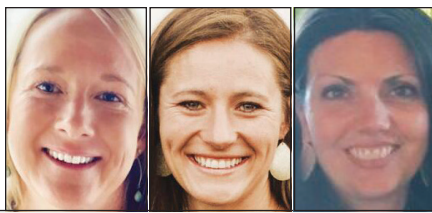




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Go! Magazine
The Easter egg hunt begins in Go!



LOCAL A2
School district announces new hires

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Julie Paxton of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Easter egg hunt, All Kids Rodeo set for Saturday

The annual Easter egg hunt returns this Saturday, April 16, to Geiser-Pollman Park in Baker City.

Organized by the Baker City Rotary Club, the hunt officially begins at 10 a.m. — but be there early because prizes go fast once the siren sounds.

Following the hunt is the Baker County Shrine Club's All Kids Rodeo, held at Geiser Pollman Park for the first time. Participation is free, but registration is required. Registration forms are available in advance at the Baker County Chamber, 490 Campbell St., and Guyer & Associates, 2790 Main St. On Saturday, registration starts at 9 a.m. at the park.

Activities will begin after the hunt, with organized events starting at 10:30 a.m.

A hot dog lunch will be available for free to participants, and \$5 for all others. Proceeds from the rodeo support the Baker County Shrine Club.

Free firewood permits available soon

Beginning May 1, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will offer free personal-use firewood permits, with a limit of 10 cords per household, per year. Permits will be available, at no charge, over the counter at local Forest Service offices and through a variety of local vendors. A processing fee of up to \$2 per transaction may be charged when obtaining the permits from local businesses.

WEATHER

Today
40/18
Snow showers



Wednesday
43/26
Snow late



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

CITY WANTS TO MEET WITH COUNTY ON AMBULANCE ISSUE

Work session could happen April 25 or 26



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Patrick Foss, left, and David Van Dyke of the Baker City Fire Department with one of the department's ambulances on Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR AND JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

The Baker City Council wants to meet with county commissioners to seek a possible solution that could allow the city fire department to continue operating ambulances and avoid substantial layoffs in the department without worsening the city's financial plight.

Councilors decided during their meeting Tuesday evening, April 12, at City Hall to invite Baker County commissioners to a joint work session later this month.

"I think we're in a position that we still need to sit down with the county commissioners and explain where we're at and then see if they can offer a solution," Councilor Shane Alderson said. "I've called for a work session twice and I think we still need to go ahead with it. I just want to make enough money to keep going and offering the best protection that we can."

Mayor Kerry McQuisten agreed. "We do need to get that work session scheduled and get the commissioners here," she said.

Councilors suggested as a possible date April 25, one day before the next regular City Council meeting, or prior to the April 26 meeting.

Under Oregon law, Baker County is solely responsible for picking ambulance service providers in each of the county's four current ambulance service areas.

The Baker City Fire Department is the provider for the Baker ambulance service area, which covers the city as well as about two-thirds



Dixon



Alderson



McQuisten

of the rest of the county, excluding the Halfway, Richland and Huntington areas.

The City Council decided on March 22 to send a notice to the county that the city, due to projections that its financial losses for ambulance service could exceed \$1 million per year, intended to cease ambulance services Sept. 30, 2022.

If that happened, the county would have to find a new ambulance provider, likely a private company.

The city, meanwhile, is working on a plan that calls for laying off about half of its firefighter/paramedics (the budget includes 12 employees, but two positions are vacant now). Ambulance calls account for more than 80% of the fire department's volume, with fires being much less common. And although the city spends more money to provide ambulance services than it receives from billing, the ambulance revenue is projected to slightly exceed \$1 million for the current fiscal year. Without that revenue and without operating ambulances, the city would neither need, nor could it afford, the current fire department workforce.

See, Ambulance/Page A6

Council votes to let voters decide on the train quiet zone

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Baker City voters apparently will get a chance to weigh in on the city's plan to pursue a railroad quiet zone after all, and potentially override a January vote by the Baker City Council.

The City Council voted 4-2 on Tuesday night, April 12, to ask city staff to prepare a measure for the Nov. 8, 2022, ballot.

Councilor Joanna Dixon, who made the motion, said the measure would ask voters whether they support or oppose a quiet zone.

Dixon said she intends that if voters oppose a quiet zone, that would overturn the Council's Jan. 25 decision to apply for a quiet zone.

The Federal Railroad Administration decides whether to approve quiet zones, in which train engineers are not required to sound their whistles at public crossings.

See, Zone/Page A3



Damschen



Spriet

School board buys 2nd home for international student housing

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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After hearing from a local resident who objected to the plan, the Baker School Board voted 4-0 during a special meeting on Tuesday, April 12, to buy a home for \$490,000 to house foreign exchange students while they attend Baker High School starting this fall.

It's the second home the school district has bought this year for its budding Oregon International School charter school.

In early March the district bought a home, at 1706 Washington Ave., for \$295,000.

The second home, also a historic house, is at 1503 Second St.

Before voting to transfer \$500,000 from the district's capital projects fund to buy the Second Street home, board members — chairman Chris Hawkins was absent from the Zoom meeting — reviewed financial projections for the International School.

Those project that the district will bring in about \$28,000 more from the charter school than it will spend for the first year of operation, with estimated surpluses increasing to \$134,000 the second year and to \$248,000 the third year.

Those figures include repayments to the district's budget for the home purchases, which is projected to take about 14 years.

See, Housing/Page A3

Pinwheels spin with purpose

Colorful displays promote April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

BY LISA BRITTON

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The blue pinwheels popping up around Baker City are getting quite a workout in the wind this month.

But at least the spinning decorations catch eyes — the whole purpose of the "Pinwheels for Prevention" campaign, which happens every April for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The root of this yearly campaign dates to 2015, when the Ford Family Foundation dedicated money to start development of the Protect Our Children project, which includes trainings on how to recognize and respond to child abuse.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

The wind twirls a pinwheel on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at a pinwheel garden placed at the corner of Second Street and Auburn Avenue in recognition of April as Child Abuse Awareness Month.

"This project would lead 11 areas across the state and Siskiyou County in California in presenting trainings to build awareness of child sexual abuse and learning steps to protect children," said Marilyn

Dalton, site coordinator for the Protect our Children project in Wallowa and Baker counties.

Building Healthy Families was selected to bring the program to Wallowa, Baker and Malheur counties.

The training is "Stewards of Children" provided by the prevention organization Darkness to Light.

"This prevention training teaches adults how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse," Dalton said.

Trainings continued during the pandemic, but moved to a virtual format.

Dalton, who is a trained facilitator for "Stewards of Children," said the Protect Our Children project has provided the training for more than 30,000 people.

Next training

Building Healthy Families will offer the next virtual training on Tuesday, April 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The final day to register is Monday, April 18.

See, Pinwheels/Page A2



TODAY
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