

## DREDGE

Continued from A1

She just keeps collecting decorations.

"I had no Halloween stuff when I moved here four years ago," she says.

An eavesdropper on these volunteers may wonder what they're plotting, what with the talk of a chain saw and the clowns and other scary stuff.

"The witch with the cauldron here, a casket over there," Shanks says, moving through the dim spaces.

And then there are the actors — although Shanks won't reveal how many she's recruited for the night haunting.

"There will be humans," is all she says.

During a lull, ShaRee Serr scrolls through Amazon searching for accessories to her witch costume.

"I've never done much with Halloween," she says, "but you get around Laramie and you catch her spirit."

Serr and her husband, Karl, live in Wendell, Idaho, and met Shanks when they stayed at the Stockade. Now friends, they traveled to Sumpter to help Shanks decorate for the upcoming holiday.

Demaris, her head intact after removing the cleaver headband, can't help but grin as she looks at the transformed interior.

But this sunny October day doesn't quite represent

### If You Go

The Sumpter Dredge is on the south side of Sumpter, about 27 miles west of Baker City via Highway 7. The Haunted Dredge experience is set for Friday, Oct. 29 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. There is no fee to visit the Dredge.

what people will find on Oct. 29.

"It's fabulous when it's dark," she says.

Coinciding with the Haunted Dredge are two night rides of the Sumpter Valley Railroad. The train will leave the Sumpter Station at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. Fares for these short runs are \$15 adults, \$14 seniors/military, and \$8 for ages 3-17. For tickets, go to [www.sumptervalleyrailroad.org](http://www.sumptervalleyrailroad.org).

The fourth-annual Trunk-or-Treat is Saturday, Oct. 30, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the main street of town.

More trains are planned for that day and depart Sumpter at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

### Is it haunted?

Every year the dredge attracts ghost hunters, says Darold Smith, assistant park ranger.

"Ever since they did 'Ghost Mine,'" Smith says, referring to the show filmed near Sumpter that also explored the dredge. "We had a guy from Canada who asked if he could look for ghosts."

The wooden behemoth, floating silent in a pond as the



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Mary Chakarun works on decorating the Sumpter Dredge with cobwebs and plastic spiders.

centerpiece of this state heritage area, is leftover from the area's gold mining days. The dredge ran 24 hours a day, digging up more than \$4 million in gold.

It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Restoration began in 1995.

When asked if it's haunted, Smith just shrugs.

"It's a dredge. It just collected a lot of gold," he says with a smile.

Although the state heritage area is accessible year-round — several miles of trails wind through the dredge piles and ponds — the dredge itself closes to the public the day after Halloween.

"We turn it over to the ghosts," Smith says with a grin.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Marsha Demaris models a creepy Halloween prop while decorating the Sumpter Dredge for an Oct. 29 event.

## MANDATE

Continued from A1

Yencopal said the county's other ambulance provider, in addition to Halfway/Oxbow and Eagle Valley, is the Baker City Fire Department.

The Baker City department, which provides ambulance service in the city and in much of the rest of the county, has vaccination cards or approved exceptions for all its employees who staff ambulances, City Manager Jon Cannon said on Monday.

"We're moving forward with all the staff that we have on hand," Cannon said.

When asked how many of the department's 16 full-time firefighters, and approximately six part-time paid staff, are vaccinated, and how many requested and received an exception, Cannon said he is "hesitant to give numbers because there are HIPPA laws and personnel laws and if I give an exact ratio, then it starts to give information on what arguably should be private."

HIPPA is a federal law that keeps people's medical records confidential.

Yencopal and County Commissioner Mark Bennett said county officials are looking for ways to provide the ambulance and crew that the Halfway/Oxbow service requested in the letter.

The county has requested aid from the state, Bennett said.

County commissioners on Sept. 22 approved an emergency declaration stating that the governor's vaccine mandate for health care workers could leave

both ambulance providers and volunteer fire districts in the county, whose members often are the first to respond to traffic crashes and other emergencies, unable to fulfill that mission as often as they have in the past.

The county has several volunteer districts whose members respond to emergencies as well as fires, but which, unlike ambulance services, are not certified or equipped to transport patients.

In the Huntington area, which does not have a local ambulance provider, calls are usually handled by either a private company in the Treasure Valley, or by the Baker City Fire Department, Yencopal said.

He said the private ambulance operator in the Treasure Valley might not be as available to respond to calls in the Huntington area, including traffic crashes on Interstate 84, due to effects of the mandate.

The governor's mandate also applies to hospitals.

Mark Snider, public relations and digital strategy coordinator for the Saint Alphonsus Health System, in response to a question from the Herald about staffing at the Baker City hospital, wrote on Monday, Oct. 18 that "we expect a high level of compliance with the Governor's requirement, and will assess staffing after the deadline."

According to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), of the 314 licensed health care workers in Baker County, 69% were fully vaccinated as of Oct. 4.

That's the ninth-lowest

rate among Oregon's 36 counties.

Among counties in the region, Union County has the highest rate, at 77%. Umatilla and Wallowa counties both have a 70% rate, while Grant County is at 58% and Malheur County at 54%.

Statewide, 82% of licensed health care workers are fully vaccinated, according to OHA.

### Baker School District

Of the district's 263 employees, 208 — 79% — are vaccinated, and all 55 of the remaining employees have a medical or religious exception, District Superintendent Mark Witty said on Monday morning, Oct. 18.

He said only one district employee has resigned due to a philosophical objection to the vaccine mandate.

That employee, who is a certified worker — a group that includes teachers and other classroom staff — left in mid September, which gave the district enough time to hire a replacement before the mandate deadline, Witty said.

Vaccination rates for the district's three groups of employees:

- Certified and administrative — 80%. This group includes the district's approximately 111 certified employees, including teachers.

- Classified — 78%. This group includes non-teaching staff such as bus drivers and custodians. There are about 110 classified employees.

- Confidential — 79%. There are 22 employees in this category, which includes some non-teaching administrative staff.

Witty, who said he is fully

vaccinated, did not have a breakdown, by the three categories, of how many of the 55 district employees have medical or religious exceptions.

He said the majority of those are religious exceptions.

Witty said the district did not deny any requests for exceptions.

"We didn't go over those with a fine-tooth comb; I don't know who would want to," Witty said.

He said he is confident that employees who submitted a religious exception form did so earnestly, and that he respects their choice.

Employees who chose an exception rather than being vaccinated are required to either wear an N95 mask while working, or take weekly COVID-19 tests. Witty said most of the 58 employees who aren't vaccinated chose the weekly testing option.

Those workers will take the test at home, probably on Sunday evening or Monday morning, and the district will then send the test kits to a laboratory in Corvallis. The OHA is paying for the testing, Witty said.

He expects to receive results within one day.

Witty said the weekly tests are available for all district employees, and he said some fully vaccinated employees also have signed up to receive the weekly test kits.

He said he's grateful for the cooperation of the district's employees, including its two unions, one of which represents certified employees, the other representing classified staff.

"We have people honestly disagreeing with the mandate, there's no doubt about that," Witty said. "This doesn't satisfy everybody, but at the end of the day our staff is here to serve students, and they want to try to do that."

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### Department of Corrections

Most employees at state prisons, including the Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City, have until Nov. 30 to be fully vaccinated due to an agreement between the state and one labor union approved Friday, Oct. 15, said Jennifer Black, communications manager for the Oregon Department of Corrections.

Employees who are partially vaccinated by Oct. 18 have until Nov. 30 to fully comply, Black said.

This applies to most correctional department employees statewide.

"There are just a few who are subject to a straight October 18th compliance date," Black wrote.

As of press time Monday afternoon, Black did not have compliance statistics for Powder River or other individual prisons.

For the entire Department of Corrections, the compliance breakdown as of Monday:

- Fully vaccinated — 67%
- Religious exception — 19%
- Medical exception — 1%
- Not enough information to verify status — 10%
- In the process of being verified — 3%

## WOLVES

Continued from A1

Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at ODFW's Baker City office, said Monday morning, Oct. 18 that the

investigation into the Oct. 16 report, which involved a dead calf, wasn't finished.

Ratliff said the Lookout Mountain pack's breeding female, which is wearing a GPS tracking collar, has recently been "moving all

over the place" in the pack's known territory, which includes most of the eastern part of the Lookout Mountain unit between Highway 86 on the north and Interstate 84 on the south.

In addition to the three

wolves killed Sept. 17, ODFW employees shot and killed two pups from the Lookout Mountain pack on Aug. 1.

The agency had estimated the pack, prior to Aug. 1, consisted of at least nine wolves.

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**The Baker County Veteran Services**

**office will be closed from 18 -21 of October, 2021 due to a training conference.**

## — NEWS OF — RECORD

### DEATHS

**Nancy Gover:** 78, a longtime Richland resident, died Oct. 15, 2021, in Sunnyside, Washington. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences can be made at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

### FUNERALS PENDING

**Betty Hindman:** Graveside service Thursday, Oct. 21 at 1 p.m. at Mount Hope Cemetery. For those who would like to make a donation in Betty's memory, her family suggests the Eagle Valley Cemetery (kiosk) or Community Connection, through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

**Raymond Howerton:** Celebration of life with military honors, Friday, Oct. 22 at 3 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Club, 2005 Valley Ave. in Baker City. Please attend for food, drinks, a good time and story sharing. Online condolences can be made at [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com).

**Beth Johnson Morrissey:** Memorial service will be Oct. 23 at 11 a.m. at the Baker City Church of the Nazarene, 1250 Hughes Lane, with Pastor Lennie Spooner officiating. The service will also be livestreamed by the church; details available at [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com). Memorial contributions can be made to the YMCA Youth Scholarship program through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To leave a condolence for Beth's family, go to [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com).

**Roscoe Curry:** Memorial service Saturday, Oct. 30 at 2 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Halfway. Military honors will follow at the Pine Valley Cemetery. Friends are invited to join the family at the church following the interment.

For those who would like to make a donation in Roscoe's memory, his family suggests the Gary Sinsise Foundation or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Halfway branch, through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR 97834. Online condolences can be made at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com).

### POLICE LOG

**Baker City Police Arrests, citations**  
THIRD-DEGREE THEFT, FAILURE TO APPEAR (out-of-county warrant): Josi Nadine Sargent, 48, Baker City, 6:53 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17 in the 900 block of Elm Street; cited and released.

MENACING, RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING: Deni Marie Speelman, 55, Baker City, 5:02 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17 in the 2400 block of Carter Street; jailed.

CONTEMPT OF COURT (Two Baker County Justice Court warrants): Kyle Ryan Bork, 21, Baker City, 4:09 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17 in the 2400 block of Birch Street; cited and released.

FAILURE TO APPEAR (out-of-county warrant): Paul Adam Heller, 50, Baker City, 4:26 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 17 in the 2100 block of Second Street; cited and released.

CONTEMPT OF COURT (Baker Justice Court warrant): Brian Anthony Heredia, 32, Baker City, 4:02 p.m. Friday, Oct. 15 in the 1200 block of Campbell Street; cited and released.

FAILURE TO APPEAR (Baker County Circuit Court warrant): Austin Lakota Reese, 26, Baker City, 8:15 a.m. Friday, Oct. 15 in the 2700 block of Cedar Street; cited and released.

**Baker County Sheriff's Office Arrests, citations**  
PAROLE VIOLATION: Tyler Joseph Anders, 32, Baker City, 2:19 p.m. Friday, Oct. 15 in the 1900 block of 17th Street; jailed.

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