



LOCAL A2
Road closures over
Hells Canyon Dam



SPORTS A3
Bulldogs picked for
all-star baseball series



STATE A6
Off-road wheelchair
built for Baker boy

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Cindy Heesacker of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Nominees sought for Baker County Fair Family

Baker County Friends of the Fairgrounds are seeking nominees for the 2022 Fair Family of the Year. Nominations are due by July 10. Nomination letters can be emailed to bakercityfriendsofthefair@gmail.com.

Rep. Mark Owens plans meet and greet in Baker June 22

Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, who represents Baker County in the Oregon House of Representatives, will have a meet and greet Wednesday, June 22 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, 4005 23rd St. Owens will give updates from the Legislature and hear from constituents.

Three Baker students on Gonzaga president's list

SPOKANE, Wash. — Three Baker City residents were named to the president's list for the spring 2022 semester at Gonzaga University. To be eligible, students must earn a GPA of at least 3.85. Baker City students on the president's list are Gabriel Gambleton, Jacob Jackson and Jazmine Labonte.

WEATHER

Today
60/40
Rain showers

Sunday
59/40
Afternoon showers

Monday
68/42
Partly sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

Raleigh Rust drowned in the Powder River in May 2021, and his mother, Carla Koplein, still wonders how her son might have been saved



Carla Koplein/Contributed Photo



ABOVE: Raleigh Rust with his girlfriend, Carrie Edison Johnson, in the winter of 2019. They were living in Las Vegas at the time. They were sightseeing while returning from a concert in Los Angeles.

LEFT: The memorial to Rust, created by his mother, Carla Koplein, along the Leo Adler Memorial Parkway between Bridge Street and Auburn Avenue.

Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald



Carla Koplein/Contributed Photo

A school picture of Raleigh Rust when he was about 8. His mother, Carla Koplein, said he was full of spunk and endless energy. "He was at the age where he was aware of his appearance and tried to constantly impress people," she said.

BY JAYSON JACOBY • jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

As Carla Koplein listened to the staccato chatter on the police scanner, at an hour when almost everyone in Baker City is deep in sleep, she wondered if her son, Raleigh David Rust, was involved.

She worried that he was. The list of people likely to be the subject of a 911 call about someone wailing near Second Street and Court Avenue at 2:28 a.m. was surely not a lengthy one. Yet as Koplein listened on the early morning of May 14, 2021, she had no trouble imagining that the police officers and the dispatcher were talking about Raleigh, 46, al-

though the initial report speculated that the wailing person was younger. She knew her son, one of her four children, was mentally ill. He was also kind and intelligent and generous. But Raleigh's mental health struggles had been a frequent challenge for Koplein. She had tried for several months to have Raleigh civ-

ily committed to the Oregon State Hospital for treatment. Just three months earlier he spent a week or so at a psychiatric hospital in Twin Falls, Idaho, where she said he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder with schizophrenic tendencies. But Raleigh underwent that treatment voluntarily. He didn't stay. Koplein feared that her son would soon be dead if he remained free, neither in treatment nor in the Baker County Jail, where he had been incarcerated multiple times for short periods over the past several months, for charges including burglary and criminal trespassing.

See, **Raleigh** / Page A7

When can Connor Creek Road be closed?

Final settlement on county's lawsuit sets standard

BY JAYSON JACOBY
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The wildfire danger would have to be extreme for more than 26 straight days before a landowner in eastern Baker County could close and lock gates on a dirt road that was the subject of a lawsuit the county filed in 2019 and settled earlier this year.

That's one of the clauses in the settlement of the lawsuit involving a section of the Connor Creek Road near Lookout Mountain that was closed to public access after the property owner locked the gates in 2017.

Based on that fire danger threshold, the gates could have been locked for two weeks during the summer of 2021, but not at all in 2020 or 2019.

Although the property sold about two weeks after the settlement was signed on Jan. 20, 2022, the deal is binding on the new, and any subsequent, owners, said Kim Mosier, the county's attorney. County commissioners voted 2-1 on Sept. 15, 2021, to approve a memorandum of understanding to negotiate a settlement. The proposed pact included a payment of \$125,000 from the county to the landowner for a "permanent, undisputed" public right of way on the road.

Negotiations on the terms of the settlement continued through the fall and into the winter.

See, **Settlement** / Page A3

Infant formula shortage has local effects

BY IAN CRAWFORD
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Baker County has fared better than many parts of the country during the infant formula shortage, but the effects are being felt here with scant supplies at times at local stores.

"Many families have not been able to find the formulas they use to feed their babies," said Meghan Chancey, administrator at the Baker County Health Department. Some parents have also had to switch formula brands repeatedly depending on which were available, Chancey said.

"While this isn't ideal for families, most babies will tolerate formula changes," she said.

Formula shortages have affected parts of the country since this February, when Abbott Nutrition, one of four companies that produce about 90% of the product in the U.S., closed its Michigan factory due to bacterial contamination.

See, **Formula** / Page A3

Council looks to swap sister cities: No Russia, yes Taiwan

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
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The Baker City Council voted 6-0 on Tuesday, June 14, to move toward ending the sister city relationship with Zeya, Russia. Baker City and Zeya became sister cities in 1996 after a group of Russian miners visited here. Councilor Johnny Waggoner Sr., reflecting on Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year, said Tuesday that "we don't have really good terms

with Russia right now?" Councilor Jason Spriet was absent Tuesday. But even as Baker City dissolves one sister city relationship, councilors will be looking at forging a new bond with a distant land. Mayor Kerry McQuisten will bring information to the Council in July regarding a possible relationship with a city in Taiwan. McQuisten said she had dinner in Portland last week with the two Tai-

wan diplomats who are based in Seattle. "They are looking to establish a sister city relationship potentially and this is a really positive thing moving forward," McQuisten said. "This is a really good opportunity I think to get in on the ground floor plus it's a political statement as well." McQuisten said she will meet with the Taiwanese officials again in Seattle in July, and report back to councilors.

Councilor Joanna Dixon said she believes it is a wonderful opportunity, saying the U.S. needs to strengthen its ties to Taiwan. Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, encompasses a series of islands off mainland China, the largest of which is Formosa. Although the U.S. doesn't have official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the two have strong economic ties.

See, **Council** / Page A3



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