

# Baker City Herald

December 23, 2021

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**GO! Magazine**  
Your weekly guide to arts and entertainment events around Northeast Oregon

**IN THIS EDITION:** Local • Business & AgLife • Go! magazine **\$1.50**

### QUICK HITS

#### Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Carmen Erskine of Baker City.

#### Publication schedule for Christmas and New Year's weeks

The Baker City Herald will not publish an issue on Saturday, Dec. 25.

Next week, the Herald will publish issues on Tuesday, Dec. 28, Thursday, Dec. 30 and Friday, Dec. 31. There will not be an issue on Saturday, Jan. 1.

### BRIEFING

#### Hospice looking for volunteers

Heart 'N Home Hospice is looking for volunteers to undergo training to learn about hospice care and the services provided to patients.

Typical volunteer activities include talking with patients in person or on the phone, art and music, helping with transportation, grocery shopping and errands, and doing yard and housework.

Anyone interested in applying can learn more at <https://internal-lhgroup.icims.com/jobs/117067/hospice-volunteer/job>.

More information is available by emailing Cheyenne Thamert at [cheyenne.thamert@lhgroup.com](mailto:cheyenne.thamert@lhgroup.com) or by calling 541-524-7688.

### WEATHER

#### Today

40 / 24  
Rain or snow



#### Friday

34 / 24  
Morning snow



Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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



## Sitting in for Santa

Members of the Baker Kiwanis Club write responses to more than 250 letters to the jolly old elf

Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Shelly Cutler, a member of the Baker Kiwanis Club, leafs through some of the more than 250 letters to Santa that she and two other club members wrote responses to.

#### By JAYSON JACOBY

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Shelly Cutler isn't a ghost writer but she makes an exception for Santa Claus.

The chance to bring joy to a child with a couple of short handwritten sentences, Cutler said, is one she simply can't miss.

"It's so well worth it," Cutler, a member of the Baker Kiwanis Club and executive director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, said of her role as one of Santa's designated scribes this Christmas.

"The Christmas spirit — sometimes we struggle to find it, but here it is."

Cutler and two other Kiwanis Club members, Debbie Poe and MaryLynne Evans, divided up the task of replying to each of more than 250 letters to Santa written by Baker County children.

The last of the responses — postmarked from the North Pole, naturally — were mailed on Tuesday, Dec. 21.

And with each of the dozens of letters Cutler wrote, she imagined the smile of wonder on a little face, perhaps as the child pulls the envelope from a mailbox, or later when they, or a parent, reads Santa's words.

Dear Santa, I have been so good this year I want to wish you a merry christmas this year be safe on your flight. happy holidays Santa claus.

"The way they light up and are so excited," Cutler said. "There's nothing like it."

This is the second year the Kiwanis Club has invited local kids to write to Santa.

Last year the club started the effort because its longtime Christmas tradition — photos with the jolly old elf himself — was canceled due to the pandemic.

See, **Santa** / Page A3

## Generosity 'overwhelming'

■ Toy donations above average this year



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Donated toys at the CASA of Eastern Oregon office in Baker City. The toys are being distributed around the county.

#### By LISA BRITTON

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The community, says Mary Collard, responded with big generosity this holiday season.

Collard is the executive director of CASA, which trains volunteers to advocate for children in the court system. Every December, CASA has a toy

drive and "wish tags" for children in foster care.

Lew Bros. Les Schwab in Baker City is the collection point for the toys — the local version of Schwab's company-wide "Toys for Tots" campaign, said Diana Brown, co-owner of the tire store.

See, **Toys** / Page A3

## 11 COVID cases Tuesday

■ Highest one-day total in a month

#### Baker City Herald

Baker County had its highest daily total of COVID-19 cases in a month, with 11 cases reported on Tuesday, Dec. 21.

That was the most in a day since Nov. 22, when there were also 11 cases.

Tuesday's total was the first day with 10 or more cases since Nov. 30, when there were 10 cases.

Case totals have been

trending down, however, during December, for the third straight month.

The daily average dropped from a record high of 15.5 cases during September, to 5.4 during October and to 4.8 during November.

For the first 21 days of December, the daily average is 3.7 cases, the lowest since July.

See, **COVID** / Page A3

## Shining Bright

#### By JAYSON JACOBY

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Most people look at Doug and Lori Lien's Baker City home and see a brilliant display of lights in multiple hues and shapes and sizes.

Doug Lien does not.

He sees holes.

Black spots.

Places where he could wedge in a new decoration, gleaming against the dark winter sky.

See, **Lighting** / Page A3



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Winner of the award for best non-lighted display in the Baker County Chamber of Commerce's contest is Meghan Moore, 2406 Second St.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Winner of the Griswold award in the Baker County Chamber of Commerce's Christmas lighting contest is Doug Lien, 675 L Loop.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Winner of the Santa's Favorite award in the Baker County Chamber of Commerce's Christmas lighting contest is Billie-Jo Nickens, 1170 Columbia Ave.



**TODAY**  
Issue 95, 34 pages

Business.....B1 & B2  
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**COMING NEXT WEEK — LOOKING BACK AT THE TOP STORIES OF 2021**