

STREETS

Continued from A1

According to ODOT data, in the five years after Campbell was restriped to three lanes in 1997 the number of crashes on that section of street dropped by 15%.

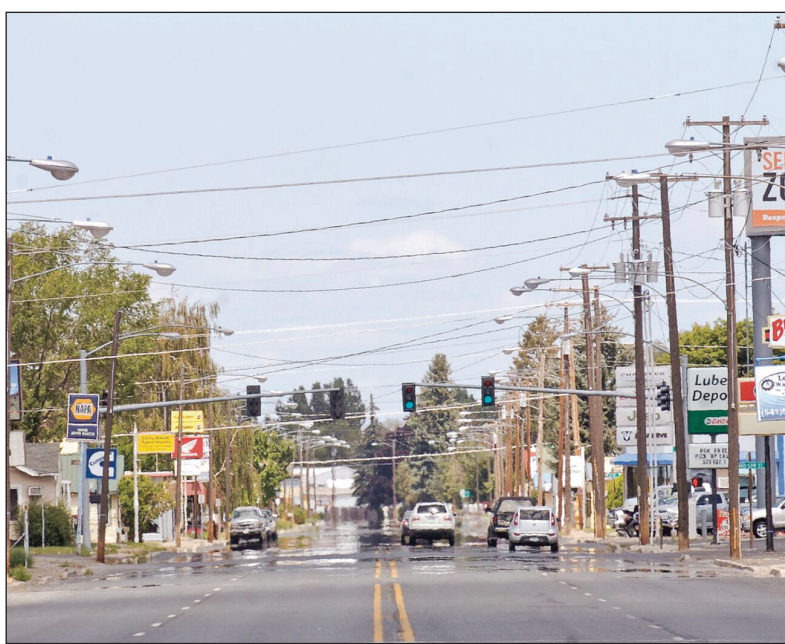
Traffic engineers say the three-lane system, with a center turn lane, is especially effective at reducing rear-end collisions, since drivers, unlike with the four-lane configuration, aren't in a travel lane as they wait to turn left.

Despite her concerns about the striping on 10th Street, Stadler said other proposed improvements would be beneficial.

"The really important part of the whole project is that it is addressing the safety concerns and the accessibility to all modes of transportation," Stadler said. "So, it's not just about people driving their cars on those three corridors, it's also about pedestrians being able to walk down 10th Street."

The proposal suggests adding sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of 10th Street from H Street north to Hughes Lane, and sidewalks on both sides from H Street south to Broadway. Curbside parking would be allowed on both sides of 10th Street south of H Street.

For Cedar Street north of D Street, the proposal calls for a 10-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald, File

The 10th Street business district.

on the west side of the street, and a 6-foot-wide walking path on the east side.

The bicycle/pedestrian path would also continue south of D Street.

The project also includes a proposed rebuild of the intersection of 10th Street/Hughes Lane/Pocahontas Road. Possible changes include realigning 10th Street just north of the intersection. Traffic heading north on 10th Street would have three lane options — straight, onto Highway 30 toward Haines, right onto Hughes Lane, or left onto Pocahontas Road.

Drivers traveling east on Pocahontas Road would also have three lanes — straight onto Hughes Lane, left onto Highway 30 or right onto 10th Street.

The project analysis is available on the city's website: https://www.bakercity.com/DocumentCenter/View/1961/TM6_Future-Conditions_Analysis_Final

"This plan that we're working on we should have completed and to the (city) planning commission and then the (city) council in January maybe into February; we've basically done the heavy lifting on this," Owen said.

JOBS

Continued from A1

Grant County saw a 1.5% decrease, down to 6.6%, and Morrow County recorded one of the lowest year-end decreases with just 0.9%, down to a 4.4% unemployment rate.

Union County is largely back on track, according to economists, but not fully recovered from the 1,400 jobs lost at the start of the pandemic. Leisure and hospitality regained 87% of jobs lost, but remained roughly 60 shy of full recovery.

Evidence of those statistics can be found in persistent help wanted signs at fast food chains such as McDonald's and Dairy Queen, while job advertisements have largely disappeared from the windows of local restaurants downtown. Restaurants such as Mamacita's International Grill have had to close down temporarily due to staffing shortages, while others such as local bistro and eatery Wine Down have closed permanently.

Ranked among Oregon's 36 counties, Umatilla County placed 14th in September, tied with Jackson, with an unemployment rate of 5%. Umatilla County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has fallen by 1.2 percentage points since September 2020 with

job growth primarily through the public sector, including 470 government jobs.

Morrow County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.9 percentage points, down to 4.4% since September 2021 — ranking Morrow sixth out of 36 Oregon counties, tied with Clackamas and Yamhill. The total increase across Northeastern Oregon counties was approximately 1,450 jobs over the year ending in September. Of those jobs added, 700 were in the private sector.

Across the state, unemployment rates fell to 4.7%, down from its high of 13.2% in April 2020 when government-mandated shutdowns halted economies across the United States. The unemployment rate sits slightly higher than its pre-pandemic level of 3.5%, flirting with the idea of a full recovery as COVID-19 infections fall across the state, and vaccination rates rise to 80%, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Unemployment claims fell dramatically over the year, tumbling from 1,918 unemployment claims in September 2020, to just 794 in September 2021, a nearly 60% drop in claims numbers. Those claims numbers had been continually dropping since January 2021, and the last three months, starting in July, have had marginal decreases as federal unemployment benefits dry up.

COVID

Continued from A1

According to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), 78% of the nearly 14,100 doses administered in the county were of the Moderna vaccine.

The Pfizer vaccine, by contrast, which received federal approval for booster shots on Sept. 22, accounts for 14% of doses given in the county. The one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine accounts for a little more than 7% of doses.

Federal officials have said, however, that people eligible for a third dose don't have to take the same vaccine that they had originally.

According to OHA data, a total of 91 vaccine doses were given in Baker County on Tuesday, Oct. 26 — 75 Moderna doses, 12 Pfizer doses and four Johnson & Johnson doses. The OHA database doesn't distinguish between first, second or booster doses.

Tuesday's total of 91 doses was the most given in the county since May 27, when 94 doses were given — 48 Moderna, 31 Pfizer and 15 Johnson & Johnson.

Federal officials recommend a booster dose for people 65 and older, for residents of long-term care facilities who are 18 or older, and for people who have compromised immune systems or other underlying medical conditions.

The booster dose, which is designed to reverse declining levels of protection against the virus, is also recommended for certain types of workers, including first responders, health care workers and grocery store employees.

Staten said county officials might schedule large-scale vaccination clinics to handle the demand.

The Health Department put on several such clinics at Baker High School in February, March and April.

The county administered more than 600 doses, all of them the Moderna vaccine, on each of four days — Feb. 26, March 12, March 26 and April 9.

Health clinics and pharmacies have also administered COVID-19 vaccines, including the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

Even with the age recommendations for booster doses, there is a large potential demand for those doses in Baker County.

Almost 4,100 county residents ages 60 or older have been vaccinated. That's about 24% of the county's population.

That age range, which accounts for almost 38% of the county's population, also has by far the highest vaccination rate in the county.

- Ages 80 and older, 71% — 785 of 1,106 residents vaccinated. The statewide vaccination rate in this age group is 81.8%.

- Ages 70 to 79, 69.8% — 1,530 of 2,192 residents vaccinated. The statewide vaccination rate in this age group is 89.7%.

- Ages 60 to 69, 57% — 1,758 of 3,082 residents vaccinated. The statewide vaccination rate in this age group is 80.6%.

Overall, Baker County's vaccination rate, which had been the sixth- or seventh-lowest among Oregon's 36 counties for much of the summer, has been overtaken by Harney County and now has the fifth-lowest rate, with 53.1% of residents 18 and older vaccinated.

Harney County, which has had infection rates and test positivity percentages near the highest in the state over

the past month or so, has a vaccination rate of 53.3%.

The four counties with lower rates than Baker County's:

- Lake, 43.2%
- Malheur, 46.6%
- Gilliam, 48.2%
- Grant, 48.8%

Rates among other counties in the region:

- Union, 57%
- Umatilla, 53.5%
- Morrow, 55.1%
- Wallowa, 66.6%

Cases drop, average age rises

With three days left in the month, October's case count was down by about 66% compared with September, which set a record with 465 cases, an average of 15.5 per day.

From Oct. 1-28, Baker County had 170 cases, a daily average of about 5.8.

The average age of people who tested positive increased during the first half of October.

From Oct. 1-15, residents ages 60 to 69 accounted for 25.6% of the county's cases, the largest percentage in any age range.

During September, by contrast, people in their 60s accounted for 9.8% of Baker County's cases.

During September, most of the county's record-setting number of cases — about 69% — were in residents younger than 50.

But during the first half of October, residents younger than 50 accounted for 33.6% of the county's cases.

Residents 70 and older continue to account for a relatively small percentage of the county's cases.

There were no such cases in the county during the first half of October.

During September, people 70 and older accounted for 9.9% of the county's cases.

Breakthrough cases

Baker County's percentage of breakthrough cases — infections in people who are fully vaccinated — has increased over the past month, as overall cases have declined.

The OHA's most recent breakthrough case report, released Thursday, Oct. 27, covers the week Oct. 17-23. During that week, 12 of the county's 51 cases were breakthrough — a rate of 23.5%.

The statewide breakthrough case rate for that week was 27.9% — 2,156 of 7,723 total cases.

Statewide, the number of total cases has dropped in eight consecutive weeks.

In Baker County, after a record weekly total of 139 cases from Sept. 12-18, weekly totals dropped for four straight weeks. There were 37 cases the week Oct. 10-16, a drop of almost 74% from the record week.

The county's case total rose to 51 from Oct. 17-23.

The current week is on pace to have the fewest cases since mid-July. For the first five days of the week, Oct. 24-28, the county reported 17 cases. The county has had fewer than 10 cases every day since Oct. 20, the longest such streak since mid-July.

There are no active workplace or school outbreaks in the county, according to the OHA.

Staten said the Health Department's contact tracers have found several recent instances of multiple people in the same household being infected.

"We are seeing a decline, and that's refreshing," Staten said. "But the virus is still in the community and we need to take precautions."

The county's test positivity rate dropped to 12% for the week Oct. 10-16, the lowest rate since mid-July.

The positivity rate rose to 14% from Oct. 17-23. For the current week, starting Oct. 24, the positivity rate, for the first four days of the week, was 9.2%.

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New At The Baker County Library

Patrons can reserve materials in advance online or by calling 541-523-6419. This week, Baker County Library has added 6 new bestsellers, nine movies, one audiobook, 39 children's books, and 124 other books, including 59 that are available online. See everything new this week to Baker County Library District at wowbrary.org. Materials featured, and in library collection, does not indicate endorsement or approval of contents by the library. Selections are based on factors such as demand, public interest, diversity of viewpoint, community relevance, and others.

FICTION

- "The Judge's List: A Novel," John Grisham
- "Forgiving Paris," Karen Kingsbury
- "A Court of Silver Flames," Sarah J. Maas
- "West with Giraffes," Lynda Rutledge
- "When Two Feathers Fell from the Sky," Margaret Verble

NONFICTION

- "Crazy Faith: It's Only Crazy Until It Happens," Michael Todd
- "E.R. Nurses: True Stories from America's Greatest Unsung Heroes," James Patterson and Matt Eversmann
- "Midnight in Washing-

ton: How We Almost Lost Our Democracy and Still Could," Adam Schiff

- "The Beatles: Get Back," The Beatles, Peter Jackson, and others.
- "The Pioneer Woman Cooks' Super Easy! 120 Shortcut Recipes for Dinners, Desserts, and More," Ree Drummond

MOVIES

- "Don't Breathe 2" (Horror)
- "Snake Eyes: G.I. Joe Origins" (Action)
- "Space Jam 2" (Family)
- "Stillwater" (Drama)
- "The Suicide Squad" (Sci-Fi)