

# Local

## TURNING BACK THE PAGES

### 50 YEARS AGO

from the Democrat-Herald

January 29, 1972

CROWLEY, Ore. — The wreckage of a light plane missing since Dec. 12 was found Friday near here, the Boise Flight Service station reported.

### 25 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

January 29, 1997

Baker County senior citizens may finally get the new activity center they've wanted for many years.

The Baker City Council on Tuesday voted unanimously to sponsor an application for a \$600,000 federal Community Development Block Grant to help build the center.

The site for the proposed 9,200-square-foot center is a two-and-a-half acre lot Baker County Seniors Inc. owns at 2810 Cedar St.

The estimated cost for the center is about \$1 million.

The council had two projects to choose from (the city can sponsor only one). The other was MayDay Inc.'s proposal to buy a house and use it as a shelter for abused women and their children.

### 10 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

January 30, 2012

Temperatures below 10 degrees on Friday didn't detour more than 200 youngsters from bundling up and hitting the slopes at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

Of course, the cold doesn't matter much when you're maneuvering skis and snowboards up and down the hill.

Every Friday, students from Baker, John Day, North Powder and Cove board buses for the program "Ski For the Health Of It" that began Jan. 6. It is for students from grades 1 to 12.

### ONE YEAR AGO

from the Baker City Herald

January 30, 2021

The director of Baker County's Health Department is optimistic that the county will be ready to start COVID-19 vaccinations for county residents 80 and older the second week of February.

That's consistent with the schedule from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Nancy Staten, the department's director, said on Thursday, Jan. 28, that the department and its two partners that are also administering vaccines, Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Baker City and the Pine Eagle Clinic in Halfway, are focusing this week on teachers and other school employees, child care providers and early learning workers.

She estimates those groups comprise a few hundred county residents, although she didn't have a precise number.

Staten said a vaccination clinic was scheduled for Friday, Jan. 29, at the health department with about 60 people from those groups set to get the first of their two doses, while the hospital planned to inoculate about 100 people that day.

Staten said the county received permission from state officials on Sunday, Jan. 24, to start offering vaccinations to teachers and others in that group.

The previous day the county sent a letter to OHA affirming that county residents in what the state calls phase 1A — health care workers, first responders and residents of assisted living facilities and other long-term group care centers — had been offered a COVID-19 vaccine.

## OREGON LOTTERY

### MEGABUCKS, JAN. 26

5-12-17-18-31-47

Next jackpot: \$8.9 million

### POWERBALL, JAN. 26

4-11-38-49-69 PB 16

Next jackpot: \$104 million

### MEGA MILLIONS, JAN. 25

3-12-38-53-58 Mega 13

Next jackpot: \$421 million

### WIN FOR LIFE, JAN. 26

52-64-66-71

### PICK 4, JAN. 27

• 1 p.m.: 5-6-5-0

• 4 p.m.: 2-3-6-7

• 7 p.m.: 3-2-2-2

• 10 p.m.: 8-6-7-6

### LUCKY LINES, JAN. 27

3-5-12-14-20-24-25-32

Next jackpot: \$15,000

## SENIOR MENUS

**MONDAY (Jan. 31):** Chicken strips, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, biscuits, pudding, fruit cup

**MONDAY (Feb. 1):** Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, rolls, green salad, pudding

**TUESDAY (Feb. 2):** Baked ziti, zucchini and tomatoes, garlic bread, Jell-O with fruit, cake

**WEDNESDAY (Feb. 3):** Ham and beans, mixed vegetables, cornbread, cottage cheese and fruit, brownies

**THURSDAY (Feb. 4):** Meatloaf, baked beans, corn, rolls, broccoli-bacon salad, apple crisp

Public luncheon at the Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St., from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; \$5 donation (60 and older), \$7.50 for those under 60.

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## COVID

Continued from A1

That's a testament to students and staff wearing masks, washing their hands and following other precautions, as well as to parents heeding the district's advice to keep their kids home if they're ill, Superintendent Mark Witty said on Thursday, Jan. 27.

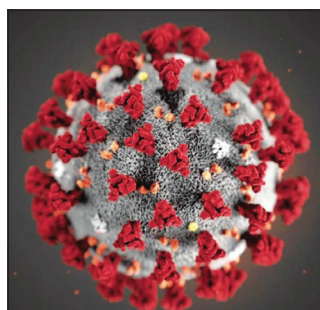
"I'm proud of my staff and the students for doing the right thing," Witty said. "We're not perfect but we're pretty good."

Witty said the district's over-riding goal is to avoid having to return, even briefly, to online classes, known as comprehensive distance learning (CDL).

"CDL is pretty challenging for families," Witty said. "The staff wants to keep kids in school."

Witty said the percentage of students absent on Thursday, Jan. 27, was lower in most district schools than the previous week.

He said the percentages include all students missing for any reason — some, he said, certainly are due to either a COVID-19 positive test or a possible exposure.



CDC/Contributed Photo

### A COVID-19 particle.

The absentee percentage, by school:

- Baker Middle School, 30%. Witty said a few sports teams were quarantining due to COVID-19, which boosted the absentee rate at BMS.

- Baker Early Learning Center (kindergarten), 20%.
- Baker High School, 18%.
- South Baker Intermediate, 14%.

- Brooklyn Primary, 14%.
- Keating Elementary, 8%.
- Haines Elementary, 2%.

Employees being absent, rather than students, is the biggest threat to continuing in-person schools, Witty said.

On Thursday, Jan. 27, the school with the most staff out was South Baker, with seven from a total of about 45.

Baker Middle School had four of its staff of about 37 out that day.

As with students, some of the absences are due to COVID-19, although the district doesn't know the exact breakdown, Witty said.

He said the number of absent employees has remained low enough that all schools have been able to continue operating. The situation has been in effect balanced, he said — as a few employees have to stay home, a similar number of workers who had been out are able to return to work.

"We've been able to make it work," Witty said. "It hasn't been easy for sure, and the staff deserves a lot of credit."

The OHA's weekly outbreak report lists case totals for Baker County-area schools over the past month.

- Baker High School, 20 students, two staff, most recent onset of symptoms, Jan. 20.
- Baker Middle School, 15 students, no staff, Jan. 19.
- South Baker Intermediate, six students, no staff, Jan. 19.

- Brooklyn Primary, four students, no staff, Jan. 18.

- Pine Eagle Charter School, Halfway, four students, no staff, Jan. 19.

- North Powder Charter School, three students, no staff, Jan. 14.

- Haines Elementary, two students, no staff, Jan. 9.

- Eagle Cap Innovative High School, one student, no staff, Jan. 16.

The outbreak report also lists one outbreak in a Baker County business — six cases at Marvin Wood Products in Baker City, with the most recent onset Jan. 16.

### Breakthrough cases

For the most recent week, Jan. 16-22, Baker County had 65 breakthrough cases — infections in fully vaccinated residents — out of 183 total cases, a rate of 35.5%.

The breakthrough case rates for the previous two weeks were 31.8% and 38.5%.

The statewide breakthrough case rate for Jan. 16-22 was 28%, up from 21% the previous week.

# Oregon hospitals strained under near-record COVID-19 cases even as new infections wane

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon hospitals are seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases caused by the omicron variant, even as the state is seeing the initial signs of a drop in reported new infections, public health agencies reported Thursday, Jan. 27.

The Oregon Health Authority reported that 1,130 people in state hospitals have tested positive for COVID-19, a jump of 69 cases in one day. The record of 1,178 people in Oregon hospitals was set Sept. 1, when the delta wave that began in late June peaked.

Oregon Health & Science University forecasted last week that the number of hospitalizations would peak at 1,553 on Tuesday, Feb. 1.

There were 169 COVID-19 positive patients in intensive care unit beds on Thursday, Jan. 27, up from 155 the day before.

OHA reported 19 new deaths on Thursday, bringing the state total since the beginning of the pandemic two years ago to 6,067. OHA noted the fatality milestone on Wednesday.

"We've lost mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. Coworkers and neighbors. These losses pain all of us," said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, state

health officer and state epidemiologist. "What makes these losses more painful is that nearly all our most recent deaths could have been prevented by COVID-19 vaccines, which remain the best protection against serious illness and death."

Unvaccinated Oregonians make up the majority of severe cases and deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported earlier this week that Americans 65 and older who are not vaccinated are 49 times more likely to be infected and require hospitalization than those who have received the full course of vaccine and booster recommended for adults.

Data shows that Oregon is showing signs of following the nationwide trend of hitting a peak in omicron-driven infections followed by a steep drop-off.

Oregon's hospitalization spiral comes as reported new infections dropped to 7,781 on Thursday, Jan. 27, down from 8,207 in Wednesday's report.

The state tallied 10,034 new infections in its Jan. 20 report. The percentage of tests that were positive dropped to 23.6% on Thursday, Jan. 27, down from the previous day's average of 24.9%

Multnomah County, the state's most populous, had 1,101 new cases. Marion (989), Washington (936), Lane (869), Clackamas (522) and Deschutes (454) followed.

The counties with the highest number of cases over the previous week, adjusted for population, were Sherman, Jefferson, Wheeler, Crook and Wasco.

Morrow County had the highest positive test rate at 52.3%, followed by Wheeler (50%); Malheur (44.1%); Curry (42.2%); Douglas (38.1%) and Wallowa (37.2%).

Oregon is hoping to soon join the parts of the country where the wave hit and peaked earlier and is now receding.

New infections are down 21% nationwide compared to two weeks ago, according to an ongoing survey by The New York Times. Data shows 31 of 50 states reported falling case rates.

Hospitals reported the number of COVID-19 patients had slowed to a 5% increase compared to 14 days ago.

Deaths, which have been a

lagging indicator throughout the pandemic, are up 34% over the same period.

A total of 878,220 people in the United States have died from COVID-19, the most of any country among the more than 5.63 million killed worldwide, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

Federal officials had said over the weekend that enough data had come in to be able to say the decline in cases was a nationwide trend.

"Things are looking good," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said Sunday, Jan. 23. "We don't want to get overconfident, but they look like they're going in the right direction right now."

Health officials have increasingly shifted to the idea that COVID-19 surges are less likely in the future as vaccination and exposure to the virus leave fewer Americans with no defenses.

COVID-19 could become endemic — a permanent but cyclical part of life that can be managed but not eradicated.

## Local Briefing

### Taco Tuesdays fundraiser for Brooklyn School

Brooklyn Primary School is again organizing a Taco Tuesday fundraiser in February in place of its traditional taco feed event organized by the school's Parent-Teacher Organization.

Throughout the month, four restaurants will donate a percentage of their proceeds every Tuesday to Brooklyn. Participating businesses are D&J Taco Shop, El Erradero, Delicioso Mexican Restaurant, and MC Taco Bus.

Brooklyn students will also sell raffle tickets throughout the month (\$1 each, six for \$5, or 25 for \$20).

Raffle winners will be drawn live on Zoom on Thursday, Feb. 24. Winners can pick up their items on Friday, Feb. 25, from Brooklyn Primary, 1350 Washington Ave.

The school houses students from first, second and third grades.

### OSU Extension offers online science workshops

The Oregon State University Extension Office is offering online "Explore 4-H Science" workshops each Tuesday in February from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Registered participants will receive a kit with all the materials needed for the 45-minute session. The kits are free to participating county residents who can pick them up at the local Extension Office.

Registration is required for each class, and space is limited. Register online at <https://bit.ly/4HVIRTUALSTEM>.

Here is the schedule:

- Feb. 1 — Light it Up!: Explore simple circuits and create your own wand.
- Feb. 8 — Cooking Chemistry: Mix up something fun and yummy.
- Feb. 15 — Engineering Challenge: Create a DIY that's part slingshot and part crossbow.
- Feb. 22 — Chemistry is Cool!: Explore chemical reactions to create something fun.

## News of Record

### POLICE LOG

#### Baker City Police

#### Arrests, citations

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF INTOXICANTS: Laif Robert Edison, 24, Baker City, 8:46 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, in the 1000 block of Place Street.

#### Baker County Sheriff's Office

#### Arrests, citations

PROBATION VIOLATION: Paul Lloyd

Niehau, 54, Baker City, 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, on Schoolhouse Road; jailed.

