



**INSIDE GO! Magazine**  
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**LOCAL A3**  
Little League reports break-in at Wade Williams



**SPORTS A6**  
Baker boys golf team 2nd at state

# Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • BUSINESS & AG LIFE • SPORTS Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022 • \$1.50

**QUICK HITS**

**Good Day Wish To A Subscriber**  
A special good day to Herald subscriber Mike Schoeningh of North Powder.

**BRIEFING**

**Groups urge residents to attend school board meeting**  
Baker County United is planning its monthly freedom rally at the Baker 5J School District office, 2090 Fourth St., on Thursday, May 19, at 5 p.m. The group is urging people to attend the school budget committee meeting, which starts at 5 p.m., and the school board meeting at 6 p.m., to ask questions about the district's spending priorities, including the board's recent decision to buy two homes to house foreign students attending Baker High School through the district's Oregon International School program.  
A local parent, Heather Dallstream, is also urging residents to attend the board meeting and learn about district priorities.

**Brown nominates local man to remain on EOU board of trustees**  
Gov. Kate Brown has nominated Richard Chaves of Baker City to serve another four-year term on the board of trustees for Eastern Oregon University, starting July 1, 2022.  
Chaves' current term on the board expires June 30.  
The Oregon Senate Committee on Rules is scheduled to consider Brown's list of nominees for a variety of state boards and commissioners in June.

**WEATHER**

**Today**  
51/32  
Rain showers

**Friday**  
60/34  
Partly sunny

**Full forecast on the back of the B section.**

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

## Garrick, Alderson advance to general election

### Justus, Witham race has not been decided

**BY JAYSON JACOBY**  
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One of the two races for a Baker County Commission slot was too close to be determined the day after the May 17 primary.

But the tiny gap between Kody Justus and Christina Witham — Justus had a 3-vote advantage as of Wednesday, May 18 — isn't even the key factor at this point.  
Because neither candidate has more than 50% of the total votes cast, it's possible that Justus and Witham will both advance to the Nov. 8 general election, where they'll again

be the only two names on the ballot.  
They are vying for position 2, one of the two part-time spots on the three-member Board of Commissioners.  
According to Oregon election law, if no candidate in a contested race gets more than 50% of the votes cast, then the top two advance to the general election. That standard also

applies in races, like this one, with just two candidates.  
In unofficial results from the Baker County Clerk's Office on Wednesday, Justus had 2,485 votes and Witham had 2,482.  
But the more meaningful statistic for now is the percentage of the total votes cast that each candidate has received. Justus had 49.53%.

Witham had 49.47%.  
The reason Justus doesn't have at least 50% of the votes, even with his slim lead, is that there were also 50 write-in votes as of Wednesday, which constitutes 1% of the 5,017 total votes cast. That means Justus and Witham are dividing 99% of the votes, and with

See, **Election**/Page A5



Rotarians Dave Lindley, left, and Brenda Holly help add sponsor stickers to 1,000 books that will be given to local students.

## Baker loves books

### Baker City Rotary Club supports literacy program

**BY LISA BRITTON**  
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Surrounded by stacks of books and supplied with sheets of stickers, members of the Baker City Rotary Club helped label about 1,000 books on May 9 to support the REAL program.

That acronym stands for Read Everyday And Learn, which is a project of the Baker County Community Literacy Coalition.  
Rotary also donates money every year to help purchase books.  
"As a club, we believe literacy is a big deal and we want to help anyway we can," said Anthony Bailey, club president. "This is the biggest way we can impact the most kids."  
Literacy, he said, is one of Rotary's "key areas of service."  
The club's other community service projects include a coat drive (in collaboration with Sorbenots), ringing bells for The Salvation Army every December, scholarships, volunteering at the 1A basketball tournaments and organizing the community Easter egg hunt.  
To support these projects, the Rotary Club sells buffalo burgers during Miners Jubilee every year in Geis-



Baker City Rotary Club members Dotty Miles, right, and Anthony Bailey help add stickers to books that will be given for free to local school children through the Read Everyday And Learn program, coordinated by Jessica Dougherty, left. Each year, the club financially supports the literacy program and Rotarians read with students in the schools.

er-Pollman Park, and on holidays they place American flags, sponsored by local businesses, around Baker City.  
"We especially feel pride on patriotic holidays such as Independence Day, Veterans Day and Memorial Day because without our service men and women we wouldn't have the rights we have today, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice for those rights," Bailey said.  
The Rotary Club meets at noon on Mondays in the banquet room at the

Baker Tower. Potential members are welcome.  
"People are welcome to come check it out," Bailey said.  
**Volunteer readers**  
Rotary members also volunteer with REAL as readers in the schools, although that hasn't been possible for the past two years due to the pandemic.

See, **Books**/Page A5

## Fire chief warns county of response delays

**BY JAYSON JACOBY AND SAMANTHA O'CONNOR**  
Baker City Herald

Baker City Fire Chief Sean Lee has notified Baker County that the city fire department might have to delay responses to fire and ambulance calls due to a staffing shortage.  
In a Tuesday, May 17, email to county commissioners and Jason Yencopal, the county's emergency management director, Lee wrote that "We are at the point that we will have to start staging the calls for service that we receive. We will be able to take the first call for service, but doubles and/or triples may have to wait until the crew can clear the first call. When we receive fire call and medi-

cal call simultaneously, we will have to triage the calls as they come and determine the greatest threat to life and property. My hope is that this will give you an opportunity to find a provider for the interim that will be able to maintain the existing level of service as is referenced in OAR 333-260-0070 (d)."  
Lee wrote that the department's "staffing level has reduced, and existing staff are not responding to call back."  
Casey Johnson, a firefighter/paramedic and president of the local union chapter that represents firefighters, called Lee's email a "direct dig" at firefighters, and in particular the reference to staff not responding to call backs.

Johnson blames the frequent need to call in off-duty employees, and the resulting rise in overtime costs, on the city's decision in July 2021 to change the work schedules for the department's three division chiefs.  
Rather than working the same 24 hours on, 48 hours off schedule that firefighter/paramedics do, two of the three division chiefs work a standard 40-hour weekday schedule, Johnson said.  
He said that means the division chiefs aren't available as often to go out on calls or to cover the station when a two-person crew is out on a call.  
The result, he said, is that the department, more often than before the staffing change, has to ask off-duty

firefighters to respond to the station, to ensure it is staffed, when a two-person crew is out on an ambulance or fire call.  
According to city records, the fire department's overtime bill for the nine-month period July 2021 through March 2022 was \$135,600 — an increase of \$69,900, or 94%, from the same period the previous year.  
Among the documents the city recently added to its website, www.bakercity.com, as part of a new ambulance service database, is a chart showing the weekly number of requests for off-duty firefighters to respond to the station, and the percentage of responses.

See, **Chief**/Page A2

## Spring chinook season opens late

**BY JAYSON JACOBY**  
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Anglers had to wait longer than they have in more than a decade, but they will again get the chance to hook a spring chinook salmon in the Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam and Dug Bar.  
The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), which typically has opened the spring chinook season in late April, announced Tuesday afternoon, May 17, that the season had opened that day.

(Spring chinook are so named because they typically move from the Pacific Ocean into the Columbia River starting in early spring to begin their upstream migration.)  
The issue this year is that few spring chinook are expected to arrive in that reach of the Snake River, said Kyle Bratcher, fish biologist at ODFW's Enterprise office.  
But the story, and the problem that led to this situation, actually dates to 2018.  
There was a meager return of spring chinook that year to the fish trap that Idaho Power Company operates just below Hells Canyon Dam, Bratcher said.  
Workers harvest eggs and sperm from those fish, and the eggs are reared at Idaho Power's Rapid River hatchery near Riggin, Idaho.

See, **Salmon**/Page A3

## Island City man dies in motorcycle accident

Baker City Herald  
An Island City man died when he lost control of the motorcycle he was riding while exiting Interstate 84 in Baker City on Tuesday afternoon, May 17.  
John Dale Atwood, 73, was pronounced dead at the scene.  
The accident happened around 4:24 p.m., according to an Oregon State Police report.  
Atwood was riding westbound on the freeway when he took the offramp at Exit 304, the Campbell Street interchange.  
"For unknown reasons," Atwood lost control of the 2011 Harley-Davidson and crashed into a guardrail, according to the OSP report. He was thrown from the motorcycle, which continued down the offramp.



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