material and make it more homogenous. It sits for two weeks like that with the tarp, and then two more weeks without the tarp.

See **Compost** / Page A2



Joanna Mann/Baker City Herald

From left, Garrett Virtue, landfill manager, David Henry, Baker Sanitary Service president, and Stephen Henry stand in front of the initial batch of compost, which is covered by a tarp.



TODAY
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Outdoors B1 & B6

Senior Menus A2
Turning Backs A2
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TUESDAY — SAINT ALPHONSUS SAFE SLEEP PROGRAM RECERTIFIED