

Baker City Herald

August 26, 2021

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Karen Story of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Library offers two new online tutoring services

The Baker County Library District has launched two new online services, both from Brainfuse: HelpNow and JobNow. Both services offer vetted, professional, live tutoring for either education or vocation, and both services are available free of charge to library patrons.

These resources are available thanks to a grant from the State Library of Oregon and coordination by Libraries of Eastern Oregon.

HelpNow is an educational resource for students of varying ages—including adult learners seeking to advance their education. The service includes skills tests, college prep and multiple live tutoring options, as well as a writing lab and a portal to submit detailed questions for reference help.

The other new service, JobNow, offers similar live help for job seekers or people looking to improve their career skills.

Both of these new services, and more premium content, are at www.bakerlib.org/online-library. Access requires a library card number from Baker County Library District.

WEATHER

Today
78 / 43
Mostly sunny

Friday
74 / 38
Mostly sunny

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

Lawyer: Murder charges should be dismissed

By JAYSON JACOBY
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The attorney for Shawn Quentin Greenwood, the suspect in a 2020 murder in Baker City, argued in court Tuesday, Aug. 24, that Judge Matt Shirtcliff should dismiss charges against Greenwood due to “egregious” conduct

by Baker City Police Detective Shannon Regan, the lead investigator in the case who allegedly listened to five privileged phone calls between Greenwood and his attorney last year. Greenwood’s attorney,



Greenwood

Jim Schaeffer of La Grande, argued during a three-hour hearing before Shirtcliff in the Baker County Courthouse that Regan’s conduct is an “intrusion and violation of my client’s constitutional rights.”

“Dismissal is the right answer,” said Schaeffer, who filed a motion on June 25, 2021, to either dismiss charges against Greenwood, or prohibit District Attorney Greg M. Baxter from introducing at trial all evidence that Regan was involved with.

Baxter, meanwhile, told Shirtcliff that he’s willing to not use at trial any evidence that was collected in the case after Sept. 14, 2020. That’s the day recordings of the five phone calls, which Greenwood made from the Baker County

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Council considers suing governor



Samantha O’Conner/Baker City Herald

A group, including Jayden Freeman, far right, and Shyanne McCoy, next to him, gathered outside Baker City Hall Tuesday evening, Aug. 24, to protest Gov. Kate Brown’s mandates for health care workers and teachers to be vaccinated by Oct. 18, and for students and school staff to wear masks when classes start Aug. 30.

Suit would focus on vaccine, mask mandates

By SAMANTHA O’CONNOR
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The Baker City Council voted unanimously Tuesday evening, Aug. 24, to have City Manager Jon Cannon obtain legal counsel for a potential lawsuit the city could file or join challenging Gov. Kate Brown’s recent mandates regarding vaccinations for health care workers and face masks for students and school staff.

Councilors also voted unanimously to keep City Hall open regardless of future restrictions from the governor prompted by the surge in COVID-19 cases.

Councilors approved those motions after seeing a group of people outside City Hall who object to the governor’s mandates, and hearing from some of those people during the meeting.

Cannon discussed the language of the vaccination mandate, which requires health care workers, including firefighter/paramedics from the Baker City Fire Department, to be vaccinated by Oct. 18 or potentially lose their jobs.

Cannon noted that cities and other employers that violate the state rule could be subject to civil penalties of \$500 per day.



Samantha O’Conner/Baker City Herald

Council chambers at Baker City Hall were crowded Tuesday evening, Aug. 24, as residents urged councilors to oppose Gov. Kate Brown’s mask and vaccination mandates.

Cannon said he’s concerned about those penalties, but also about the city incurring legal costs in a potential lawsuit.

“I’m not saying it’s not a fight worth doing, I’m just saying our pockets aren’t that deep,” Cannon said.

Mayor Kerry McQuisten said the governor’s mandates have put cities and other employers in a difficult situation — “between the devil and the deep blue sea” — by forcing them to potentially choose between facing civil penalties and losing critical employees who don’t want to be vaccinated.

Councilor Jason Spriet suggested seeking out other cities and agencies that either might want to join a lawsuit as co-plaintiffs, or that have already started legal proceedings that the city could participate in.

Citizen comments

Twelve people voiced their opposition to the mask or vaccine mandate, or both.

Stephanie Johnson of Richland told councilors she has been a registered nurse for more than a decade.

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County’s COVID cases set monthly record

■ August has surpassed December 2020

By JAYSON JACOBY
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COVID-19 cases continue at a record-setting pace during August in Baker County.

From Aug. 1-24, the county reported 239 cases, a daily average of almost 10.

The previous monthly and daily records were both set in December 2020, when there were 196 cases, a daily average of 6.3.

There have been more cases in the county so far in August than the combined total for the previous three months.

Cases totaled 212 during May (51), June (70) and July (91).

August could also become the first month with at least one case every day. Daily numbers have ranged from one case on Aug. 15, to 24 cases on Aug. 9.

Baker County’s experience mirrors that in much of Oregon and many parts of the nation as the much more contagious delta variant has spurred a rapid rise in cases and hospitalizations.

One Baker County resident has died during August after testing positive. The 95-year-old woman died Aug. 17 at her home, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Her death was the 19th in the county during the pandemic.

There were two deaths during July — Trinidad Navarro, 59, died on July 14, and his 93-year-old mother, Mary Hurtado, died on July 29.

There were no COVID-related deaths in the county during June, and one during May.

County Commissioner Mark Bennett, who has served as the county’s incident commander throughout the pandemic, said on Wednesday, Aug. 25 that his chief concerns are the county’s roster of emergency responders, and hospital capacity.

On the former, Bennett said the county needs to have a contingency plan in case a significant number of paramedics, nurses and other health care workers choose not to comply with Gov. Kate Brown’s mandate that they be vaccinated by Oct. 18 or potentially lose their jobs.

A group that included Baker City Fire Department employees gathered outside Baker City Hall on Tuesday evening, Aug. 24, to protest the vaccination mandate, and to urge the City Council to oppose the requirement.

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SATURDAY — BAKER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE SETS MOUNTAIN CLIMBING RECORD