

Baker City Herald

August 17, 2021

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In LOCAL, A5
Fire risk remains 'explosive'

IN THIS EDITION:

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\$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Esa Murrell of Baker City.

Local, A2

Nine local artists were picked as winners in a coloring contest sponsored by the New Directions Northwest FEMA Outreach Team.

The winners' posters were displayed at many local businesses.

BRIEFING

Applications open for Leo Adler Community grants

The Leo Adler Foundation is accepting applications for 2021-22 Community Fund grants. The application deadline has been extended to Sept. 15, 2021. To create an account, go to www.leadler.smapply.io. The Leo Adler Foundation and Community Fund provides annual grants to charitable organizations that create high-impact projects to benefit the people of Baker County and North Powder. Applicant organizations need not be based in Baker County or North Powder, but the project submission must demonstrate a direct benefit to the community.

Lodging tax committee meets on Thursday

The Baker County Transient Lodging Tax Committee will meet Thursday, Aug. 19 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St.

WEATHER

Today

73 / 45



Mostly sunny

Wednesday

67 / 41



Morning showers

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

Population Tops 10,000 For First Time In A U.S. Census

Baker City Reaches Population Milestone



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald File, December 2020

For the first time since it was incorporated in 1874, Baker City's population has surpassed 10,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The city was home to 10,099 people in 2020.

By JAYSON JACOBY
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Baker City has finally surpassed a threshold it had approached, but never quite cleared, over the past century and a half.

The city's population has topped 10,000.

And that's according to the ultimate arbiter of such matters, the U.S. Census Bureau.

The federal agency on Thursday,

Aug. 12 released city and county populations from the once-a-decade head count conducted in 2020.

The Census pegs Baker City's population at 10,099. That's an increase of 271 people — 2.8% — from the 2010 Census figure of 9,828.

Although the Portland State University Population Research Center, which makes annual estimates of city and county populations in the years between the decennial U.S.

censuses, has in several years put Baker City above the 10,000 mark, the city had not reached that level in an official U.S. Census.

But Baker City, which was started in 1864 and incorporated in 1874, came awfully close 60 years ago.

Its official population in the 1960 Census was 9,986.

See, 10,000 / Page A3

More mosquitoes infected with West Nile

By JAYSON JACOBY
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West Nile virus has been detected in more mosquitoes trapped in Baker County, including a site about four miles north of

Baker City.

Mosquitoes can transmit the virus to humans through bites.

No human cases of West Nile virus have been confirmed in Oregon this year,

according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms, according to the state health officials, but about 20% will have symptoms

such as a fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea or a rash.

In rare cases the virus can be fatal.

See, Mosquitoes / Page A3

COVID surge on a record pace

By JAYSON JACOBY
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Baker County had more COVID-19 cases during the first half of August than in all but two whole months since the pandemic started.

From Aug. 1-15, the county reported 146 cases, including a weekly record of 84 from Aug. 8-14, said Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department.

That surpassed the previous one-week record of 68 cases from July 25-31.

Even with help from the Oregon Health Authority, the surge in cases is making it a challenge for the county to investigate cases, Staten said.

In a Thursday, Aug. 12 press release, Dr. Eric Lamb, the county's public health officer, said "we are seeing a spike in cases and hospitalizations that threatens to overwhelm hospital capacity."

The highest number of cases in any month was 196, in December 2020. That was the last month in which vaccines weren't available throughout the month (vaccines became available in mid-December).

The second-highest total was in April 2021, with 162 cases.

The numbers dropped significantly thereafter, to 51 during May — the fewest since September 2020. There was a slight increase to 70 cases during June, but the daily rate dropped again during the first three weeks or so of July.

See, Surge / Page A3

Something's brewing at Sorbenots

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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The Baker City Sorbenots location is getting a makeover. The coffee shop at 1270 Campbell St. will have a new look within the next few weeks.

"We're re-doing the siding and doing a ground level patio out front and an order window out there," said Philip Stone, Sorbenots CEO.

The siding will be repainted to a dark or royal blue with the Sorbenots logo, and the building will have brown trim.

"We kind of went to a standard look and feel for all of our shops," Stone said.

Sorbenots has shops in La Grande, Ontario, Herm-



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

The Sorbenots coffee shop on Campbell Street in Baker City is undergoing a renovation.

iston and Pendleton as well as Baker City, where the company started.

Stone said the new patio in Baker City will be ADA-accessible.

Other changes include moving the drive-thru to

make more room for cars.

"The idea would be just to push it back enough that we can get two or three cars off of Campbell Street," Stone said. "It just makes it a little too much gridlock for what we're trying to do. I don't like to see people hanging out and trying to get in and out of Campbell Street."

The renovations had a bittersweet moment with the removal of the Sorbenots coffee bush. Stone said several years ago they had cut down an old tree and it kept sprouting up. They decided one day to shape the bush into a coffee cup.

"We had to remove it to extend the drive through back a little bit," he said. "I think people kind of got

used to having that coffee bush back there."

Stone said they have planted more trees and will probably turn one of the older trees into a new coffee bush in the future.

Stone said the projected two-week project has slowed a bit as the contractor had a workforce shortage.

"We're hoping in the next week and a half, two weeks, they'll get reengaged with it and be done with it," Stone said.

He said the goal is to minimize the effect on traffic.

"We usually like to try to get that done in a shorter time frame but sometimes you've got to deal with what you're given," Stone said.



TODAY
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Crossword B2 & B4
Dear Abby B6
Horoscope B2 & B4

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News of Record A2
Opinion A4

Senior Menus A2
Sports A6
State News A5

Sudoku B5
Turning Backs A2
Weather B6

THURSDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE