

Baker City Herald

November 6, 2021

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IN THIS EDITION:

Local • Outdoors • Sports • TV

\$1.50

Fall back

Daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m. Sunday – set your clocks back one hour before going to bed Saturday



QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Marvin Endicott of Baker City.

BRIEFING

OTEC canned food drive going on through Nov. 19

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is having a canned food drive through Friday, Nov. 19. You can drop off canned, nonperishable food items at any OTEC office during regular business hours.

The Baker City office is at 4005 23rd St. All donated food will be given to food banks in the four counties that OTEC serves: Baker, Union, Grant and Harney.

WEATHER

Today

50 / 25
Rain showers



Sunday

47 / 24
Partly sunny



Monday

46 / 35
Partly sunny



Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Royce Peterson inoculates Sloan Defrees, right, with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine on Friday morning, Nov. 5, at the Baker County Health Department. Sloan's mom, Jess Defrees, sits beside her.

Ready for the shot

■ First group of kids, ages 5 to 11, receive COVID-19 vaccine

By JAYSON JACOBY

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The pair of five-year-olds are discussing COVID-19 vaccinations, and it's a serious conversation.

"I hate waiting," says Gwen Swart.

"It just makes it scarier," says Sloan Defrees, her fellow Baker City kindergarten.

"Sloan," Gwen replies with an earnestness that belies her age, "you already got your shot."

Sloan's gentle response: "Gwen, don't worry."

Five minutes later, both these girls had received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Baker County Health Department.

Gwen and Sloan were among about 25 children, ages five to 11, who were inoculated Friday morning, Nov. 5, the first group in that age range in the county

to receive the vaccine that gained federal approval earlier in the week. There are about 1,200 children in that age group in the county.

Although the vaccine wasn't available everywhere in Oregon on Friday, Nancy Staten, director of the Health Department, said the agency took advantage of a brief opportunity to place an order for doses and the smaller needles that are used to administer the vaccine to small children.

"We're fortunate in that regard," Staten said.

Gwen's and Sloan's mothers, Anna Swart and Jess Defrees, agreed.

Anna Swart said she and her husband, Tony, who both work at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City, have been eagerly anticipating the approval of the vaccine for younger children.

Swart, who also works in Baker schools, said she and her husband were both inoculated soon after the vaccines became available in December 2020.

Swart said she's also had a booster shot.

"We just want to do our part in ending this," she said. "COVID has affected all of our lives so much."

Swart said it was an easy decision to have Gwen vaccinated.

"She doesn't have a high risk of becoming very sick, but she could still spread it to others," Swart said of her daughter.

Once Gwen is vaccinated, Swart said she hopes that should her daughter be exposed to the virus at school, she would not have to quarantine.

Swart said she is completely confident in the safety of the vaccine, and that the possibility of a reaction to the vaccine is much lower than the chance that Gwen could be

More Information

Parents interested in scheduling a vaccination for children ages 5 and older can call the Baker County Health Department at 541-523-8211.

infected with the virus.

"I trust the doctors, the CDC, the FDA, in making the right choice for our kids," Swart said.

She said she has talked often with Gwen about COVID-19 and the vaccines.

"I don't want her to be scared of COVID, and she isn't," Swart said. "We've talked more about protecting her and others from getting sick."

Defrees, whose husband, Nathan, is a doctor, said they also had no qualms about having Sloan vaccinated as soon as doses were available.

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Missing teen returns home

By JAYSON JACOBY

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Michelle Gately, the mother of Kaitlyn Rose Gately, the 17-year-old Baker City girl who was reported as missing and endangered earlier in the week, said late Thursday, Nov. 4 that her daughter has returned home.

In a message to the Baker City Herald, Michelle Gately wrote that she's "so happy that she's home and will definitely be working on bettering the relationship so she doesn't feel she has to run away when there is friction between us."

Michelle said she slept through the night for the first time since Kaitlyn went missing on Oct. 28.

Michelle thanked all those who shared Kaitlyn's photo and helped her search for her daughter.

The Baker City Police department posted on its Facebook page on Nov. 1 that Kaitlyn Gately was "missing and endangered."

Michelle Gately said in an interview with the Herald that she had seen her daughter at Baker High School on the morning of Oct. 28. They argued about a cellphone Kaitlyn had been using, which was not her own, and Kaitlyn didn't return home that afternoon.

COVID cases continue to drop

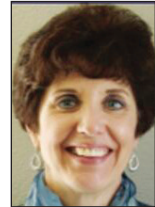
By JAYSON JACOBY

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The wave of COVID-19 cases that swept Baker County during the late summer continues to recede as autumn progresses.

Both the number of cases, and the percentage of tests that are positive, have declined over the past two weeks, to their lowest levels since mid-July.

Breakthrough cases — infections in people who are



Staten

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Pine Creek resident seeks no-shooting zone

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

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A resident in the Pine Creek area northwest of Baker City has asked county commissioners to enact a no-shooting zone in that area after his home was twice hit by stray bullets.

Ted Davis, who made the request of commissioners during their regular meeting Wednesday, Nov. 3, said his house was hit by the first bullet during the summer of 2020.

"I didn't know it at the time but I was home," Davis told commissioners. "I was sitting there and I heard this huge bang and I had no idea what it was."

He said that after looking

for the source of the noise, he found a bullet hole in his home.

Davis, who reported the incident to the Baker County Sheriff's Office, said the bullet had come from the north, went through one exterior and two interior walls, passing over his bed and hitting a closet.

"As you can imagine, that kind of rattled me a little bit. But in no way do I think it's intentional," Davis said.

He said he wrote it off to a once-in-a-lifetime accident.

But then it happened again in August of this year.

Davis said he started talking to neighbors to see how they felt, finding most felt agreed with him that some-

thing needed to be done. He gathered about 30 signatures from neighbors on a petition.

Davis emphasized to commissioners that he has nothing against guns or shooting.

"I'm not trying to take anyone's guns. I own guns. I'm not trying to take anyone's guns away. I just don't want my house shot," Davis said. "There's just, with all those houses, I would feel really bad if someone got hurt and I didn't bring this forward."

Commissioner Mark Bennett said Davis' request is a starting point. Bennett suggested the county schedule a meeting to hear from other residents.

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Pharmacy crisis continues

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

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Amid the bustle of shoppers, one group of customers stood still, their patience waning, Thursday morning, Nov. 4 at the Safeway store in Baker City.

The members of this group were waiting for their turn at the pharmacy.

Some near the front of the line said they had been waiting for more than an hour.

Similar lines have formed at times leading to the three pharmacies in Baker City, in the Safeway, Albertsons and Rite Aid stores.

The closure of the pharmacy in the Bi Mart store

slated for Nov. 9, combined with staffing shortages in the remaining pharmacies, has created a situation that's frustrating for customers and employees alike.

Paul Musser, one of those waiting in line at Rite Aid on Thursday morning, said he transferred his prescriptions from Bi Mart to Rite Aid. Musser was upset as he waited with about 15 other customers.

"My prescription was called in on Monday to here," he said. "Today the line is short. Yesterday it was all the way down and around. It's all because of Bi Mart and Kate Brown."

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