

LOCAL BRIEFING

Photos with Santa on Dec. 4 at Event Center

The Kiwanis Club of Baker City is offering the annual Santa photos event on Saturday, Dec. 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Baker County Event Center, 2600 East St. There will be an opportunity to write Santa a letter before or after visiting with the jolly elf.

Cost is \$10 per sitting and includes two 5x7 or three 4x6 prints. Prints are normally available for pickup within 15 minutes. Proceeds from this event support the club's community service projects, which

focus on supporting children. Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers "dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time."

Cultural Coalition seeking grant applications

The Baker County Cultural Coalition (BCCC) is welcoming grant applications for arts, culture and heritage projects through Dec. 15.

BCCC receives a grant annually from the Oregon Cultural Trust to support local heritage, arts and culture projects in the county. Over the past 18 years, the coal-

ition has awarded more than \$100,000 in grants to local artists, programs such as "Chalk It up to Art," local orchestra, children's program, Halfway music events, heritage events such as restoring the Haines School bell, history summer program at Baker Heritage Museum and the Baker 5J School District oral history collection.

Grants are typically \$500 and are not restricted to non-profit organizations. Occasionally grants are given in larger amounts where a project warrants critical support. The BCCC board of directors

seeks applications from any individual or group who has a program or project addressing arts and culture in Baker County and it looks forward to receiving creative ideas.

The local grant process through BCCC for 2022 is in two stages. The first deadline is Dec. 15 for grants given in January; the second stage is May 15 for grants given in June for projects taking place before the end of 2022. Grant applications and instructions for reports can be found on the Baker County website at www.bakercounty.org/cultural_plan/contact_us.html.



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Vehicles lined up Friday morning, Nov. 19 on East Street in Baker City for a COVID-19 and flu vaccine drive-thru clinic.

VACCINE

Continued from A1

In addition to the COVID-19 vaccines, health department workers gave 125 doses of flu vaccine, said Nancy Staten, health department director.

"We were happy with the turnout," Staten said Monday morning, Nov. 21.

Since the April 9 clinic, the county's highest one-day total of COVID-19 vaccine doses given was 138, on Oct. 26. Another 136 doses were administered on Nov. 9.

Staten said the 245 doses given at the drive-thru clinic included first and second doses, as well as third doses (for people who are immunocompromised and receive a full dose) and booster doses for fully vaccinated people (a half-dose).

She didn't have a breakdown of how many of each type of dose were given.

Staten said on Friday that the health department will consider having more clinics, depending on demand, now that federal officials have made all residents 18 and older eligible for a booster dose.

About 7,400 Baker County residents 18 or older have been vaccinated, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Vaccination rates by age group:

- 65 and older — 64.5% (statewide rate is 82%)
- 50 to 64 — 49% (statewide rate is 72.9%)
- 20 to 48 — 38.4% (statewide rate is 68.8%)
- 18 to 19 — 44.2% (statewide rate is 57.1%)

SUNN

Continued from A1

"I wanted to improve my own health too," she said.

As she talked, Anderson clipped bright green blades of wheatgrass and added it to the juicer along with chunks of fresh pineapple and apple.

"I've felt really good since I've been here," she said.

Anderson plans to add other items to the menu, such as breakfast and lunch bowls and "grab-and-go" items ready in the refrigerator.

The other half of the space fills the "decor" part of the shop's name with items for "bath, body, bed and home."

She's stocked home goods such as sheets in three varieties — linen, Turkish cotton, and percale. Other offerings include robes, aprons, shirts,

As of Friday (not including the drive-thru clinic), 23.3% of Baker County residents ages 65 and older had received a third or booster dose, according to OHA.

Residents 18 and older who want a booster dose can call the health department at 541-523-8211 to schedule an appointment.

Residents can also set up a time to have children ages 5 and older vaccinated.

Baker County's vaccination rate for ages 18 and older is 53.6%, the fifth-lowest among Oregon's 36 counties.

Friday's drive-thru clinic coincided with a rise in COVID-19 cases in Baker County.

The county reported 46 cases for the week Nov. 14-20, the highest weekly total since 51 cases from Oct. 17-23.

Weekly totals for the following three weeks were 24, 20 and 24.

Most of last week's cases were reported on three days — 10 on Nov. 15, 11 on Nov. 17 and 13 on Nov. 18.

Two cases were reported on both Friday, Nov. 19 and on Saturday, Nov. 20.

No new cases were reported on Sunday, Nov. 21.

Despite the increase last week, November remains on pace to have the fewest cases in a month since July.

Through Nov. 21, the monthly total was 89, an average of 4.2 cases per day.

October's average was 5.4 cases per day, following the delta variant-driven surge in September (a record 15.5 cases per day) and August, with 10 cases per day.

There were 91 cases during July, an average of 2.9 per day.

towels, and baby items.

She's also carrying candles and soap handcrafted by Kate Johnson at Old Wingville Farm in Haines and featuring unique scents created just for Sunn.

"It's been fun creating things with her," Anderson said of Johnson.

Anderson said she spent many hours researching products to offer that are eco-friendly, fair trade, and created by small businesses.

"It's all things I love," she said. "These are things that make us feel good."

Sunn is open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Anderson will also feature artwork for the First Friday art walk, held on the first Friday of each month (the next one is Dec. 3).

For updates, check the shop's Facebook page.

Oregon's fuel tax rises again

By ZANE SPARLING

Oregon Capital Insider

Gas prices are up. They're about to get even higher.

Oregon drivers will pay 2 cents more on every gallon of gasoline beginning on Jan. 1, 2022, as the state's fuel tax rises to \$0.38 per gallon.

The pump price jump was baked into House Bill 2017 — the omnibus \$5.3 billion transportation package passed by state lawmakers that year — which included three previous price hikes and a final two-cent increase set for 2024, at which point drivers will be paying 10 cents more per gallon in tax.

There's also a separate

10-cent per gallon fuel tax collected by the city of Portland, plus an \$0.184 federal gas tax, meaning Rose City consumers are currently paying roughly \$0.64 in taxes on every gallon of gas.

Oregon Department of Transportation data shows that state fuel tax revenue has recovered somewhat from the COVID-19 slump, even though drivers are buying less gas.

As virus restrictions emptied public spaces and converted most white collar commuters into home workers, gross tax revenue dropped from \$620 million in calendar year 2019 to \$589 million in 2020.

According to ODOT Budget Manager Daniel Porter, the state has collected \$486 million in fuel tax revenue through September 2021, about \$20 million more than this time in 2019, with the final quarter of revenue yet to be tabulated. But the number of gallons of gasoline sold is lagging previous years, with 1.357 billion gallons sold through September of this year compared with 1.38 billion in September 2019.

All told, some 1.829 billion gallons of gas passed through the pump in 2019, compared with just 1.645 billion last year.

Lawmakers have con-

sidered proposals to ditch Oregon's fuel tax in favor of a tax on every mile traveled, which would return electric vehicle users to the tax base, but so far it's just an idea.

Statewide, the average price for regular unleaded gas is \$3.78 per gallon, according to the American Automobile Association. That's nearly a buck and a quarter more than the average unleaded gas cost of \$2.59 a gallon from this time last year, though still less than the price peak recorded in 2008, per AAA.

As of Thursday, Nov. 18, Baker County's average was \$3.82 per gallon for regular unleaded, according to AAA.

Baker man hurt in motorcycle crash

Baker City Herald

A Baker City man was seriously hurt when his motorcycle went off Highway 86 near Baker City on Friday afternoon, Nov. 19.

Terry John Everson, 63, was riding an Indian Chieftain motorcycle

eastbound on the highway about 4:08 p.m. when the motorcycle went off the road and hit boulders in the ditch, throwing Everson off the motorcycle and into the ditch, according to a report from Oregon State Police Sr. Trooper Nicholas Hagedorn.

A Baker City ambulance took Everson to Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center-Baker City, and he was later taken by Life Flight to Saint Alphonsus in Boise, according to Hagedorn's report.

Everson was in criti-

cal condition as of Monday afternoon, Nov. 22, according to Saint Alphonsus-Boise.

According to Hagedorn's report, "evidence of DUI was observed," and information was given to the district attorney's office for consideration of possible charges.

POLICE

Continued from A1

"The last 18 to 24 months, we have seen a lot of our long-time employees — police officers — retire and so we have been doing more hiring than what maybe we would, or have over the course of the last 15 to 20 years," Bell said.

In order to attract lateral transfers — poaching police officers from other regions — Bell created a \$6,000 hiring bonus for certified experienced police officers, hoping to draw in officers from across the state. So far, that effort "has not garnered any certified officers," Bell said.

Lateral transfers are valuable for police departments due to the amount of training required for new officers. It can take up to nine months to transform a new recruit into an independent and capable police officer, Bell said.

"Five to eight years ago we started retiring police officers — and you can't quickly replace the experience and the wisdom that those career police officers possess," Bell

said. "You genuinely can't just replace a police officer, it's a lengthy road."

Dealing with a public image problem

While hiring woes are not limited to one career, police agencies are facing yet another hurdle in their attempts to hire new officers — a growing sentiment that paints police officers in bad light.

"Everybody is having a hard time finding people who want to work, and especially this profession right now. It's probably not the most sexy profession," said Pendleton Police Chief Charles Byram.

Byram, along with Bell and DUBY, noted that the public image of police deteriorated in the wake of massive protests and riots across the nation following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. Images from majors cities showed police clad in riot gear blanketing city blocks in tear gas, as well as several incidents of assault against members of the media.

"Essentially since George Floyd we have seen a marked decrease in the number of people interested in applying to be police officers," Bell said. "Law enforcement has really been beat up in the course of the last 18 to 24 months."

That sentiment has been muted in more rural areas, where police enjoy a strong support from local residents who, by and large, have a favorable outlook toward police, Bell said. Much of that favorable opinion may stem from the active community involvement of police officers in rural communities.

"We have to become embedded in our community, I mean people know us; we're only 17,000," Byram said. "Somebody is going to know you. You're only a few degrees of separation away from someone you're arresting."

Call of duty

The chiefs said that they are still accepting applications for the open positions, but not everybody can become a police officer. They still need to meet the basic

physical and psychological standards set by the agencies and the state, as well as background checks and medical screenings.

"The one thing that I won't do is sacrifice our standards just to make a hiring decision, I won't do it," Byram said. "Usually if you do that, then you're setting yourself up for disaster; and right now, in this line of work, I'll protect the brand all day. If we have to run short for a little bit, that's fine; but our values, our mission, our beliefs aren't going to be sacrificed just because I need another body on the road."

Byram said that anyone who is interested should apply, and that if anyone would like to see what the daily lives of a police officer entails, they would be more than welcome to join an officer for a ride-along or come and chat with the police chief about the job.

"Quite honestly, you know, I'm open for all comers," Byram said. "Whether you have experience or not, it's one of those things where we're also good at training cops."

CHIEF

Continued from A1

• Feb. 11-15 — background checks of candidates.

• Feb. 15 — school board to meet in executive session (closed to the public) to determine list of finalists.

• Feb. 16 — set dates for second interviews with finalists.

• Feb. 22-25 — second interviews with finalists. Candidates would make a presentation to the board, tour the district with Witty, and meet with community partners.

• March 10 — announce hiring of new superintendent.

The tentative plan calls for the new superintendent

to start work at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, said Lindsey McDowell, the school district's public information and communications coordinator.

Witty would work with the new superintendent to start, and then fully retire later in the school year at a time agreed on by the new superintendent and the school board.

Providing quality and compassion to all his patients.

Dr Sanders specializes in all aspects of the foot and ankle. Anything from foot & ankle pain to diabetic foot care & limb salvage, injuries, surgery, skin or toe nail conditions, sports medicine, he covers it all!



SANDERS PODIATRY 2830 10th St Baker City, Oregon
Baker City office hours:
Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm
Clinic hours: Tuesday 8am-5pm
Thursday 8am-12pm
Clinic offices in Ontario (every other Monday)
John Day (every other Monday)
La Grande (every Wednesday)

Brian Sanders, DPM
Accepting most insurances
541-524-0122

ELTRYM
Showing Movies Since 1940!
1809 1st Street • Baker City

★ Nov. 26 - Dec. 2 ★

ENCANTO (PG)
Disney Animation. As the only member of her family with no magical powers, Mirabel must save her family's magic, although she has no special gift of her own.
Fri - Sun 1:10, 4:20, 7:20
Mon - Thurs 7:20

HOUSE OF GUCCI (R)
When Patrizia Reggiani, an outsider from humble beginnings, marries into the Gucci family, her unbridled ambition begins to unravel the family legacy.
Fri - Sun 12:30, 3:45, 7:00
Mon - Thurs 7:00

GHOSTBUSTERS AFTERLIFE (PG-13)
After moving to a new town, a family discovers they have a connection to the original Ghostbusters and the secret legacy their grandfather left behind.
Fri - Sun 1:00, 4:10, 7:10
Mon - Thurs 7:10

SHOWTIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CALL AHEAD TO VERIFY
www.eltrym.com (541) 523-2522

CASHWAY
Lumber Co.

• Lumber
• Plywood
• Building Materials
• Hardware
• Paint
• Plumbing
• Electrical
And much more!

3205 10th Street
Baker City
541-523-4422
Mon-Fri 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Saturday 8 am - 5 pm
Closed Sun

Don't text and drive... you won't have to come see us!



Joe Scott's
Premier
Auto Body, Inc.
2390 Broadway, Baker City
541-523-5223