

Drugs

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Baker City Police Chief Ty Duby announced the arrests of Loren Dean Alexander Prevo, 29, of Baker City, on Jan. 29, and Tom Raymond Carroll, 38, on Jan. 25.

A third man whom the Narcotics Enforcement Team had been investigating, Richard Wayne Carroll, 51, was treated for a drug overdose after being found unconscious on Feb. 6 at 1129 Elm St., according to a press release from Duby.

Detectives secured a search warrant for the home and found about 1 pound of methamphetamine, several grams of heroin, two AR-15 rifles and two handguns, along with “other items indicative of narcotics trafficking,” according to the press release.

Richard Carroll, who is Tom Carroll's brother, was released from the hospital and has not been charged, but the investigation is continuing.

All three men are acquainted and “considered by the Narcotics Team to be upper-level traffickers of narcotics and firearms into and out of Baker City and Eastern Oregon,” Duby said in the press release.

Detectives continue to investigate all three suspects.

Prevo was arrested on Jan. 29 in Baker City on a charge dating to his March 2021 arrest, also by the Narcotics Enforcement Team, for unlawful delivery of meth. Prevo was also charged in the Jan. 29 arrest for being a felon in possession of a firearm, probation violation, and having a restricted weapon (a stun gun).

He remained in the Baker County Jail on Friday, Feb. 11.

Prevo, who was accused in the March 2021 incident of trafficking in meth, heroin and fentanyl, the latter in the form of counterfeit oxycodone pills, pleaded guilty to drug charges and possession of a restricted weapon. He was given a suspended sentence by Judge Matt Shurtcliff in Baker County Circuit Court, including 17 days in the Baker County Jail, and ordered to complete drug treatment.

Charges of delivery of heroin and oxycodone, and unlawful possession of heroin and meth, were dismissed.

According to Duby, Prevo left treatment within a week or so, “and the narcotics team initiated another case as he returned to narcotics trafficking in the Eastern Oregon area.”

An Aug. 20, 2021, report from Prevo's probation officer, Rich Kirby, stated that Prevo had ar-

rived for an appointment on Aug. 12 under the influence of alcohol, meth and cocaine.

Prevo checked into a local detox center that day but left two days later and then failed to report to Kirby as required.

Tom Carroll's case also dates to the spring of 2021. The Narcotics Enforcement Team arrested him on May 6, 2021, in a motel room in Baker City.

Carroll was on parole after serving a prison term on drug and firearms offenses.

He was charged with selling meth and fentanyl, which was in the form of blue pills, made in Mexico to look like 30 mg oxycodone pills. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is about 100 times more potent than morphine, according to Duby's press release.

The blue pills, known as blues, M30s or Fettys, are dangerous and have been implicated in many overdoses, Duby said.

“We have seen an increase in these pills throughout Eastern Oregon as well as responded to several drug overdose cases in the last two years due to the increased presence of opioids in our community,” he said in the press release.

When police arrested Carroll in May 2021 they found more than 2 pounds of meth, about 50 of the pills, a stolen 9 mm handgun and more than \$20,000 in cash.

Carroll was released from the Baker County Jail the same day after posting a \$10,000 bond (10% of his \$100,000 bail).

“Shortly after his release the narcotics team learned that Mr. Carroll was back in the business of drug trafficking and police initiated a separate investigation. He was again arrested in Baker City on Jan. 25, 2022, for violation of his release agreement and was taken into federal custody.”

Baker County District Attorney Greg Baxter said Carroll's case was shifted to the federal level last year because, due to differences in Oregon and federal law, it's more likely that Carroll, if convicted, would face longer prison terms from federal charges than from state charges.

Baxter said the local charges were dismissed without prejudice, so they could potentially be refiled if the federal case isn't adjudicated.

The Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team is composed of members from the Baker City Police Department and is supported by the Baker County Sheriff's Office, the Baker County District Attorney's Office and the Oregon State Police.

Council

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“Baker City received a grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to create a Housing Production Strategy. Part of the grant will pay for utilizing a consultant to perform the work,” Councilor Joanna Dixon read from the staff report.

City Manager Jonathan Cannon said the grant is around \$80,000 but most of it is needed by the Baker

City-County Planning Department for its part of the work.

Alderson noted that New Directions Northwest also has received a grant to do a housing study.

“I think by the time we get the information from both of those, we will be in a better position to make decisions on housing,” Alderson said.

• unanimously approved Resolution No. 3900, moving \$30,000 from the contingency fund to fund the legal costs for union negotiations and other legal costs including personnel matters.

COVID

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The trend is backed up by the averaging of 13 major medical, university and scientific forecast models submitted regularly to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In a briefing with state lawmakers late Monday, Feb. 7, Graven said he was seeing sustained trends that omicron is very high, but receding.

“I believe we are at the peak and we are kind of bouncing around a little bit as it comes down,” he said.

Hospitalizations are the most accurate measure of the impact and direction of a virus surge. Graven's report showed the state would be under 1,000 hospitalizations a day by Feb. 18. It expects cases to drop under 500 around March 23.

The count will go under 200 by April 23. By the second week of May, hospitalizations should fall below 100.

Estimates of severe cases of COVID-19 in OHSU reports near the beginning of 2022 showed up to 3,000 people could be hospitalized in Oregon on peak days in the wave.

“In the current surge, a lot more states went up much

much higher than us and more steeply,” Graven said.

OHSU projected 80% of the state population followed the indoor mask mandate during recent weeks. With masking and a relatively high level of vaccination, Oregon was dealt a less powerful blow than other states where the safeguards were ignored or actively opposed.

The hospitals have filled up during the omicron wave with mostly unvaccinated people either suffering from severe cases of the virus, or hospitalized for other reasons — surgery, accidents, heart attacks — but blood tests showed they were positive for COVID-19.

The forecast released Thursday, Feb. 10, shows the average number of deaths rising from about 13 per day now to a peak of 18 in early March. It will then follow the same path as infections and severe cases with a relatively steep decline. Deaths are projected under five per day by the end of March.

Breakthrough cases

Statewide, 46% of cases from Jan. 30 to Feb. 5 were breakthrough, defined as an infection in a fully vaccinated person. That means a person

La Grande students, parents protest school mask mandate

BY DAVIS CARBAUGH

The (La Grande) Observer

LA GRANDE — Dozens of parents and La Grande students of varying ages rallied outside of La Grande Middle School on the morning of Friday, Feb. 11, to voice their opposition to mask requirements in school. The demonstration is one of many that have occurred across the state in the wake of Oregon health officials announcing that indoor mask mandates will be lifted by the end of March.

“We don't like wearing the stupid masks!” one student yelled at the protest.

The outdoor rally along Fourth Street in La Grande came just one day after a number of students at La Grande Middle School refused to wear masks indoors. The protest involved students from Central Elementary and La Grande Middle School, along with many parents.

Lloyd Mills, a parent of two students at Central Elementary, attended the protest in favor of optional mask usage.

“They were forced out,” Mills said of his kids. “They said I had to take them home because I didn't want them wearing masks. I couldn't even take my kids to school.”



Alex Wittwer/The (La Grande) Observer

Students and parents protest Oregon's mask mandate outside La Grande Middle School in the morning before school starts on Friday, Feb. 11, 2022.

Many parents stood alongside their children at the protest, holding signs and chanting at oncoming cars. Numerous cars driving by honked in support, while one driver yelled out, “Wear your mask!”

The rally started around 7:30 a.m. and lasted through the start of the school day. Upon school starting, several students rushed into

the middle school building while many others remained at the rally. Numerous students refusing to wear masks were turned away.

“They won't let our kids go to school,” one parent said.

La Grande Superintendent George Mendoza noted that the students at the rally had the option to go into the school with a

mask on or go home with their parents at the conclusion of the protest.

According to Mendoza, the La Grande School District is working toward making masks optional before or at the March 31 deadline for lifting mask requirements set by the Oregon Health Authority.

“We support peaceful protests,” Mendoza said.

Baker High School, Middle School announce honor rolls

Baker City Herald

Baker High School and Baker Middle School recently announced honor roll students for the first semester.

Baker Middle School

4.0 GPA

Paige Anderson, Brooklyn Baxter, Kegan Bott, Weston Burton, Ashlyn Wild, Jarren Cikanek, Andie-Jo Craigmile, Lance Downing, Dawson Fletcher, Jaxon Ford, Talon Gyllenberg, Johnee Hallett, Ruby Heriza, Meren Jesenko, Taylor Johnson, Jack Joseph, Taylor Lee, Elias Long, Colton Luschen, Macey Morgan, Chase Myatt, Anthony Mack, Jake McClaughry, Kathryn Murphy, Maggie Pierce, Kara Regan, Andrew Richards, Leona Rose, Erelah Rosin, Reese Roys, Kaitlyn Schwin, William Spriet, Dalin Stocks, Elizabeth Timm, Ella Wilde

3.8

Claire Bachman, Sawyer Blatchford, Adysen Boehm, Jacob Burton, Stella Carlson, Hayden Churchfield, Harris Gaslin, Waylon Gibbons, Raegan Gulick, Alexandria Honsvick, Moriah Manniselli, Connor Mar-

tin, Kathleen Nilsen, Ryder Nimmo, Benjamin Nudd, William O'Connell, Jaxyn Ramos, Madelyn Rudi, Lilyan Smith, Roman Zickgraf

3.7

Sage Baker, Isaac Berry, Dylan Conklin, Kayla Coley, Serenity Herrera, Chadd Hillman, Riley Hurliman, Lily Logsdon, Dave Ochoa, Aribella Rademacher, Luiz Rosales, Wayland Thomas, Jace Whitford

3.6

Marley Barrett, Clay Stevens, Quinton Wellman, Brett Whitley

3.5

Zachary Conant, Zakary Davey, Elijah Jones, Miley Joseph, Daniel Maldonado, Malachi Miller, Theodore Pepera, Emily Sullivan, Ethan Whiting

Baker High School

4.0 GPA

Ashlyn Anderson, Emma Baeth, Anna Belding, Gaige Birmingham, Gauge Bloomer, Gabriel Bott, Daniel Brown, Savannah Brown, Palmer Chandler, Te'ygana Coley, Alexis Conant, Tristin Curry, Kaycee Cuzick, Ashlyn Dalton, Taylor Dalton,

Rylee Elms, Cody Eskew, Makenzie Flanagan, Ethan Fletcher, Kailise Fuss, Grant Gambleton, Wade Hawkins, Sydnee Hallett, Austin Hays, Owen Higdon, Seth Holden, Promise Hughes, Megan Hurley, Olivia Jacoby, Diego Jones Bedolla, Sydney Lamb, Blaize Lewis, Caitlin Lien, Jaxon Logsdon, Axel Marvin, Zane Morgan, Gavin Nelson, Lincoln Nemeck, Oliver Palmer, Ryann Paulsen, Morgan Pelcha, Thaddeus Pepera, Candace Peterson, Lani Pierce, Roxie Bree Pierce, Sarah Plummer, Jillian Poe, Aiyana Radford, Jozie Ramos, Brooklyn Rayl, Julie Robinson, David Shaw, Eowyn Smith, Brianna Stadler, Gaven Stecher, Tiyana Stevens, Neah Thomas, Tristen Tritt, Antonio Washington, Jayden Whitford, Phoebe Wise.

3.5-3.99 GPA

Eva Anderson, Jose Armenta, Angelyna Baird, Dakota Ballou, Abigail Benson, Dashel Bloomer, Travis Bolman, Graysen Bowling, Caleigh Carpenter, Silas Carter, Connor Chastain, Anthony Christopher, Lacy Churchfield, Taylor Churchfield, Ben Coburn, Lilly Collins, Rebecca Craigmile, Emma Davis, Angel De Arcos,

Christopher Entrek, Tessa Feeley, John Garcia, Bryley Garvin, Lillian Gately, Gerardo Gonzalez Sierra, Sofia Hanson, Wyatt Hawkins, John Heriza, Cole Hester, Paul Hobson, Payton Hobson, Nicholas Hughes, Brooklyn Jaca, Anastasia Johnson, Sage Joseph, Sofia Kaaen, Eleanor Lamb, Hannah Lay, Jaron Long, Tanner Lucas, Melissa Luna, Dana Luster, Megan Luster, Jesse Maldonado, Seth Mas-trude, Jessica Mercado, Lucas Metz, Jacob Mills, Macey Moore, Gretchen Morgan, Dillon Multop, Joy Murphy, Emylia Myer, Clark Norton, Anahy Ocampo Garcia, Emrie Osborn, Sydney Penning, Tessa Potter, Scarlett Rademacher, Evangeline Rexroad, Cole Richards, Alex Ritter, James Robinson, Richardo Rodriguez-Duran, Anastacio Rodriguez, Iriana Rosales, Marco Rosales, Kincaid Rudi, Makenna Shamion, Riley Shaw, Mark Shetler, Jordan Smith, Cyl-lus Sperl, Gavin Stone, Graison Stone, Izabella Thomas, Kaydena Thomas, Daniel Wachtel, Meadon Waldrop, Wyatt Widman, Katherine Wilde, Montana Williams, Lillyanna Wilson, Alexander Wise, Paige Wolfe, Hayden Younger, Austen Zemmer.

New At The Library

Patrons can reserve materials in advance online or by calling 541-523-6419. Recently, Baker County Library has added 20 new best-sellers, 27 movies, six audiobooks, 19 children's books, and 110 other new books, including 76 that are available online with the Libby App. See everything new to Baker County Library District at wowbrary.org. Materials featured, and in library collection, does not indicate endorsement or approval of contents by the library. Selections are based on factors such as demand, public interest, diversity of viewpoint, community relevance, and others.

FICTION

- “Daughter of the Moon Goddess,” Sue Lynn Tan
- “Dog Park,” Sofi Oksanen
- “The Horsewoman,” James Patterson and Mike Lupica
- “The Marriage Game (Book 1),” Sara Desai
- “Something to Hide,” Elizabeth George

NONFICTION

- “The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence, and the Pillage of an Empire,” William Dalrymple
- “Facing Violence: Preparing for the Unexpected,” Rory Miller
- “The Meghan Method: The Step-By-Step Guide to Decorating Your Home in Your Style,” Meghan Carter
- “The Reign of Wolf 21: The Saga of Yellowstone's Legendary Druid Pack,” Rick McIntyre
- “The Steal: The Attempt to Overturn the 2020 Election and the People Who Stopped It,” Mark Bowden and Matthew Teague

DVDs

- “The Addams Family 2” (Family)
- “All is Lost” (Action)
- “Dune” (Sci-Fi)
- “Last Night in Soho” (Horror)
- “Spencer” (Drama)

Gary A. Warner of the Oregon Capital Bureau contributed to this story.