

Baker City Herald

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In SPORTS, A6
Rings for state champs

IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Outdoors • Sports • TV

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Erin Hansen of Baker City.

Local, A3

The death toll in deer in Baker Valley from a disease spread by midges has risen to 36 in less than a month.

But a local wildlife biologist who's tracking the outbreak said the arrival of colder weather will end the threat, at least until next year.

"One good freeze is all we need," said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Baker City office.

BRIEFING

Natural Resource Advisory Committee meeting Sept. 23

Baker County's Natural Resource Advisory Committee will meet Thursday, Sept. 23 at 3 p.m. at the Courthouse, 1995 Third St. Members of the public will have five minutes each to talk about natural resource topics only. Agenda items include an update on the settlement of the county's lawsuit regarding the Connor Creek Road, and the River Democracy Act.

WEATHER

Today
67 / 39
Rain showers

Sunday
56 / 32
Rain showers

Monday
63 / 30
Mostly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Residents gathered at Geiser-Pollman Park on Thursday evening, Sept. 16, for a rally opposing COVID-19 vaccination mandates.

Speaker: 'We will not comply'

■ About 100 people attend rally opposing vaccine mandate

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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More than a hundred people gathered at Geiser-Pollman Park Thursday evening, Sept. 16 for a rally opposing Gov. Kate Brown's mandate that health care workers, school staff and many state employees be vaccinated

against COVID-19 by Oct. 18.

Dubbed the Eastern Oregon Liberty Rally, the event started with a procession of vehicles, many sporting American flags, that traveled through town before ending at the park.

Dennis Bachman, who organized the rally, said about 75 cars participated.

Bachman, who works for the Baker City Public Works Department, said he put on the rally because he's concerned about how the vaccine mandate will

affect firefighters and other emergency responders.

"While I was on vacation traveling, that just kind of gave me some time to think on the situation and I just don't feel this is right at all," Bachman said. "So, when I got back from vacation, I decided that I was going to try to help those guys out and support them as well as everybody else that is under this mandate."

Bachman said he was pleased with the attendance on a cool Thursday evening.

"Of course I would have liked to have seen a bigger turnout, but for a first time rally of this sort in Baker, with a weeks' worth of planning, I thought it turned out pretty good," Bachman said.

Baker City Mayor Kerry McQuisten, who is seeking the Republican nomination for Oregon governor in the 2022 election, was unable to attend the rally.

Bachman read a statement that McQuisten provided.

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Schools have options for unvaccinated staff

By JAYSON JACOBY
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Baker School District employees who choose not to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before the state-ordered Oct. 18 deadline and instead opt for a medical or religious exception will have to either wear an N95 face mask while at work or take a weekly rapid test.

Baker Schools Superintendent Mark Witty said

on Friday, Sept. 17 that he's confident the protocols the district has negotiated with its two unions, each of which represents about 110 employees, constituting the bulk of the district staff, will both protect the workforce and students, and prevent any significant loss of employees due to the mandate.



Witty

"There's not going to be a mass exodus, I'm confident of that," Witty said. "I think we've come up with a reasonable approach. We've had multiple conversations with

both unions, and they were very productive."

Toni Myers, president of the Baker Education Association, which represents the

district's 111 teachers, and Rachelle Lemmon, president of Baker Chapter 20 of the Oregon School Employees Association, the union that represents the district's 110 classified employees, both said recently that they don't expect the mandate will result in a large number of workers either resigning or being fired.

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Barley's brew wins gold medal

By JAYSON JACOBY
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Tyler Brown had just gotten back to Baker City with a load of fresh hops from Moxee when he was asked about his brewery's award-winning beer that has that funny five-letter word in its name.

Brown was happy to chat about Moxee Water.

This session-style IPA, brewed at Barley Brown's in Baker City, won the gold medal in that category at the Great American Beer Festival on Friday, Sept. 10.

The Moxee in this case is the town in Washington's Yakima Valley, one of the Northwest's prime hop-growing regions.

The flowers from that plant give beer its distinctive bitter bite.

Hops are especially important ingredients in IPAs — India Pale Ale — a style known for its hop-heavy flavor.

Brown said he makes multiple trips in late summer to bring home hops just harvested from fields in the Moxee area.

After the travails of the past 19 months of pandemic, with breweries forced to cut back production and, in some cases, to close, Brown said it was especially gratifying to win a medal at the world's largest professional beer competition.

The gold medal for Moxee Water was Barley Brown's 26th medal at the competition since the brewery entered its first beer in 2006.

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Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald, File

Barley Brown's Brewery owner Tyler Brown, front, prepares to sample a just-filled can of Pallet Jack IPA at the Baker City brewery in April 2020. Brewers Eli Dickison, right, and his brother, Kyle Dickison, far left, also worked on the packaging line.

State plans to kill most wolves in pack

By JAYSON JACOBY
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The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has authorized killing most wolves from the Lookout Mountain pack, including its breeding male.

But the agency does not plan to target the breeding female from the pack in eastern Baker County, which has killed six head of cattle since mid July and injured two others, including a six-month-old calf killed late last week.

The permit allows ranchers to kill up to two wolves, not including the breeding pair, before Oct. 31. The permit applies to four ranchers who have lost cattle to wolves, and allows any of them to kill wolves on land they either own or legally use for grazing.

In addition, ODFW officials intend to kill four other wolves from the pack, including the pack's breeding male, according to a press release from the agency Thursday evening, Sept. 16.

The pack numbers up to nine wolves, according to ODFW. Both the breeding pair and five juveniles, born this spring and now weighing about 50 pounds, have been seen by ODFW employees as recently as Sept. 8.

One or two yearling wolves, born in the spring of 2020, are likely still in the area, although ODFW workers haven't seen either yearling since Sept. 1, according to the press release.

The breeding female had a litter of at least seven pups this spring. ODFW workers, firing rifles from a helicopter, killed two of those pups on Aug. 1, the day after ODFW Director Curt Melcher issued a lethal take permit for up to four subadult wolves from the pack.

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett had sent a letter to Melcher earlier that week asking the director to authorize the killing of some wolves.

No wolves have been killed since Aug. 1.

There were no confirmed wolf attacks on cattle for more than two weeks after the two pups were killed. But since Aug. 19, Lookout Mountain wolves have killed four more calves, according to ODFW reports.

In response to the repeated attacks, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash sent a letter to Melcher on Sept. 13 asking the state to kill the entire Lookout Mountain pack.

In a press release Thursday, Roblyn Brown, ODFW's state wolf coordinator, said the agency's initial strategy of killing subadult wolves, in an attempt to reduce the amount of food the pack needs, didn't alter the pack's behavior and preference for livestock as prey rather than deer and elk, which are common in the Lookout Mountain area.

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TUESDAY — LOOKING BACK AT THE WEEKEND IN SPORTS