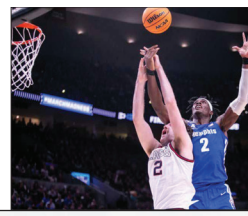




HOME & LIVING B1
Cornbread: Fresh take on an old-fashioned favorite



LOCAL A2
Animal rights initiative won't make Nov. ballot



SPORTS A6
Gonzaga rallies past Memphis to make Sweet 16

Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • HOME & LIVING • SPORTS

Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022 • \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Kareen Bybee of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Baker baseball loses first game in Arizona

The Baker baseball team rallied from a 10-0 deficit but couldn't come all the way back against Doherty, Colorado, on Monday, March 21, at Phoenix, Arizona. The Bulldogs lost 11-5 in the first of their four games scheduled during a spring break trip to Arizona. Baker, which lost for the first time after opening the season with three wins last week, played Manitou Springs, Colorado, later Monday. Baker is slated to play Buena Vista, Colorado, on Wednesday, March 23, and Apollo, Arizona, on Thursday, March 24. See Thursday's issue of the Baker City Herald for more coverage.

Baker Relief Nursery plans open house on March 30

The Baker Relief Nursery, 1925 16th St., will be celebrating its first year of operation during an open house on Wednesday, March 30, from noon to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The public is invited to tour the facility and visit with the team. Staff will also be sharing their first Annual Impact Report.

For more information call 541-523-5054 or email at info@bakerreliefnursery.org.

WEATHER

Today
 57/34
 Partly sunny

Wednesday
 63/37
 Partly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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



The Baker City trolley route begins and ends at Community Connection, 2810 Cedar St.

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Pump prices might make the Trolley attractive

Baker's Community Connection trolley runs a fixed route on weekdays

BY LISA BRITTON
 lbritton@bakercityherald.com

If gas prices make you cringe, it might be time to let someone else do the driving. The Baker City trolley, operated by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, runs a fixed route around town from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday.

See, **Trolley**/Page A3

Agencies brace for effects of record fuel prices

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR and JAYSON JACOBY
 Baker City Herald

With fleets of vehicles for which the concept of fuel economy is more farcical than reality, officials at the Baker County Road Department and Baker City Public Works Department are keenly aware of the record-high fuel prices.

Noodle Perkins, Baker County roadmaster, said the recent price hikes are a significant concern, particularly for diesel, the fuel that heavy equipment such as graders and backhoes burn at a prodigious rate.

"It's major for us," Perkins said. On the positive side, Perkins said the road department didn't use as

much diesel as usual this winter since most of the snowfall was confined to about two weeks in late December and early January.

"Fortunately, we had kind of a light winter and in winter we (can) burn a ton of diesel plowing snow every single day," Perkins said.

The road department's budget for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, includes \$230,000 for fuel.

A longer term concern, Perkins said, is the state gas tax, which is a major source of revenue for the road department overall and is not limited to paying for fuel.

The county will receive about \$1.6 million from the state this fiscal year.

The problem, Perkins said, is

that as fuel prices rise, people tend to drive less, and since the fuel tax hasn't increased (the price hikes are due to market issues, not to higher taxes), tax revenue could drop.

"It's nailing us pretty good," Perkins said.

The road department did have a beginning balance of about \$3.5 million for this fiscal year.

For Baker City, the comparatively small amount of snowplowing this winter means the fuel budget for the current fiscal year, ending June 30, should be fine, said Michelle Owen, public works director.

But based on current fuel prices, she said she's proposing a 30% increase in the budget for fuel for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

See, **COVID**/Page A3

COVID rate hits lowest since June of 2020

BY JAYSON JACOBY
 jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The difference between the two words is minor, but after two years it's something of a milestone for Mark Bennett to refer to an endemic rather than a pandemic.

Bennett, a Baker County commissioner, has also served as the county's incident commander since March 2020, when COVID-19 caused a worldwide upheaval like no other infectious disease had in a century.

With the county's number of cases, and its rate of positive tests, plummeting to the lowest levels since the spring of 2020, Bennett said the county is returning to a more normal situation.

Employees from departments who had devoted some of their time to COVID-19 topics are no longer doing so, Bennett said on Monday, March 21.

Although Bennett acknowledged that a new variant could change conditions, at this point he believes those measures are no longer necessary.

See, **COVID**/Page A3

County gets \$280,000 to upgrade radio system for police, fire

BY JAYSON JACOBY
 jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The mountains and canyons that add beauty and variety to Baker County's landscape also pose obstacles for the people who respond to emergencies ranging from missing hunters to car crashes to wildfires.

The county's rumpiled topography creates "dead spots" where the radio signals that link emergency responders can't always reach, Sheriff Travis Ash said.

But a recent influx of federal and state government dollars will help to strengthen that electronic connection.

Baker County has received \$280,000 in three separate grants to install new radio repeaters on 10 mountaintop sites, and to replace the outdated radio consoles at the Baker County Consolidated Dispatch Center at the Sheriff's Office, Ash said.

See, **Upgrades**/Page A3

Baker City business curates one-of-a-kind tourism opportunities in Eastern Oregon



Go Wild: American Adventures/Contributed Photo

Two Go Wild: American Adventures guests jump into an alpine lake in the Wallows during the summer of 2021. The business, which is based in Baker City, creates curated outdoor experiences in Eastern Oregon.

BY DAVIS CARBAUGH

The (La Grande) Observer

A local business is shining a light on the natural gems of Eastern Oregon.

Go Wild: American Adventures, a tourism business based in Baker City, focuses on local tourism, environmental education, community partnerships and international outreach. Through custom-curated outdoor adventures, owner Dan Sizer aims to share his love of the outdoors with others.

"From the beginning, the rural Oregon part was something I really wanted to help people connect to," Sizer said.

The business is in its fifth year, but has faced several hurdles related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the warm season approaches, Sizer and his crew are gearing up for a slate of adventures in Eastern Oregon this summer.

Sizer, who went to Baker High School and graduated from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, began the business after working for the Forest Service for six seasons. The inspiration for Go Wild: American Adventures started in Sizer's college days, when he took a group of international students back home to Eastern Oregon. Sizer and his friends went backpacking, hiking, canoeing and participated in other outdoor activities that the group had never done before.

It was at this point that Sizer saw a potential business op-

portunity, inviting individuals from out of the area to experience what Eastern Oregon has to offer. The business now provides guides, personal chefs, gourmet outdoor meals, lessons and more at destinations across the region.

"It was always amazing for me to see the awe and wonder, realizing how many folks haven't been out in this kind of country," Sizer said.

Go Wild's main clientele come from larger cities such as Portland, Seattle or the Tri-Cities in Washington. Sizer noted that the business shifted from focusing on day-trip visitors coming through Eastern Oregon toward interested individuals from out of town looking for an extended visit.

See, **Tourism**/Page A3



TODAY
 Issue 131
 14 pages

Classified.....B4-B6	Crossword.....B4 & B6	Horoscope.....B2 & B4	Opinion.....A4	Sudoku.....B7
Comics.....B7	Dear Abby.....B8	Lottery Results.....A2	Senior Menus.....A2	Turning Backs.....A2
Community News.....A5	Home & Living.....B1-B3	News of Record.....A2	Sports.....A6	Weather.....B8