



OUTDOORS B1
Returning to a mountain meadow



STATE A5
President Biden stops in Portland



SPORTS A6
Baker baseball battles La Grande

Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • OUTDOORS & REC • SPORTS

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Dudley Frost of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Rotary Club raffle tickets for sale

The Baker City Rotary Club is selling raffle tickets through May 16 for the chance to win three prizes. Grand prize is \$4,500 of AAA travel. This never expires and can be used to travel to the destination of your choice. Second prize is a condo for a week in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, plus \$1,000 for travel expenses. Third prize is a \$500 gift certificate at Best Buy.

The drawing will be held May 21, and winners don't need to be present to win.

Money raised supports the Rotary Foundation and local projects such as the annual Easter egg hunt, the Baker County Community Literacy Coalition, scholarships for local kids, and providing bike helmets to kids in Baker County.

Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased from Rotarians, as well as at Grocery Outlet and Safeway in Baker City, or by calling Ken Krohn at 541-519-5952.

WEATHER

Today
 57/27
 Sunny



Sunday
 63/35
 Partly sunny



Monday
 64/42
 Showers



Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

City, county officials mull ambulance options

Fire union president disputes city manager's claim that city can't afford to continue ambulance service

BY JAYSON JACOBY
 jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Baker City Council members and Baker County commissioners met Wednesday evening, April 20, to discuss the ambulance crisis, but without reaching any conclusions about a potential solution.

City Councilor Dean Guyer said the two-hour meeting at the Courthouse basically confirmed for him that neither the city nor the county can afford to fully make up the difference between what the city

spends to operate ambulances and what it collects from bills.

The city estimates that shortfall will be about \$581,000 for the fiscal year that ends June 30, 2022.

The annual gap between what the city spends to operate ambulances, and what it collects from bills, averaged about \$731,000 for the previous five fiscal years.

The situation, along with projections that the shortfall could surpass \$1 million annual beginning with the fiscal year that starts July 1, 2022,

prompted City Manager Jonathan Cannon to recommend that councilors, during their March 22 meeting, send a notice to Baker County that the city planned to end its ambulance service Sept. 30, 2022.

Councilors voted unanimously to do so.

If the city follows through, it would force the county, which by Oregon law is responsible for choosing ambulance providers, to find a replacement. That likely would be a private ambulance service, two of which submitted bids to the county in 2019. County commissioners are preparing to send out a request for proposals for ambulance service.

After soliciting bids in

2019, the county put on hold the process of awarding a new contract for the Baker ambulance service area, which includes Baker City and about two-thirds of the rest of the county.

The Baker City Fire Department, a dual purpose department that responds to fires as well as ambulance calls, has continued to be the provider for that area, albeit without a contract.

The county is giving the city \$100,000 for the service this fiscal year, and commissioners have offered \$150,000 for the next fiscal year.

The state law requires counties to ensure there is ambulance service, but coun-

ties are not legally obligated to pay for it.

City's financial fears

The letter that the City Council voted unanimously to send to the county on March 22 reads, in part: "Baker City finds itself unable to demand more from its taxpayers to provide a service that is the state-mandated responsibility of Baker County. Currently, there is not a significant and stable funding source available to Baker City which fully covers the cost of the Ambulance Service without city taxpayers heavily subsidizing the service for Baker County."

See, **Ambulances/Page A3**



SACRED GROUND

SPRING IS THE SEASON FOR SPRUCING UP MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
 soconnor@bakercityherald.com

Spring is the busiest season at Baker City's Mount Hope Cemetery.

Each year, usually starting around April 1, the city's maintenance contractor spends about two weeks focusing on the cemetery, in the city's southeast corner off South Bridge Street.

The goal is to have the expanses of grass lush and green in time for Memorial Day weekend.

"We do a big clean up here in the spring so we are more prepared for Memorial Day when we have probably the largest number of visitors," said Michelle Owen, the city's public works director.

Prior to the clean up, the city asks people to temporarily remove flowers and other decorative items from graves and headstones, as certain items, particularly loose ones, can make the job tougher for workers with riding lawnmowers, string trimmers and other equipment.

"It just gives us an opportunity to kind of take things off the graves and then we can do a once over and trim around things and do some of that clean up work," Owen said.

This year, for instance, the city sent out a notice asking people to remove such items by April 1.

The clean up campaign was set from April 1-15, and starting April 16, residents were again invited to return flowers and other items to graves.

The city's contractor, HnT Lawn Care Inc. of Baker City, collected items that hadn't been removed before April 1. Those that weren't perishable, such as flowers, or in poor condition, will be stored at the cemetery, where people can claim them, until Nov. 1, 2022.

See, **Cemetery/Page A3**

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald
The grass is beginning to green up, despite an abnormally chilly spring, at Baker City's Mount Hope Cemetery on Thursday, April 21, 2022.

Music festival coming to Richland

Inaugural event, with 5 bands as well as food and craft vendors, May 20-22

BY LISA BRITTON
 lbritton@bakercityherald.com

Booking the bands was the first step.

After all, musicians are the backbone of a music festival.

"We've had those in place for a while," said Sara Artley of the Eagle Valley Locals, who are organizing the first Chautauqua Music Festival in Richland.

The event is happening May 20-22 at Eagle Valley Grange Park.

Featured bands are Tiller's Folly, Juni Fisher, The Wasteland Kings, Carter Junction, and JJQ (Jenni, Jon and Quinn).

"We're all huge music lovers," Artley said of the organizers. "We feel like Richland is this hidden gem — we have a lot going for us."

In addition to music, Artley said 30 vendors are confirmed for the weekend.

"Wed like to get another 20," she said.

Offerings so far will include food stands — barbecue, gourmet hot dogs, coffee, desserts — as well as artisans.

She said a "local crafter's booth" will be available to those who have local products but not enough supply for their own stand.

Interested vendors can request an application by emailing ChautauquaVendors@gmail.com.

The Schedule

The festival begins Friday, May 20. Vendors open at 3 p.m., and Carter Junction plays from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The Wasteland Kings follow at 5:30 p.m., and Juni Fisher finishes the day from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday gets an early start with breakfast at the Eagle Valley Grange from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Vendors will be open all day, and the music starts at 2 p.m. with JJQ, followed by Carter Junction at 4 p.m. and Juni Fisher at 6 p.m.

Headliner Tiller's Folly takes the stage at 8 p.m.

Saturday finishes with a campfire jam from 10:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Artley said Saturday also includes six 30-minute slots throughout the day for open mic sessions.

"People can come do poetry or music," she said.

See, **Festival/Page A3**



TODAY
 Issue 145
 12 pages

Classified.....B2-B4	Crossword.....B2 & B4	Jayson Jacoby.....A4	Opinion.....A4	Sports.....A6
Comics.....B5	Dear Abby.....B6	Lottery Results.....A2	Outdoors.....B1, B2 & B6	Turning Backs.....A2
Community News.....A2	Horoscope.....B2 & B4	News of Record.....A2	Senior Menus.....A2	Weather.....B6