



OUTDOORS B1
Braving the chill to fish for yellow perch



SPORTS A6
Cove squeaks past Pine Eagle in quarterfinals

Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • OUTDOORS & REC • SPORTS Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2022 • \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Patti Hall of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Halfway poker run set for Feb. 20

HALFWAY — The Panhandle Snowmobile Club's annual poker run, a 25-mile route with bonfires at each stop, is set for Sunday, Feb. 20.

There will be a \$4,000 payout — \$1,600 for first, \$1,000 for second, \$800 for third, \$400 for fourth and \$200 for fifth. Each hand is \$5, with no limit. Sign in is Sunday, Feb. 20, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Halfway Lions Hall. Payout will be at 6 p.m. at the Halfway Lions Hall.

Sno-park permits are required at the Clear Creek Sno-Park.

More information is available by calling Jason Harriman at 541-742-6641; Mary Herold at 541-742-6446, or Whitey Bloom at 541-742-7277.

'Night at Old Auburn' scheduled Feb. 26

The Baker Heritage Museum is bringing back its annual "A Night at Old Auburn" fundraiser on Saturday, Feb. 26 at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St.

Dinner begins at 6 p.m., followed by gambling games and bingo at 7 p.m. Tickets for dinner are \$40 and available at www.friendsofbakerheritagemuseum.com.

WEATHER

Today
46/26
Rain or snow

Sunday
36/21
Snow showers

Monday
32/14
Snow showers

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

Motorcycle Rally canceled again

Organizer plans to return in 2023, and Chamber director says other major events scheduled for 2022

BY JAYSON JACOBY

For the third straight summer one of Baker City's signature events, the Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, will not happen.

Mark Dukes, a partner in High Desert Harley-Davidson of Meridian, Idaho, the dealership that organizes the rally, said in a phone interview on Wednesday, Feb. 16, that multiple factors contributed to his

decision to cancel the event. And unlike the cancellations in 2021 and 2020, the pandemic isn't the lone issue.

Two other concerns this year, Dukes said, are a major construction project to build more than 300 wheelchair-accessible curb cuts, including on Main Street, a focal point for the rally, and shortage of employees at his motorcycle dealership.

Dukes said he doesn't have enough workers to both organize the rally in Baker City and operate the dealership.

"I don't want to go up there and not have a great rally," he said.

Although the omicron wave of COVID-19 has passed, and infection rates are plummeting, Dukes said there is still an element of uncertainty that matters with an event such as

the rally, which takes at least 6 months to plan.

Dukes said the prospect of partnering with other organizations to coordinate the rally isn't feasible in his view, because they would need to be familiar with motorcycles and the motorcycle industry.

Dukes said his goal is to revive the rally in 2023.

See, Rally/Page A5

POND TO POOL TO STATE TITLES

Baker High School senior Brianna Stadler hopes to cap her high school career with her 5th and 6th state championships

BY JAYSON JACOBY

Brianna Stadler's journey to the top ranks of Oregon high school swimmers started in a mill pond.

No crystalline water. No eye-watering tang of chlorine in the air. No lanes precisely marked by strings of plastic floats.

Perhaps most important, no heater.

Just a patch of chilly water in the remote mountains of Northern California, a place where logs once floated, pending

their appointment with the saws.

The sodden logs were gone but there was Brianna, making her first strokes through the water.

She was, as best as she can remember, 6 or 7.

Brianna wasn't paddling about the pond for fun. Or at least not only for fun.

See, Brianna/Page A3



Brianna Stadler plunges into the pool at Sam-O Swim Center in Baker City on Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022.

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Baker City negotiating contracts with 2 of 3 unions

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

Baker City Manager Jonathan Cannon said negotiations are ongoing with two of the three labor unions representing city employees.

Separate unions represent police, fire and public works employees, and the city has contracts with each.



Cannon

The city also has about 15 employees, including Cannon and department heads, who aren't represented by a union.

See, Unions/Page A3

Open house set to review design for new Middle School cafeteria

Baker City Herald

The Baker School District has scheduled a public open house on Tuesday, Feb. 22, at Baker Middle School, Fourth Street and Washington Avenue, to review the proposed design for the new cafeteria/multipurpose building planned on the BMS campus.

The event will start at 5:30 p.m. COVID protocols, including face coverings, will be followed.

The estimated 5,000-square-foot building is one of the major projects the district will undertake with money from the \$4 million property tax bond measure that district voters approved in May 2021.

It was the first time since 1948 that district voters had approved a bond measure for school improvements.

The district plans to go out for contractor bids for the BMS building in July 2022, with construction August 2022 through March 2023. The budget for the project is \$2.2 million.

The district added the bond money to a \$4 million state grant and \$4 million from the district's capital budget for a total \$12 million project that has multiple parts besides the BMS building, including:

- Replacing heating, cooling and ventilation systems in all district schools — Baker High School (main gym, small gym and auditorium), Baker Middle School, South Baker, Brooklyn, Haines, Keating and Baker Early Learning Center (formerly North Baker).

See, Design/Page A3

Nichols calls for duties to be spread more evenly among commissioners

Issue could reach voters in November

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR

Baker County Commissioner Bruce Nichols on Wednesday, Feb. 16, reintroduced an idea he first broached in November 2021 about spreading some of the duties of the commission chairman to the two other commissioners.

The chairman, a position now held by Bill Harvey, is the lone full-time commissioner and works as the county's chief administrator.

Nichols and the other commissioner, Mark Bennett, have part-time positions. Nichols' position is about half-time, and Bennett's three-quarters time.

Nichols, who was reelected to a four-year term in 2020, said Wednesday, Feb. 16, that he wants the county to look into asking voters to change the commissioners' roles.

"I want to put more of the responsi-

bilities back to the board of commissioners and reduce the amount that the commission chair has and put it back to the three commissioners rather than just one and rotate that," Nichols said.

By rotate, Nichols means having the chairman position rotate among the three elected commissioners each year.

County Counsel Kim Mosier told commissioners they have little time to prepare a measure for the May 17 ballot. The filing deadline is March 8.

Harvey asked Mosier whether the commission would need to schedule a public hearing before putting such a measure on the ballot.

"I haven't seen anything that would require public hearings before putting it on the ballot and then that

would be up to you," Mosier said.

Mosier said the delegation of duties among commissioners was established by a county order when the county, more than a dozen years ago, changed the previous term "county judge" for the chairman position, and replaced "county court" with board of commissioners.

Mosier said she could research the matter and send a memo to commissioners.

Bennett said he doesn't believe there's enough time to draft a measure for the May ballot.

"I think that to have a carefully prepared, articulated move to the November ballot that would seem to me to be, that if you're going to do this, then you do it," Bennett said.

See, Commissioners/Page A5



Nichols



Harvey



Bennett

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



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