



OUTDOORS B1
It's almost time for turkey hunting



LOCAL A2
Keeping crabgrass out of your lawn



SPORTS A6
Bulldogs hold off Homedale, 8-6

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Delton Towell of Unity.

BRIEFING

Ladies golf and bridge season starts April 13

Opening day for the Ladies Golf and Bridge Association at Quail Ridge Golf Course, 2801 Indiana Ave. in Baker City, is set for Wednesday, April 13. The event features golf in the morning, a noon luncheon cooked by Terrie Boettcher, and bridge in the afternoon. Ladies can participate in any or all of the activities. The one-time membership fee is \$10, and lunch is \$9 per week. If planning to eat lunch, please make a reservation the day before the event by calling Dianne Ellingson at 541-519-4703 or Jennifer Godwin at 541-519-2060. The course's phone number is 541-523-2358.

Baker County Fair Board to meet April 5

The Baker County Fair Board will have a special meeting on Tuesday, April 5 to approve a bid for a floor project at the Baker County Events Center, and to discuss future projects at the fairgrounds. The meeting will start at 6 p.m. in the small meeting room at the Events Center, 2600 East St.

WEATHER

Today
53/26
Mostly sunny

Sunday
58/36
Mostly cloudy

Monday
54/30
Rain showers

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

What's Up at the Boys Jungle?

La Grande developer, who plans to build housing for veterans on a nearby parcel, would like to transfer the Boys Jungle to the city for use as a park

BY JAYSON JACOBY
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Gust Tsiatsos steps off the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway and enters the Boys Jungle.

Which no longer much resembles a jungle. Tsiatsos, a contractor and developer from La Grande, bought this property, along with four other nearby parcels totaling about 13 acres, last year. This winter, his workers cut and trimmed trees and removed much of the undergrowth that gave the Boys Jungle the name it has had for many decades. Although this approximately two-acre piece of ground, just north of D Street and with the Powder River forming its western border, has always been private property, for generations of Baker youth it was a chunk of wildland within the city with its towering cottonwoods and willows.

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Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald
Gust Tsiatsos, owner of GCT Land Management Inc. of La Grande, stands in the Boys Jungle, part of the property he bought last year.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald
The Boys Jungle is just north of D Street and east of the Powder River in Baker City.

County now 2 weeks without COVID case

BY JAYSON JACOBY
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The zeroes continue to accumulate in Baker County's column for COVID-19 tracking. The county didn't report a single case for the final 14 days of March. That's the longest such streak since June 2020. Baker County reported its first COVID-19 case on May 6, 2020. The county didn't have another until the last week of June 2020. Case rates have fluctuated since, with significant drops during the winter and spring of 2021 and again in the fall of that year, with major increases due to the delta variant in late summer 2021 and in January 2022 due to the omicron variant.

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Trial delayed in construction fraud case

BY JAYSON JACOBY
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

The trial of a Baker City man accused of taking money from customers for construction work he failed to start, or in some cases to finish, has been postponed after two attorneys appointed to represent him withdrew. Kenneth Edward Hackett, 51, was slated to go to trial April 25 in Baker County Circuit Court. Hackett was arrested on June 19, 2021, following an investigation by the Baker City Police and Baker County Sheriff's Office into construction fraud complaints. Two incidents involved a combined loss of \$78,000, according to a June 2021 press release from Baker City Police. A grand jury indictment in June 2021 included three counts:

- Aggravated first-degree theft, \$10,000 or more, from Barbara Duran
- Aggravated first-degree theft, \$10,000 or more, from Jerry Martin
- First-degree theft, \$1,000 or more, from Robert Anders

A new indictment on Aug. 26, 2021, added four additional counts:

- First-degree theft, \$1,000 or more, from Therese Holthausen
- First-degree theft, \$1,000 or more, from Kurt Gronbach

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

Snowpack melting faster than expected

BY ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

Eastern Oregon's snowpack is melting faster than expected, worsening an ongoing drought and pointing to a very dry year if conditions continue. Scott Oviatt, a hydrologist and snow survey supervisor for the Natural Resources Conservation Service Oregon, a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said snow started melting almost two weeks earlier than usual, and many sites across the state hadn't even reached their peak available snowpack levels before melt off began in the lower elevations. "Once the snowpack starts melting out, it's hard to stop," he said. The information comes weeks after many Eastern Oregon snowpack levels were reported to be in good shape. The dramatic decline in snowpack levels coupled with the ongoing drought has caused concern among experts who are watching the snow water equivalent levels closely. "The fact that we didn't reach a peak value and the fact that we're melting out early is a concern because we are



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald
Phillips Reservoir still had a thin ice cover on March 25, 2022, but the steep shorelines show how depleted it is. The reservoir, on the Powder River about 17 miles southwest of Baker City, is holding about 10% of its capacity.

losing the available water content in the snow pack (earlier) than we normally plan on," Oviatt said. "Depending on location and elevation, we're about two or three weeks early, and we didn't achieve our peak, and now we're at 70% for the Grande Ronde/Powder area and we're dropping rapidly."

Those who rely on water irrigation channels should be especially concerned about the rapidly melting snow. While snowmelt is generally expected to hit its zero point sometime in mid to late spring, having the water runoff begin and end earlier means that resources will become scarce as summer drags on — and a heat wave event can further impact water supplies and leave farmers and agricultural industries dry. Last year's heat wave depleted water supplies and caused some farms in Oregon to run out of water entirely by late June 2021, weeks ahead of schedule. In one instance, Plantworks, a nursery in Cove, had to purchase new water storage containers and fill them with city water in order to keep their crops alive. "Essentially, folks that rely on irrigation water will have less available, and there will probably be some restrictions applied depending upon where they get their water and their water rights," Oviatt said.

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