



OUTDOORS B1
Enjoying snowshoeing, sans snowshoes



SPORTS A5
Baker wrestlers best Nyssa, 52-23

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Cyndee Cottrell of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Local students on Montana State dean's list

BOZEMAN, Montana — Two local students were named to the academic honor roll for the fall semester at Montana State University. Hayden Owen of Durkee, and Michelle Williams of North Powder were both named to the dean's list by earning a GPA of at least 3.5 in at least 12 college-level credits.

Concert in Pendleton limited to family members

Due to rising COVID cases, the Oregon East Symphony's youth orchestra concert on Jan. 27 in Pendleton will limit attendance to family members. This change came after the printing of Go! Magazine.

Chili feed, singalong Jan. 23 at Wolf Creek Grange

NORTH POWDER — The Wolf Creek Grange in North Powder will have a chili feed and singalong on Sunday, Jan. 23, starting at 1 p.m. Cost for the chili feed is \$5 per person, and \$10 for a family.

WEATHER

Today
36/15
Mostly sunny

Sunday
33/16
Partly sunny

Monday
34/17
Partly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Onlookers cheer Sofie Kaaen of Baker City and her dog team as they take off from the start of the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race at Ferguson Ridge Ski Area on Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022. Kaaen was the lone competitor in the 22-mile juniors race.

Baker City girl competing in Eagle Cap Extreme sled dog race

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Sofie Kaaen is used to starting a race among a pack of competitors.

She's not used to doing so while balancing on the back of a sled being pulled by five enthusiastic and athletic dogs.

Kaaen, a 14-year-old freshman at Baker High School who placed 37th at the Oregon Class 4A cross-country championships in November, has swapped her running shoes and shorts for insulated boots and other attire more suitable for an arctic excursion.

On Thursday afternoon, Jan. 20, Kaaen guided her team of five dogs for 22 miles through Wallowa County's backcountry in the first stage of the Eagle Cap Extreme sled dog race.

She said her debut as a musher was all that she hoped it would be.

"It was pretty exciting," Kaaen said in a phone interview that evening from Joseph, headquarters for the race, which returned this year after being canceled in 2021 due to the pandemic. "Everybody was very sup-



Sofie Kaaen/Contributed Photo

Sofie Kaaen managed to get a selfie of herself while competing in the Eagle Cap Extreme sled dog race on Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022, in Wallowa County.

portive and I learned a lot from the veterans."

That assistance actually started long before the mushers led their teams away from the start at Fer-

guson Ridge Ski Area east of Joseph.

Kaaen said Chantelle Chase, a musher who also lives in Baker City and is competing in the Eagle Cap

Extreme, helped train her dogs, including on days when Kaaen was at school.

"She was a huge help," Kaaen said of Chase, who is competing in the 31-mile race this year.

(There are also 100-mile and 200-mile races.) Kaaen's entry into competitive mushing is not exactly coincidental.

Her grandfather, Wayne Kaaen, is a longtime musher who competed in the inaugural Eagle Cap Extreme in January 2005.

Sofie said her grandpa, who lives in Halfway, has been a valuable mentor.

"He would always teach me stuff and tell me about mushing," she said. "He helped me with getting dogs and training them."

She has three dogs, two of which were part of her team on Thursday, Jan. 20.

Ellie May, who is the lead dog, and Sparky, the wheel dog, are both 11-year-old Alaskan huskies.

As wheel dog, Sparky is the first dog in front of the sled. He's the strongest runner, Kaaen said.

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COVID cases near monthly record

Hospitalizations, deaths statewide have dropped

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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With 11 days left in the month, January 2022 was close to setting a record for most COVID-19 cases.

The Baker County Health Department reported 40 new cases on Thursday, Jan. 20. That brought the monthly total to 430.

The record for a month is 465 cases, in September 2021.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reported on Thursday, Jan. 20, that although new cases statewide rose by 11% for the period Jan. 10-16, and testing also reached a record weekly high with 320,710 done from Jan. 9-15, the number of both newly hospitalized COVID-19 patients, and deaths related to the virus, dropped.

There were 441 newly hospitalized patients from Jan. 9-15, compared with 486 the previous week.

And the OHA recorded 83 COVID-19-related deaths from Jan. 9-15, 20 fewer than the previous week.

The total number of COVID-19 patients in Oregon hospitals has increased, however, to 981 on Jan. 20, up by 204 from a week earlier.

In a forecast released on Thursday, Jan. 20, the Oregon Health & Science University projected that the surge driven by the highly contagious omicron variant will peak on Feb. 1, and then cases will drop rapidly.

Breakthrough cases

Although experts say the omicron variant is more adept at infecting vaccinated people than previous variants, Oregon's latest report of breakthrough cases — infections in vaccinated residents — showed a significant decrease for the most recent week.

See, COVID/Page A3

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

Wolf Committee awards \$87,000 in compensation

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

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The Baker County Wolf Depredation Compensation Committee on Wednesday, Jan. 19, approved \$87,000 in payments to county ranchers whose cattle were killed by wolves last year, who have missing cattle, or as compensation for work they have done to deter wolves.

The committee received requests from about 10 ranchers, mostly in the eastern part of the county.

Wolves from the Lookout Mountain pack killed at least nine head of cattle and injured three others from July through September 2021. Those repeated attacks prompted Curt Melcher, director of the Oregon Department of Fish



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

Two wolves from the Walla Walla pack in Umatilla County photographed by a remote-controlled camera on Jan. 13, 2017.

and Wildlife (ODFW) to authorize state employees to kill eight wolves from the pack.

Committee members are Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett, Curt Jacobs, Tom Van Diepen,

Evan Kaseberg, Levi Bunch, Cindy Birko and Shella DelCurto.

Birko and DelCurto were absent from the Jan. 19 meeting.

The committee approved compensation for these ranchers who had animals killed or injured by wolves last year:

- Deven Thompson, one calf, \$850 (full amount requested)
- Phillips Cattle Co., \$3,120 for three dead calves (full amount)
- Glenora Wright, \$2,509.15 for two steer calves (full amount)
- Carlton Anderson, \$850 for one calf (full amount)

See, Wolves/Page A3

County discusses ambulance service

Baker City wants to continue as ambulance provider

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

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Baker County Commissioners discussed the Ambulance Service Area contract with Baker City, a vital source of revenue for the city's fire department, during a meeting Wednesday, Jan. 19, at the Courthouse.

Commissioners didn't make any decisions about the contract and will discuss it again at a future meeting.

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TODAY
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