

Local

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

50 YEARS AGO

from the Democrat-Herald

February 3, 1972

CORVALLIS — A Baker man, Fred Cockram, was elected to the board of directors at the Oregon Dairymen's Association annual meeting.

25 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

February 3, 1997

An eight-member committee will meet tonight to review possible sites for a proposed new Oregon Army National Guard armory in Baker City.

In previous meetings, the committee reviewed 20 potential sites and narrowed the list to four.

10 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

February 3, 2012

As February dawned, the weather in Baker County looked pretty much as it did a month ago.

Uneventful, in a word, with no significant storms in the forecast.

The area snowpack, by contrast, scarcely resembles its former self.

Which is a good thing, if you happen to appreciate water.

ONE YEAR AGO

from the Baker City Herald

February 4, 2021

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett and other county officials are trying to ensure that the county's significant decline in new COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks results in an easing of restrictions on local businesses and other activities.

Bennett said he's concerned, though, that an apparent discrepancy in the county's positive test totals for the virus could offset, at least partially, the benefits of the downward trend in recorded infections.

"None of us can explain it," said Bennett, who has headed the county's response to the pandemic since March 2020.

The number of positive tests attributed to the county is vital because the rate of positive tests is one of two measures that determine the county's risk level and resulting state-imposed restrictions.

The other measure is the number of new COVID-19 cases over a two-week period. Based on the new case count for the current period — Jan. 24-Feb. 6 — the county is on pace to drop from the extreme-risk category, which has the most severe restrictions, including a ban on indoor restaurant dining, to lower risk, which has the least stringent restrictions.

However, the county's current test positivity rate of about 7.9% would put the county in the moderate-risk category.

Baker County has been in the extreme-risk category for all but two weeks since the state started the current four-level system (lower, moderate, high and extreme) on Dec. 3. The county was in the high-risk category from Jan. 1-14.

The state is slated to reassess risk levels early next week, with any changes to take effect Feb. 12.

Bennett said he and other members of the county's leadership team, including Dr. Eric Lamb, the county's public health officer, Nancy Staten, director of the Baker County Health Department, and Jason Yencopal, emergency management director, had a Zoom meeting on Monday, Feb. 1, with officials from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Dr. Dean Sidelinger, state epidemiologist.

OREGON LOTTERY

MEGABUCKS, JAN. 31

11 - 12 - 15 - 20 - 25 - 30

Next jackpot: \$1.1 million

POWERBALL, JAN. 31

10 - 15 - 51 - 61 - 69 PB 14

Next jackpot: \$123 million

MEGA MILLIONS, FEB. 1

11 - 24 - 38 - 62 - 66 Mega 1

Next jackpot: \$22 million

WIN FOR LIFE, JAN. 31

22 - 31 - 45 - 73

PICK 4, FEB. 1

• 1 p.m.: 9 - 0 - 6 - 9

• 4 p.m.: 3 - 6 - 4 - 0

• 7 p.m.: 7 - 9 - 7 - 6

• 10 p.m.: 5 - 0 - 6 - 9

LUCKY LINES, FEB. 1

1-7-12-15-19-22-26-29

Next jackpot: \$14,000

SENIOR MENUS

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

MONDAY (Feb. 7): Chicken strips, mashed potatoes with gravy, mixed vegetables, biscuits, green salad, pudding

TUESDAY (Feb. 8): Ground beef steak with onions, red potatoes, rolls, broccoli-and-bacon salad, brownies

WEDNESDAY (Feb. 9): Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, rolls, green beans, ambrosia, cookies

THURSDAY (Feb. 10): Sweet and sour chicken, rice, mixed vegetables, rolls, green salad, tapioca

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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Oregon lawmakers kick off a 35-day legislative session

BY SARA CLINE

Associated Press/Report for America

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers donning masks returned to the state Capitol in Salem on Tuesday, Feb. 1, to kick off the 2022 Legislative Session, while outside dozens of protesters rallied against mask rules and other coronavirus-related restrictions.

While Democrats have proposed an ambitious and progressive agenda, the question remains whether Republicans will again use tactics to slow or halt the short session in order to block bills they oppose. However both political parties say they are cautiously optimistic of a constructive working relationship as new leaders take center stage in the Capitol.

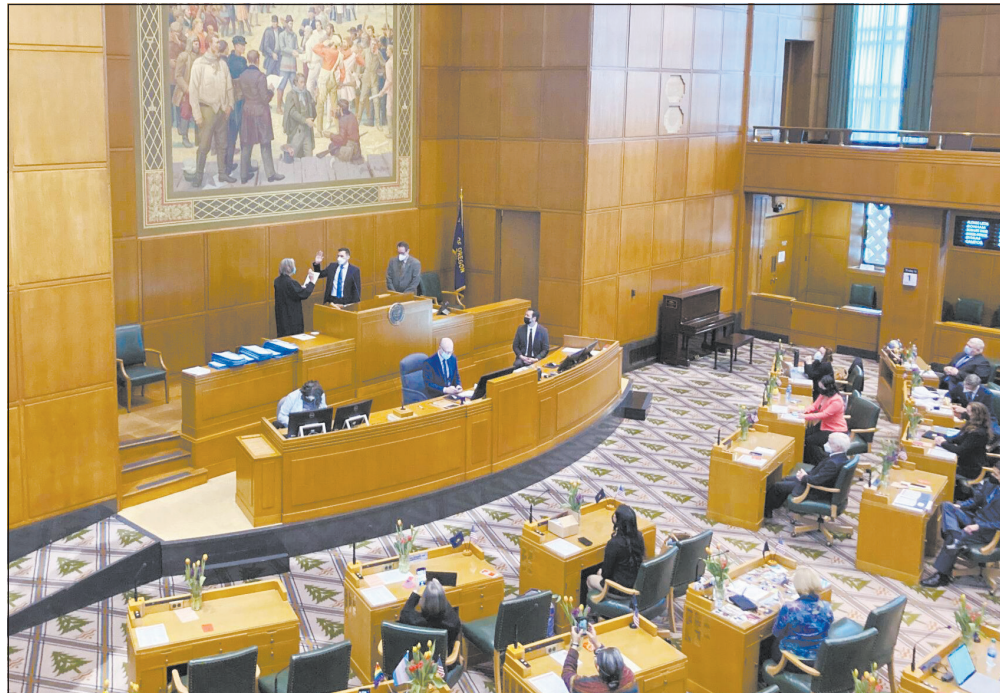
The 35-day session began with the House electing a new speaker: Rep. Dan Rayfield. The Democrat replaced longtime House Speaker Tina Kotek, who stepped down last month in order to focus on her campaign for Oregon governor.

"As speaker, I want to understand what motivates each of us so that I can help us work together to serve the entire state of Oregon — when we agree and, most importantly, when we don't agree," Rayfield said to his colleagues after being sworn in Tuesday morning.

The session comes in the midst of Oregon's omicron surge. With thousands of new COVID-19 cases reported in Oregon each day, lawmakers are keeping close watch on how it may impact the session. Quorum rules say at least 20 senators and at least 40 representatives must be present for their respective chambers to vote.

There are COVID-19 safety measures in place in the Capitol, including a mask requirement, which some Republican lawmakers have routinely criticized and refused to follow.

Those gathered outside the Capitol on Tuesday were protesting Oregon's state-wide indoor mask mandate, COVID-19 vaccinations and other pandemic-related restrictions. The Statesman Journal reported that the protesters marched around the Capitol, eventually attempting to enter without face coverings in violation of the mask mandate. At one entrance, they were rebuffed by Oregon



Andrew Selsky/Associated Press

Oregon Chief Justice Martha Walters, top left, swears in new House Speaker Dan Rayfield on Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022, in Salem minutes after the Democrat was elected by House lawmakers to replace former Speaker Tina Kotek, who has stepped down to run for governor. Tuesday was the opening day of the 2022 legislative session.

State Police officers manning a security checkpoint.

Protesters who put on masks were allowed inside, though many removed them once they were through the security checkpoint. The standoff eased after police allowed other protesters who claimed religious or medical exemptions to enter without masks.

Over the past few years the Legislature has faced a growing divide between Democrats and Republicans — marked by a broken deal to share redistricting power, accusations of gerrymandering and Republican walkouts. But this session both parties have new leadership.

In addition to Rayfield, Democratic Rep. Julie Fahey is the new House majority leader, Republican Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson is the new House minority leader and Sen. Tim Knopp is the new Republican leader for the Senate. This also marks the final session for Senate President Peter Courtney, a Salem Democrat, who is the Oregon's longest-serving state lawmaker with 38 years.

"We are at a critical point in our recovery from the pandemic. During the next five weeks we will have the opportunity to support the people and the communities that were impacted the most the last couple of years," Rayfield said. "But we may have different perspectives on how to do that."

Disagreements about this year's legislative session began even before lawmakers walked through the Capitol doors.

During the annual Associated Press Legislative Preview in late-January, Republicans said traditionally the short 35-day session is used to address budget fixes and technical issues from the previous year's long session. However, Democrats remained adamant that some larger challenges needed to be addressed immediately — including the pandemic, historic wildfires, affordable housing, access to health care and workforce disparities.

"I believe this is the most important short session we've ever had," Rayfield said. "This is why short sessions were created, to respond to crises like the ones we are facing right now."

Breese-Iverson, the House minority leader, said "tools" are on the table if Democrats continue to move forward with "big issues," like legislation requiring agricultural employers to pay overtime. In the past, these tools have included walkouts.

"If we see highly partisan and complex bills being rushed through the Legislature in February, Republicans are prepared to use the tools necessary to protect Oregonians from even more negative consequences from the majority's short-sighted poli-

cies and failed leadership," Breese-Iverson said.

This legislative session marks the first time the public is allowed to attend in-person since March 2020. Everyone entering the Capitol is expected to walk through a scanner and have their bags X-rayed. The security comes in response to a 2020 incident in which a Republican lawmaker allowed armed demonstrators into the locked building. A bill passed last year bans all firearms in the Capitol.

How much money will be spent during this five-week session remains to be seen as lawmakers await a revenue forecast scheduled for the second week of the session. However Democratic lawmakers have already estimated they could spend up to \$2 billion dollars in the upcoming five weeks.

Gov. Kate Brown presented a list of spending packages during the legislative preview — which has already garnered support from Democrats — including \$500 million set aside for the next biennium in case state revenues weaken, \$200 million to bolster the state's workforce and help historically underserved Oregonians find career paths and \$400 million to preserve and create affordable housing. This session will be the last for the governor, who cannot run again due to term limits.

Rise in water use traced to broken pipe

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

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A mysterious uptick in Baker City's water usage led to the discovery of a burst water pipe last week at a vacant commercial building on Campbell Street.

City officials had been tracking a rise in daily water use for about three weeks, but no major leak had been found or reported, said Michelle Owen, public works director.

But then, on Jan. 26, Baker City Police received a call about a water leak at the former site of the USA Gas station, convenience store and car wash on the north side of Campbell Street near Albertsons.

Public works employees found that a pipe had frozen and burst. Most of the water

flowed into a floor drain in the car wash area, which limited damage to the building, Owen said.

"Sometimes it takes a while for those to show up," she said.

Owen said it's not clear why, or who, turned on water service to the building, which has been empty for a few years.

She estimated that more than 4.5 million gallons of water had leaked through the broken pipe.

During winter the city typically goes through about 1.5 million gallons per day.

City workers turned off the water, ending the leak.

Greg Sackos, who owns the

Baker Towne Square development that includes the former gas station, said the property is under lease to Albertsons.

Sackos said on Wednesday, Feb. 2, that he hadn't heard about the leak.

He said there had been reports of people trespassing on the property recently.

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★ February 4-10 ★

MOONFALL (PG-13)
The world stands on the brink of annihilation when a mysterious force knocks the moon from its orbit and sends it hurtling toward a collision course with Earth.

Friday	4:00, 7:00
Sat & Sun	1:00, 4:00, 7:00
Mon-Thurs	7:00

REDEEMING LOVE (PG-13)
Angel, who was sold into prostitution as a child, has survived through hatred and self-loathing in 1850s California. When she meets Michael Hosea, she discovers there is no brokenness that love can't heal.

Friday	4:10, 7:10
Sat & Sun	1:10, 4:10, 7:10
Mon-Thurs	7:10

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