

LOCAL BRIEFING

Middle school, high school choirs, bands to perform

Baker Middle School and Baker High School choirs and bands have scheduled a pair of winter concerts.

The choirs from both schools will perform Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at the Baker High School auditorium, 2500 E St.

The bands will perform Thursday, Dec. 16, also at 7 p.m. at the BHS auditorium.

Baker City Police hosting Angel Tree

The Baker City Police Department is hosting, in

partnership with The Salvation Army, an Angel Tree decorated with gift tags in the front entrance of the Police Department at 1768 Auburn Ave. Angel Tree gift tags are special wished-for items given during the holiday season to children in need within our community.

If you would like to pick up an Angel Tree gift tag and purchase the gift for a local child, you can then return the unwrapped gift to the Police Department.

The last day to turn in a gift is Friday, Dec. 17.

For more information, call Phoebe Wachtel at 541-524-2014, extension 603, or Susan Bland with The Salvation Army at 541-523-5853.

Pet food collection drive underway

Bisnett Insurance is hosting a pet supply drive to benefit Best Friends of Baker through Dec. 17. Donations of kitten and cat food (wet or dry), dog food, and cat litter can be brought to Bisnett at 2001 Main St. (corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue).

SKI

Continued from A1

And higher in the mountains, much more snow piled up.

Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort reported 13 inches of new snow during the weekend, with a snow base of 18 inches on Monday morning, Dec. 13.

If the weather forecast for the rest of this week proves close to accurate, with snow likely most days, there's a "very, very good chance" that the ski area will open for the season on Saturday, Dec. 18, said

Chelsea Judy, Anthony Lakes marketing director. "We're very optimistic," Judy said on Monday morning, Dec. 13.

An automated snow-measuring station near Bourne, about six miles north of Sumpter, reported 15 inches of new snow, with 16 inches on the ground Monday morning.

At another station, in Eilertson Meadow along Rock Creek on the east side of the Elkhorns, about 14 inches of snow fell during the weekend. There was only one inch of snow there before the storm.

At Schneider Meadows,

in the southern Wallows north of Halfway, about 22 inches of snow fell during the weekend, bringing the total to 31 inches.

The chance for sticking snow in Baker City and other valleys of Baker County will increase this week after a cold front swept through Monday night, ushering in colder air and changing the upper air pattern to northwest, which reduces the rain shadow effect.

The National Weather Service predicts snow to continue in the mountains, with a foot or more during the week in the Anthony Lakes area.

ELK

Continued from A1

Marvin can attest only to the chronological acumen of the elk that congregate each year at the Elkhorn Wildlife Area.

That's the series of 10 elk-feeding stations, ranging from Old Auburn Lane in the south to Shaw Mountain in Union County, operated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Marvin is starting his fourth winter as the Elkhorn Wildlife Area manager.

The publicly owned portions of the Wildlife Area (some stations are on private land for which ODFW has leases) close to public entry on Dec. 1, and remain closed through April 10.

Marvin said elk start to show up at some of the feed sites — most notably the meadow along Anthony Creek, west of North Powder — on Dec. 1.

And the animals stroll into the meadow even in years, such as the current one, when the fall has been mild, snow is scarce and the elk have no particular need for handouts of alfalfa hay.

"These elk, they know where that feed is," Marvin said on Friday morning, Dec. 10. "They have a phenomenal memory of where they've wintered in the past, and they can migrate for many miles overnight to be here at the feed site the next morning."



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Rocky Mountain elk in a meadow along Anthony Creek on Sunday, Dec. 12. This site, about 10 miles west of North Powder, is one of the 10 sites that comprise the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Elkhorn Wildlife Area.

To be clear, Marvin and his crew distribute several hundred tons of alfalfa to elk each winter not because the animals wouldn't survive without the supplemental feed.

Elk are tough and hardy, capable of digging through deep snow to get at the meager winter forage.

Even a nasty winter, the sort that can kill hundreds of mule deer across Northeastern Oregon, typically takes only a minor toll on elk.

ODFW started the Elkhorn Wildlife Area in 1971 for a very different purpose — to stop elk from marauding cattle ranchers' haystacks in the Baker, North Powder and Bowen valleys.

The idea, which has proven largely effective over the past half century, is to

set up feeding stations where daily distributions of alfalfa will, in effect, intercept the elk, satisfying their hunger and discouraging them from migrating into the valleys.

During the ensuing decades, Marvin said, the elk have become habituated to these seasonal offerings, their instincts so keen that their arrival, as the calendar turns from November to December, is quite reliable.

"The cows every year bring their calves here, and they learn, and then they bring their calves," Marvin said.

Although the elk know when December comes, they don't always wait until then, Marvin said.

In years when snow comes early — 2020 was an example, with a couple feet

of snow accumulating in the mountains the first half of November — elk will wander into some of the feed sites.

"Acting like they're going to starve to death," Marvin said with a chuckle during a 2020 interview.

But ODFW doesn't start bucking hay bales before Dec. 1, early snow or no.

The reason, Marvin said, is that the Elkhorn Wildlife Area remains open to the public, including hunters, through Nov. 30, and he doesn't want to, in effect, set up bait stations where elk would congregate.

Typically, as was the case last year, early snow melts and the elk return to the mountains, waiting for Dec. 1.

This fall was quite different, with little snow until this past weekend.

Nonetheless, about 150 to 170 elk arrived at the Anthony Creek feeding site Dec. 1, and they've been showing up daily since, Marvin said.

Elk numbers have been much lower at the other sites, however.

That's pretty typical, Marvin said, even though the Wildlife Area crew set out hay at each of the sites on Dec. 1.

The elk that congregate at Anthony Creek tend to be the most consistent when it comes to the Dec. 1 arrival, Marvin said.

"They're very habituated elk," he said.

Elk that migrate to the other feeding sites, by contrast, often don't show up in large numbers until snow begins to pile up.

With the first major winter storm of the season

bringing heavy snow to the Elkhorns this past weekend, Marvin said he expects the elk numbers will rise at all the sites soon.

"Peak numbers are usually in January when it's the coldest and the snow tends to get the deepest," Marvin said.

During mid-winter, the Wildlife Area crew feeds more than 1,000 elk, including about 500 at the Old Auburn Lane site and 250 or so at Anthony Creek.

A few of the feed sites also attract deer.

The Auburn and Anthony Creek sites are the two publicly accessible properties with maintained roads where people can park and watch the big herds of elk, which usually include multiple mature, branch-antlered bulls.

To get to the Auburn site, drive south of Baker City on Highway 7 for about seven miles, and turn right on Old Auburn Lane. Follow this gravel road (maintained in winter) for about 3.5 miles where a sign marks the Wildlife Area. The elk are fed on a knoll south of the road.

Earlier this year, the Wildlife Area crew pruned many of the ponderosa pine trees near the road, improving the view to the feeding site, Marvin said.

To reach the Anthony Creek site, from North Powder drive west on River Lane for about 8.5 miles. The elk are fed in a meadow south of the road. You can also reach River Lane via Haines and the Anthony Lakes Highway.

BELLA

Continued from A1

For every \$10 spent, a customer is given a hazelnut or walnut to put in a stocking labeled for the charity.

Each nut represents \$1 for the organization.

"It's really so heartwarming to watch people consider where the donation should go," Calder said. "Many customers have involved their kids and let the kids help decide."

Calder said education is part of the fundraiser as well — her staff members know the background of each organization, and share the stories with customers.

"We been giving out a lot of brochures," she said.

In addition to the stockings, a raffle will increase



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

BELLA stories in Baker City and La Grande will donate 10% of sales during December to three local organizations, with shoppers deciding how much goes to each.

the donation to the charity that receives the most nuts at each store.

Calder said BELLA received a donation from a woman who was raised in

Baker City and heard about the "Give More" fundraiser. The donation — she wanted to remain anonymous — was \$300. Calder said BELLA added another \$100,

and the combined \$400 will be split for a \$200 shopping spree in both stores.

Each shop is selling raffle tickets for the shopping spree, and all the sales will go the charity that receives the most nuts in each location.

Calder said the stockings are emptied each night, and shoppers in the La Grande store are supporting Baker City causes just as much as the Baker customers are donating to the Angel Fund.

"People like to see everyone benefit," she said. "We've had a lot of fun with this and you hope, at the end of the day, that our enthusiasm is infectious."

BELLA in Baker City is located at 2023 Main St. The La Grande store is at 1216 Adams Ave.

RESOLUTION

Continued from A1

The proposed resolution also states that "the Baker County Commissioners proudly join the Constitutional Sheriffs and Police Officers Association and that the undersigned commissioners do hereby denounce any acts or agencies that promote the aforementioned practices. All actions by the federal government and its agents will conform strictly and implicitly with the principles expressed within the United States Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights."

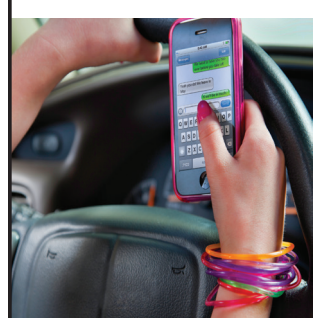
The resolution concludes: "There is no greater obligation or responsibility of any government officer than to protect

the rights of the people. Thus, any conduct contrary to the United States Constitution, Declaration of Independence, or the Bill of Rights will be dealt with as criminal activity."

Also on the agenda for Wednesday's meeting:

- Visitor services agreement with Baker County Unlimited (Baker County Chamber of Commerce).
- HVAC system for trailer at Hewitt Park.
- Professional services agreement with Arros Electric for upgrades at Hewitt Park.
- Adopting county policy for public records and travel.
- Public hearing adopting 2022 county fee schedule.
- Order authorizing sale of property near East Pine Creek, with the proceeds going to the county parks department.

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