



INSIDE
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Arts and entertainment magazine



SPORTS A5
Bulldogs power
past Nyssa, 15-0



SPORTS A5
Boys split matches
in Ontario

Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • BUSINESS & AG LIFE • SPORTS Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022 • \$1.50

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber
A special good day to Herald subscriber Robert McKim of Baker City.

BRIEFING

'Durkee Stories' event April 12 at Baker Heritage Museum

Baker Heritage Museum will host "Durkee Stories," a conversation with Gary Bloomer, on Tuesday, April 12, at the museum, 2480 Grove St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the presentation begins at 6 p.m. Attendance is free.

Bloomer, a long-time Durkee rancher, will share stories about the town's history and the Opal Mine.

Local students on Oregon State honor roll

CORVALLIS — Six Baker City students, and one from North Powder, were named to the scholastic honor roll for the winter 2022 term at Oregon State University.

To be eligible, students must earn a GPA of at least 3.5 and have at least 12 hours of graded course work.

The Baker City students: Calli N. Ward, senior, sociology; Anna C. Carter, sophomore, marketing; Reno R. Hammond, junior, public health; Ryan He, freshman, kinesiology; Jesse J. Johnson, senior, chemistry; Erik L. Ruby, senior, art.

Isaac T. Colton, a senior from North Powder majoring in construction engineering management, also was named to the honor roll.

WEATHER

Today
66/36
Mostly sunny



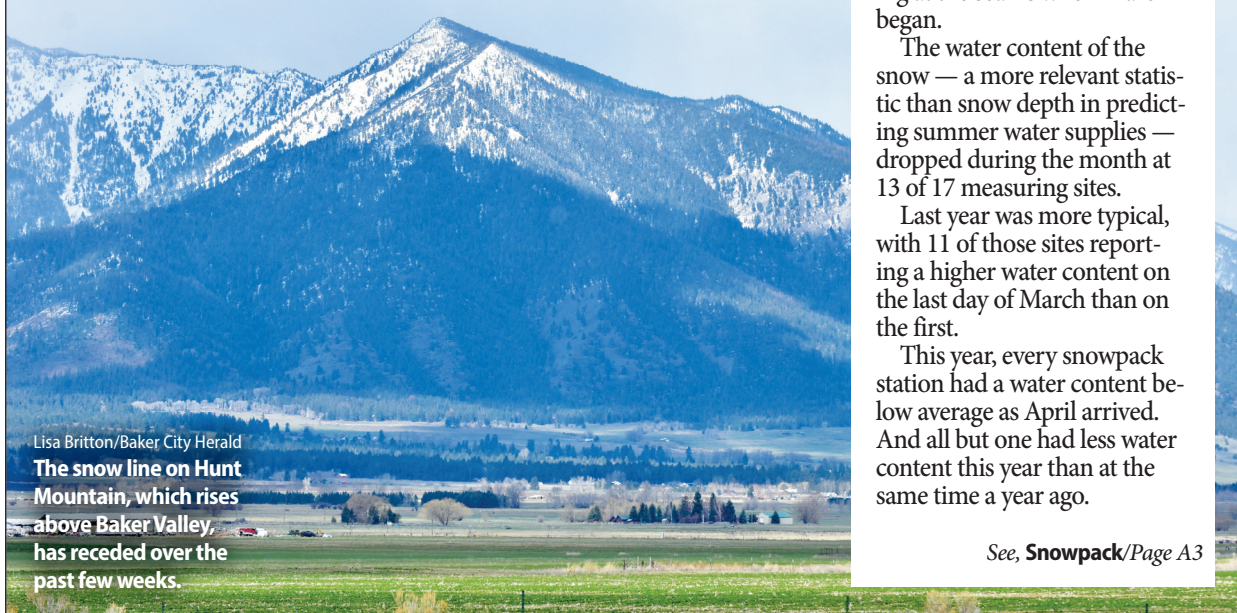
Friday
62/29
Rain showers



Full forecast on the back of the B section.

Mad about March

Month that usually boosts snowpack mainly had the opposite effect



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald
The snow line on Hunt Mountain, which rises above Baker Valley, has receded over the past few weeks.

BY JAYSON JACOBY
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March was a failure in the mountains.

The month that forms the bridge between winter and spring typically inflates the snowpack around Northeastern Oregon, a vital source of water for agriculture, recreation and fish and wildlife habitat.

But the 2022 version was more akin to a punctured balloon.

And it wasn't exactly bursting at the seams when March began.

The water content of the snow — a more relevant statistic than snow depth in predicting summer water supplies — dropped during the month at 13 of 17 measuring sites.

Last year was more typical, with 11 of those sites reporting a higher water content on the last day of March than on the first.

This year, every snowpack station had a water content below average as April arrived. And all but one had less water content this year than at the same time a year ago.

See, **Snowpack**/Page A3

County offers \$150,000 to continue ambulance service

BY JAYSON JACOBY
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Baker County Commissioners voted 3-0 on Wednesday, April 6, to offer to contribute \$150,000 to the Baker City Fire Department for ambulance services in the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2022.

But commissioners were skeptical, based on recent conversations between county and city officials, that that amount would be enough to persuade the city to withdraw its notice that it will cease ambulance operations on Sept. 30, 2022.

If that happens, commissioners, under Oregon law, would be required to find a replacement, likely a private ambulance company.

See, **Ambulance**/Page A2

Wild weather week: From chill to heat and back

BY JAYSON JACOBY
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Spring, the most tempestuous of seasons, will careen from one extreme to another over the next several days in Baker County.

The span could break a temperature record or two. It started on Wednesday morning, April 6.

In the wake of Monday's powerful cold front, skies cleared, winds weakened and the temperature plummeted to 12 degrees at the Baker City Airport.

That broke the previous record low for April 6 of 15 degrees, which was set just last year.

The average low for the date is 29.

But the unseasonable chill was quickly replaced by mild air under a high pressure ridge.

High temperatures on Thursday, April 7, and Friday, April 8, were forecast to climb well above average, into the mid or upper 60s, according to the National Weather Service.

No records are in jeopardy on those days, though.

The record high for April 7 is 80 degrees and the record for April 8 is 82. Both were set in 1996.

The balmy spell won't persist, however.

The National Weather Service forecasts another strong cold front to sweep through Friday night.

The front might bring rain showers to the valleys and snow to the mountains.

It definitely will usher in much chillier air. High temperatures are forecast to plunge by about 20 degrees from Friday to Saturday.

And Sunday will be colder yet, with a high in Baker City of about 40 degrees. That would be the lowest high temperature on record for April 10 (the current record is 41 degrees, set in 1941).

No more record low temperatures are forecast, though, with lows dipping only into the 20s.

The record lows for the next several days are all in the teens.

Resident: County competing with businesses

BY JAYSON JACOBY AND SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
Baker City Herald

Joe Hill supports Baker County's efforts to control noxious weeds.

But he doesn't want to compete with the county in the marketplace.

Hill, who owns businesses that cater to farmers and ranchers who have noxious weeds on their properties, objects to the Baker County Weed District renting weed sprayers and selling herbicides, both of which are new programs this year.

"I just don't want them selling in direct competition

to businesses," said Hill, who owns J&D Hill Farms and Joe Hill Consulting LLC.

He believes the county, by adding sprayer rentals and herbicide sales, would compete with at least 16 businesses.

Hill said he's most concerned about the county selling herbicides because as a government entity it might be able to buy products at a lower rate than he and other private businesses can.

Jeffrey Pettingill, the county's weed control supervisor, said the addition of rental sprayers and herbicide sales is not intended to compete

with private companies.

The goal, Pettingill said, is to give landowners another option if they want to control weeds on their property and to make that possible when a contractor might not be available.

To that end, the county has bought two 200-gallon sprayers, one on a trailer and one that can be placed in a pickup truck bed. Pettingill said the city used grant money from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, as part of the county's multiyear effort to improve sage grouse habitat, to buy the sprayers, which cost

\$7,000 each.

The county is offering those sprayers for rent, at \$40 per day. The county also had three other smaller sprayers, designed to be carried on all-terrain vehicles, that were bought earlier. One rents for \$30 per day, the two others for \$20.

Pettingill said he would prefer that landowners buy herbicide from private suppliers rather than the county.

He said he doesn't expect the county will sell much herbicide — less than \$3,000 per year.

See, **Competition**/Page A2

Subdivision proposed in south Baker

Baker City Herald

A Baker Valley couple has proposed a six-lot subdivision on a low-density residential-zoned parcel in the southern part of Baker City at the base of the sagebrush foothill.

Eva and Dan Henes, owners of Eagle Eye Ventures LLC, have applied with the Baker City/County Planning Department to sell lots in a subdivision south of Colorado Avenue and west of South Foothill Drive.

The nearly 5-acre property, which the Heneses own, would include six building lots ranging from 0.61 of an acres to 1.08 acres.

Dan Henes said he and his wife bought the parcel about three and a half years ago as an investment.

With the current high demand for housing, he said they decided this is an opportune time to try to develop the property.



This aerial photo shows the location of a proposed six-lot subdivision in south Baker City.

"The demand is there, and we want to increase the supply a little," Henes said.

He said two pipelines, one carrying natural gas

and one carrying oil, cross the property, and the required setbacks from those lines make it a challenge to subdivide.

That's one reason the proposed lots are larger than typical residential lots, Henes said.

If the Baker City Planning Commission approves the subdivision, Henes said he and his wife likely would start offering the lots for sale soon.

The proposed subdivision is one of three items for which the Baker City Planning Commission has scheduled a public hearing on Wednesday, April 20, at 6 p.m. at city Hall, 1655 First St.

The two other applications:

- A request from the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St., for a conditional use permit to replace an existing sign with an electronic reader board.

- A request for a conditional use permit to build a 1,728-square-foot accessory building at 306 Second St.

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



TODAY
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