

MANDATE

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Most of the rest of the city's share of property taxes is used for street maintenance.

"If people refused to pay their property taxes, then obviously that's our revenue stream for a lot of the things that we do," Cannon said. "If there were no property taxes coming into the city, then our budget would be severely slashed and a lot of the services that people have come to expect out of the city would no longer happen."

Baker County mails property tax bills once a year, during late October, so a reduction in payments wouldn't have an immediate effect on the city's operations.

Cannon also encouraged property owners to consider the potential ramifications on themselves before deciding not to pay taxes.

"It's not just an impact on the city, it's an impact on each person," Cannon said. "I would say that before people just decide not to pay their property taxes that I would discourage people from doing that. I understand that they may say 'Look, we want to take a stand on this' and they feel like that's their way of taking a stand. But there are a lot of issues that that can open up for them personally for their properties and their homes and whatever it may be that they decide not to pay."

For property owners who choose not to pay the full tax bill at once, the first one-third payment is due by Nov. 15, the second one-third by Feb. 15, 2022, and the final one-third by May 15, 2022.

For property owners who fail to make at least the first one-third payment by Nov. 15, interest begins to accrue on the bill starting Nov. 16. The interest rate is 1.33% per month, and accrues on the 16th of each month as long as there is an outstanding balance.

The flier urges residents to not pay their property taxes for the "October/November 2021 period ... until our elected officials do their duty and make our community a priority!"

The flier contends that the governor's requirement that health care workers, including firefighters and other emergency responders, be vaccinated or have an approved medical or religious exception by Oct. 18, could result in worker shortages.

"Without our local first responders we are a community at risk!" the flier states.

According to the flier, the group has sent letters to the Baker City Council, Baker County commissioners and Sheriff Travis Ash requesting a "public declaration of county wide mandate defiance, implementation of a self governance measure, and a warning that property taxes will be withheld if further action is not taken by these local government bodies to stand for our freedoms against these mandates."

The Baker City Council has discussed pursuing a legal challenge to the governor's mandates. But during their most recent meeting, on Sept. 28, councilors decided to have Cannon draft a resolution or ordinance opposing the mandates. A legal challenge is still a possibility.

The Baker County Board of Commissioners on Sept. 22 declared a local emergency, which states that the mandate could leave some local agencies unable to respond to traffic accidents and other emergencies.

Defying mandates

Cannon said that even if Baker City were to officially ignore the mandate, it has no ability to "protect anybody in the community," meaning employees who are affected by the mandate, such as health care workers, could not expect the city to help them if state officials seek to suspend or cancel their license, if they are required to have one.

"There's nothing that we as a city can do to step between that doctor or that clinic, that nurse, that nursing home, and the state," Cannon said.

If the state voided a license of one of the city's firefighter/paramedics, Cannon said, the city could not have that worker go out on emergency calls.

Defying the governor's vaccine mandate could also jeopardize the city's liability insurance coverage through City-County Insurance Services, Cannon said.

"Our insurance could potentially drop us, it could jeopardize our licenses with the state," Cannon said.

"I think there's a lot of liability for the city if we just flat out said 'We don't care, we're not going to enforce this vaccination mandate on our own employees.' It opens up a host of challenges."

City-County Insurance Services had not returned a call from the Herald by press time on Wednesday, Oct. 6.

The Baker County United website acknowledges the potential effects of local governments defying the vaccine mandate.

"We do not do this lightly, and are aware of the collateral damage this action could have on those around us; our friends, family, neighbors and potentially even ourselves, have a high likelihood of being impacted by this movement," the website states.

"As it has become apparent that the local elected officials of Baker County will choose to not conduct themselves as representatives of their constituents, it is incumbent upon us to make change happen for our community. When local officials begin to lose the funding that they require for the duties in which they were elected, it will be up to them to recognize that we are a Government of the People and for the People; or they will remain headstrong and allow the County's finances to fall to ruin."

WOLVES

Continued from A1

All the sheep were in the same pasture. Officials estimated the sheep were attacked the night of Sept. 28.

ODFW employees examined seven sheep carcasses on Sept. 30, three on Oct. 1 and two on Oct. 4. All had pre-mortem wounds, with tissue trauma up to two inches deep and tooth scrapes consistent with wolf attacks on sheep, according to ODFW reports.

Attack on guard dogs

On the morning of Oct. 1, a sheep herder found two injured Kangal guard dogs on an industrial timberland grazing allotment. The herder told ODFW employees that at about

2 a.m. on Oct. 1 he heard an apparent fight between his guard dog and an unknown predator, with barking and growling.

Biologists examined both guard dogs. One had a six-inch-long area of matted blood on its throat and the left side of its neck that was dripping blood. The dog was agitated and could not be held for further examination, according to an ODFW report.

The second dog had a bite puncture one-quarter inch in diameter on the inside of its right front leg near the elbow. The dog also had two other bite marks, and a two-inch-long tooth scrape on the inside of its upper right rear leg. The wounds are consistent with a predator attack, and similar to other cases when a wolf attacked a guard dog, according to ODFW.

OTEC

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The topics are relevant for OTEC employees, because their jobs require that they often work in remote and rugged terrain, said Joseph Hathaway, OTEC's communications manager.

"It's just good basic knowledge to have when you live in Eastern Oregon," Hathaway said. "We have so many miles of lines in forested areas. This training is pretty integral to our safety mission."

Although the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires OTEC workers to have basic training in first aid, the course that Tingelstad and Langrell put on through the Baker Technical Institute (BTI) is more thorough, said Maaik Schotborgh, OTEC's safety and loss control manager.

The scenarios that Tingelstad and Langrell demonstrated — such as stabilizing fractures and safely transporting injured people — are applicable to the types of situations that OTEC workers could potentially have to deal with, Schotborgh said.

"These guys are by themselves or working in groups of two or three," she said. "They rarely are out of cell service or radio coverage, but they are often an hour or more from emergency services."

Training center plans

This week's training is part of the partnership between OTEC and BTI that was announced in July.

The organizations are working to start a utility training center in Baker City that would offer a variety of courses for people who work for electrical companies or other utilities, Hathaway said.

The goal, he said, is to have the center attract workers from utilities throughout the Northwest.

Although this week's training was mainly for linemen, Hathaway said eventually the skills will be made available to all OTEC employees.

The two-day course featured a mixture of classroom instruction and hands-on training such as Tingelstad and Langrell's demonstration of stabilizing a patient with a broken pelvis. They used the types of materials that OTEC workers carry routinely in their trucks.

Tingelstad told the students that in the case of, say, a leg injury, the patient can be safely taken to a waiting ambulance.

OTEC workers practiced techniques for carrying an injured person.

But the situation is quite different, Tingelstad said, with a pelvic fracture.

The reason, he said, is that a person with a broken pelvis might also have a spinal injury that makes it more dangerous, not less, to move the patient.

In that situation, Tingelstad said, the proper procedure, once the fracture is immobilized, is to summon help, whether a crew to put the patient on a backboard to be carried out, or a helicopter if that's possible.

Fending off the chill

Once Smart was extricated from his pelvic splint, the group returned to the Anthony Lakes lodge to learn about the dangers of getting too cold.



Joseph Hathaway/Contributed Photo

Dr. Kaare Tingelstad, top, demonstrates the proper way to wrap a severely hypothermic person for transport to a hospital. The "victim" in this case is Al Dockweiler, an Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative journeyman lineman.

Langrell, who grew up in Baker City but also has lived in Alaska and is trained in wilderness survival, gave a PowerPoint presentation about hypothermia.

She pointed out that although humans have a fairly effective means of cooling themselves — sweating — we are much less capable of keeping ourselves warm.

When a person shivers, that's the body's main way, through stimulating muscle fibers to contract rapidly, to generate heat.

"Shivering is your metabolic engine revving up to redline," Tingelstad said.

A person who is shivering, uncoordinated and confused likely is suffering from mild hypothermia, Langrell said.

The much more dangerous situation is severe hypothermia, when a person stops shivering and thus is no longer capable of warming himself without help.

Langrell said it can actually hurt a severely hypothermic person by warming him too quickly.

Rubbing the person's hands, for instance, can cause chilled blood to rush from the extremities to the heart, potentially causing a heart attack, she said.

The key, Tingelstad said, is to recognize the early stages of hypothermia, since that's when it's still possible for a person, or a friend or co-worker, to reverse the process.

Tailoring his lesson to his audience, Tingelstad said one of the simplest steps could be to simply "get out of the bucket," meaning the elevated perches that lineman use to access power lines.

He said he always carries gummy bear candies, a source of sugar that, using the analogy of starting a campfire, is equivalent to the kindling.

(Proteins and complex carbohydrates are akin to sticks that you feed into a small fire, Langrell said, and fats are the logs that sustain the blaze.)

Tingelstad asked the OTEC workers if they had ever been cold on the job.

There were several chuckles, and every head nodded.

Chris Peppers, a lineman in Baker County, recounted a winter day, not far from Anthony Lakes, when he and a crew were called out to restore power to the ski area.

Although it was sunny and relatively warm at the start, the weather eventually turned cold and snowy. And Peppers said he got sweaty while working to free the crew's side-by-side from deep snow.

He said that although he knew it was dangerous to be both damp and cold, he was so anxious to get the power restored that he never stopped to build a fire.

Tingelstad said the crucial period is when hypothermia is mild — when it's still possible for a person to get warm on his own.

"You can fix this on the job site," he said.

But once hypothermia worsens to the point the person no longer is shivering, reversing the process is impossible in the field, and trying to do so will imperil the patient even more.

"You can keep them from getting colder, but you can't save a severely hypothermic patient in the field," Tingelstad said.

The lifesaving procedure must happen in a hospital, he said, describing the process — inserting a needle in one femoral artery to draw out the chilled blood, warming it in a machine, and then replacing it via another needle in the other femoral artery.

Tingelstad urged the students to avoid wearing cotton garments, which absorb moisture readily, dry slowly, and offer little insulation.

He said he never ventures into potentially hypothermic conditions without wearing wool — especially merino wool — which insulates well, even when it's wet.

"Cotton does kill," he said.

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