



Sumpter Valley Railroad/Contributed Photo

Weathered roofs have been replaced at Sumpter Valley Railroad's McEwen Depot. The SVRR season starts the weekend of May 14-15.

Roll

Continued from Page A1

She said the No. 19 engine will be out of service until July, and the season starts with the No. 3 wood-burning Heisler. "We're so honored to be a part of the community and welcome folks from near and far," Svaty said. "The snow is quickly melting and we'll start the season work on tracks soon."

The Sumpter Valley Railroad, a restored narrow-gauge railway, runs between McEwen Depot, just south of Highway 7 west of Phillips Reservoir, and the depot in Sumpter near the dredge.

The season starts May 14 and 15 with one full run each day at 2 p.m.

After that, most weekends will feature runs on Saturday and Sunday, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Svaty said the holiday weekends that coincide with Sumpter flea markets — Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day — will again feature short runs from Sumpter to the river and back. The

SVRR will also offer short runs July 16 and 17, which is the weekend of Miners Jubilee in Baker City.

The staged train robberies return as well, and now the robbers have a new name — the High Country Outlaws.

"They are back once a month and will start in May," Svaty said.

The first "robbery" is set for May 29. A few special events are already set in the schedule. Hunter Noack will return June 25 and 26 to present "In a Landscape" — a full piano concert he plays outdoors. Tickets must be purchased through inalandscape.org.

Svaty said a wine and cheese train, which was new in 2021, returns Sept. 3. This night train, for ages 21 and older, leaves McEwen at 6 p.m. and features items from The Cheese Fairy and Copper Belt Winery.

"That ended up being a great success last year and loved by all," Svaty said.

Another special event returning is a full moon train on Sept. 10, with departure at 7 p.m.

Looking way ahead into October, the

SVRR will offer three fall foliage trains Oct. 21-23. There will be no full-day photographer's special this year.

"Which is disappointing, but it will be back in 2023 bigger and better," Svaty said.

Special Halloween trains will happen Oct. 28 and 29.

"The High Country Outlaws will also be a part of Halloween on Saturday to add more fun and excitement," Svaty said.

When the cold sets in, the trains switch to the diesel engine. Although still tentative, trains are scheduled for Nov. 25 and 26.

December brings a night train on Dec. 9, then day trains Dec. 10 and 11.

"After a disappointing break down in 2021, we realized it's easier to run diesel than keeping the steam trains from freezing up and causing damage," Svaty said.

The 2022 is schedule to change — check the website for confirmation and to purchase tickets, www.sumptervalley-railroad.org.

Updates are also posted on Facebook.



Kathy Orr/Baker City Herald, File

Students and other fans will gather at Baker High School this week for the Class 1A state boys and girls basketball tournaments. All ticket sales will be online for the first time.

Tickets

Continued from Page A1

Buell Gonzales Jr., athletic director for the Baker School District, said ticket sales were online only for the Class 1A state football championship game in November between Powder Valley and Adrian at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium, and for Baker's state volleyball match.

He said the system worked well. Online ticket buyers can

choose to download and print a paper ticket, which will be scanned at the door, Gonzales said.

The other option is paperless. The virtual ticket, or tickets, are downloaded to a smartphone, and the images are shown at the door.

Gonzales said he can help people order their tickets online from about 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. each day from Wednesday, March 2, through Saturday, March 5. Call Gonzales at 541-524-2606 to set up an appointment.

Winter

Continued from Page A1

Hardly conducive to short-sleeve shirts.

February's chill continued a trend that dates to Christmas Eve.

Since then, the temperature at the Baker City Airport has reached 40 degrees on just five days (and barely got to that threshold on three of the five).

The warmest day was Jan. 7, when the high was 47. That was the only 40-degree-plus day during January.

In February:

- 41 on the 9th
- 40 on the 10th
- 45 on the 11th
- 40 on the 13th

With one day left in the month, the average high temperature for February at the airport was 33.3 degrees. On 12 of the 27 days the temperature didn't go above freezing.

The 33.3-degree figure is 7 degrees below average for the month.

And it's likely to rank 2022, by that measure, as the sixth-coldest February at the airport since 1943.

The lowest average high for the month is 25.9 degrees, in 1989.

Based on another statistic, this February has been even more historic.

The average low temperature at the airport, through

Feb. 27, was 11.4 degrees. That's 10 degrees below average.

It's also the third-lowest average low for February, trailing only 1989 (3.4 degrees) and 1985 (9.4).

The major culprit for the consistent cold is the temperature inversion that has trapped cold air — chilled by the persistent snow cover — near the ground.

That has kept temperatures well below average in Baker Valley, and most of the other valleys in Baker County, this winter even as temperatures occasionally rose into the 40s and even low 50s in the surrounding mountains.

On 11 days in February the low at the airport dipped below 10 degrees.

Only one of those days set a record low, however — and it was, curiously enough, one of the warmer days.

The low of 9 degrees on Feb. 24 broke the previous record of 10, set in 1975.

That record was an anomaly, as the warmest record low for February.

The record low is below zero on 25 of the 29 days (including leap years), including from minus 15 to minus 28 on the first nine days of the month.

The coldest reading this February was 1 below zero on Feb. 25. The record low for that date is 3 below, set in 1955.

Convoy

Continued from Page A1

The protest comes after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced on Feb. 25 that it was no longer recommending indoor mask mandates.

"It's all peaceful. It's all legal," Veluscek said. "They pulled permits or rented huge areas, venues where they can park along the way of these routes. It's almost a humanitarian effort. They're saying when we get to D.C., let's spread the love. Let's try to take care of people."

Veluscek said he's looking forward to the trip.

"I wish it had happened earlier," he said. "I just want to see as many people stand up and do something. It's been too long."

Joining the convoy will be country music singer Jessie Leigh, an Estacada native who was flying back from Nashville to join the protest, along with carrying a special American flag given to her by a close friend that she hopes will inspire people on the road.

"The goal and mission is to have this particular flag used for unity and to be touched by as many Americans as possible

and to unify people," she said. "Despite what side of the aisle, it doesn't matter. We're all Americans. We're all human, and we all stand together. And for at least a moment, we can stand under the flag and sing a song together."

Leigh said a break in her schedule is what allowed her to join the convoy.

"We have these open dates on the schedule and they reached out to ask if we would be the caretakers of the flag on this convoy," she said.

American Freedom Convoy is an offshoot of several other protests across the nation

against vaccine and mask mandates due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The convoy follows weeks after truckers in Ottawa, Canada, shut down commerce and traffic in the city.

A separate convoy, The People's Convoy, already has started driving toward Washington, D.C., and is scheduled to reach Indianapolis by Tuesday, March 1.

The American Freedom Convoy is scheduled to arrive at Peoria, Illinois, on Saturday, March 5. Afterward, the convoy will rendezvous with other truckers participating from across the nation.

COVID

Continued from Page A1

hospitals who were positive for COVID-19.

The decline in omicron-related severe cases accelerated and the date was moved last week to March 19. But on Thursday, Feb. 24, OHSU issued a forecast showing Oregon would dip below the 400-mark by March 12. The next OHSU forecast is due March 3.

Baker County's case numbers continue to plummet

The Baker County Health Department reported 23 new cases for the week Feb. 20-26.

That's the lowest weekly total in more than two months.

It's also the third-lowest since July 2021, just before the delta variant became the predominant source of cases.

"It's really uplifting," said

Mark Bennett, a Baker County commissioner and the county's incident commander throughout the pandemic.

Although Bennett emphasized that it's still important to try to protect those who are most vulnerable to the virus, including people with compromised immune systems, he said the statistics, both at the county, state and national levels, show that "the corner has been turned it appears."

After the omicron wave crested in Baker County the week of Jan. 16-22, with 183 cases reported, the weekly total has dropped for five straight weeks.

During that period the weekly figure has plummeted by 87.6%.

Last week's total of 23 cases was the fewest since 22 cases the week of Dec. 12-18.

Only one other week has had fewer cases in the county since July 2021 — Oct. 31-Nov. 6,

when there were 20 cases.

In addition to the number of cases, Baker County's rate of positive tests, and its number of new cases per 100,000 population have both dropped substantially and are near the statewide average.

The county's test positivity rate dipped from 13.2% the previous week to 7.1% from Feb. 20-26.

The statewide test positivity rate for that week was 6.1%.

Baker County's new case rate per 100,000 population last week was 136, down from 236.5 the previous week (and a peak of 1,076 for the week Jan. 16-22). The statewide rate last week was 131.

Bennett said he feels differently about the current situation compared with the significant drop in cases that happened during the late spring and early summer of 2021, and again during the fall after the delta surge.

The biggest difference, Bennett said, is that the level of herd immunity, through vacci-

nations and natural infection — the latter boosted significantly by the much more contagious, but less virulent, omicron variant — is considerably higher.

He encourages people to pick up free COVID-19 testing kits — they're available online and at the Health Department by calling 541-523-8211.

Although home test results don't need to be reported, they can be helpful in letting people know when they should quarantine, Bennett said.

He also recommends people continue to heed the advice to stay home if they feel ill, regardless of whether they take a COVID-19 test.

Baker County's first COVID-19 case was reported on May 6, 2020.

As of Sunday, Feb. 27, the county has had 3,178 cases, as well as 46 COVID-19-related deaths, including four during February.

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

CASHWAY Lumber Co.

- Lumber
- Plywood
- Building Materials
- Hardware
- Paint
- Plumbing
- Electrical

And much more!

3205 10th Street
Baker City
541-523-4422

Mon-Fri 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Saturday 8 am - 5 pm
Closed Sun

Winter is here!
Cold weather can mean icy spots in shaded areas!

Joe Scott's Premier Auto Body, Inc.
2390 Broadway, Baker City
541-523-5223

Mobile Service
Outstanding Computer Repair

Fast & Reliable
Call or Text 24/7
Dale Bogardus 541-297-5831

Stay up-to-date with Microsoft's most advanced operating system to date, Windows 11
Desktops and laptops in stock
Or upgrade yours today for the best security!

House calls (let me come to you!)
Drop Offs & Remote Services are Available

All credit cards accepted

Keith Alden Stubblefield
October 31, 1936 – February 16, 2022

Keith Alden Stubblefield, 85, of Salem, Oregon, passed away peacefully in the comfort of his own home surrounded by family on Feb. 16, 2022. Keith was born in La Grande, Oregon, in 1936. His parents were Harlan and Edna Stubblefield. For most of his youth, his family lived in Elgin, Oregon, where he enjoyed hunting, fishing, horseback riding and skiing. He even crafted his first pair of skis himself. His family later moved to Baker, Oregon, where he met his wife, Cheryl (Culley) Stubblefield. They attended high school together and married in 1956 in Baker.

Keith had many ambitions vocationally. He earned his bachelor of science degree from Eastern Oregon College in 1964 and took his graduate study in criminology at the University of Maryland. In 1964 he moved his family to Washington, D.C., where he was appointed research assistant for President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administrative Justice. He was later appointed to Correctional Manpower and Training in Washington, D.C. He held many executive positions in law enforcement. He served as deputy administrator of the Law Enforcement Council of Alaska and administrator of the Law Enforcement Council of Oregon.

Keith served in the Army Reserve for 38 years as first sergeant of the 20th PSYOP Company. He earned his airborne wings in 1966 and participated in training exercises with allies such as Canada and Germany.

Keith is preceded in death by his wife, Cheryl; oldest son, Brent; and sister, Joyce Stubblefield. He is survived by his sisters, Karen Stubblefield Linfor and Marla Houston; daughter, Tami (Alisa) Allen-Stubblefield; son, Rick (Wendy) Stubblefield; and daughter, Kimberly Stubblefield; as well as seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Keith loved and was loved by many and will be missed more than words can express.

Services will be at 11 a.m. on March 4, 2022, at Restlawn Memorial Gardens, 201 Oak Grove Road NW, Salem, Oregon 97304.