

Water

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Last year, after a record heat wave in late June, the city went on alert status for its water supply on June 28, and enacted stage 2 of the water curtailment ordinance on July 2.

Stage 2, also known as "warning status," restricts residents to using city water (it doesn't affect private wells) to irrigate lawns or gardens only between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., when evaporation declines.

Although the ordinance allows the city to cite and fine residents who fail to comply, city officials emphasized last summer that they didn't intend to do so, and no citations were issued.

But starting in early April and continuing into the second week of June, a series of storms brought significant amounts of rain — and in many instances snow — to higher elevations of the watershed.

That trend has kept watershed streams and springs flowing well. The storms also helped fill Goodrich Reservoir high in the Elkhorns, which holds about 200 million gallons of water and is an important source of water for the city later in the summer, when the stream volumes drop.

"We'll have our water that we typically use there (from Goodrich) for August, so that's great news," Owen said.

Currently the city is primarily using water from Marble Springs, one of the primary sources in the watershed, which ranges from Elk Creek in the south to Goodrich Creek at the north end.

"We have it at Marble, we have it at Elk Creek, and we have it at Goodrich if we need it. We have the well if we need it," Owen said. "At this moment, things look good."

She had hoped to have two wells available to supplement the watershed sources this summer.

A 654-foot-deep well was drilled in 2020 at the east end of the parking lot at the city-owned Quail Ridge Golf Course, but supply chain issues slowed construction on the well house and installation of piping and controls. That work is happening now, and the well should be available later this year.

The city's existing well, which was drilled in the late 1970s, is available. That well is augmented by water from the watershed. During the winter and early spring, the city diverts tens of millions of gallons of water from the watershed into the well, a process known as Aquifer Storage and Recovery. In 2009 Baker City was the first Oregon city to receive a state permit to use that tactic.

The city's water supply will also benefit soon when workers wrap up this year's segment of a long-term project to replace the aging, leak-prone concrete water supply pipeline in the watershed with PVC and ductile iron.

Once that's done, the city also be able to tap Salmon and Little Salmon creeks.

Owen doesn't think the city will need to enact the water curtailment ordinance in early July as it did last year.

But the restrictions might be necessary later in the summer.

She noted that most of Baker County remains in a drought, although its sever-

ity has declined over the past month or so due to the persistent cool, damp weather.

As of June 21, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 4.3% of the county (in the southwest corner, not in Baker City) is in extreme drought. Most of the county is in either moderate drought (53.1%) or is abnormally dry (12.7%), which is the lowest of the five-category drought rating system.

The northwest corner of the county, which includes the city's watershed and much of Baker Valley, is rated as abnormally dry.

"Technically we're still in a drought," Owen said. "We're just not in extreme or exceptional. So, that's good. We don't want to be extreme or exceptional."

Water use rises along with the temperature

The cool spring also suppressed the city's thirst.

Daily water use had been averaging around 2 million gallons per day, Owen said, which is typical for fall, winter and spring.

But as temperatures rose last week — it was the warmest week of the year, with daily highs topping 70 degrees on five straight days — daily consumption rose to around 4 million gallons.

"That's pretty common, you know, when the weather gets warmer," Owen said.

Last June wasn't common, both in terms of temperature and water use.

With a record-breaking heat wave the last week of the month — including 103 degrees on June 29, the hottest June day on record at the Baker City Airport — city residents were going through about 5 million gallons per day.

That rate, Owen said last year, was not sustainable based on the city's water supply.

The city used 45% more water in June 2021 than it did in June 2020.

That heavy use led to the city enacting phase 2 of the water curtailment ordinance and prompted Owen to talk about the possibility of the city moving to phase 3 for the first time ever. Under that stage, all outdoor watering with city water is banned.

But the city's water use dropped by 23% in August 2021 compared with July, and the city never advanced to stage 3.

Although Owen is more optimistic today than she was a year ago, she continues to emphasize the need to conserve water.

"I think, in general, we are fairly wasteful of our water," she said. "And I just think it's a habit. There's habits you can get into in conserving water."

Educating at the school level for young kids to develop helpful habits is the best, such as shutting off the water while brushing their teeth.

"I'm still going to continue to push that," Owen said.

The city's annual Consumer Confidence Report, which was mailed to water customers recently, includes a list of water-saving tips. The information is also available on the city's website, bakercity.com.

That report, which the city is required to send yearly, also includes the results of water quality testing the city does throughout the year.

- Joseph Zikmund, tied 90th, 77.
- Chris Schuh, 96th, 74.
- Matt Rabourne, 97th, 73.

Boys junior varsity

- Connor Martin, tied 5th, 86.
- Remington Benson, tied 9th, 85.
- Jose Armenta, tied 13th, 84.
- Ryan Hansen, tied 22nd, 81.
- Ethan Whiting, tied 30th, 77.

Boys novice

- Charlie Boulter, 4th, 81.

Girls junior varsity

- Riley Hurliman, tied 4th, 71.

Kimball expressed gratitude for his crew and faculty support.

"I want to thank everyone that has supported us from day one," he said. "All coaches — Wayne Paxton, Chad Hurliman, Bob Whitnah and David Blair really stepped up this year."

Kimball said Baker, La Grande and Wallowa trap clubs are planning a winter league to start in early 2023.

It is separate from the USA Clay Target League and is a great warmup for the season," he said.

City officer uses taser to stop fleeing suspect

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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A Baker City Police officer used his taser to subdue a man who fled and jumped over a fence into a residential backyard while being arrested on Saturday, June 25 as a suspect in a burglary.

Markus Damian Dethloff, 32, of Baker City, was arrested at about 11 a.m. at 1723 Madison St., according to a report from officer Koby Essex.

Dethloff, who was not hurt, was taken to the Baker County Jail.

He is charged with third-degree escape, second-degree criminal trespassing, and was also held on a Union County Circuit Court warrant on a charge of failure to appear.

The incident started a little before 11 a.m. when Essex, who was in his pa-

trol car, saw Dethloff walking west near the 1500 block of Campbell Street. Essex wrote in his report that he knew Dethloff was a suspect in multiple cases, and when he asked dispatch to check, he confirmed the Union County warrant.

Essex said he stopped Dethloff and another man in the 1700 block of Madison Street. Baker City Police Sgt. Michael Regan also arrived.

Essex wrote that Dethloff asked if he were being arrested.

Essex said that he said yes, after which Dethloff sprinted away, running across the front yard of the home at 1723 Madison.

Dethloff then leaped over the fence separating the front and backyards.

Essex wrote in his report that he was concerned Dethloff, having already trespassed on the property, might try to enter

the home.

Essex wrote that before deploying his taser, he checked to see where Dethloff would land if the effects of the taser caused him to fall.

Essex confirmed that Dethloff would land on grass, after which the officer used the taser.

Essex wrote that he used the feature that delivered a five-second burst from the device. Both probes struck Dethloff, and he fell. Regan handcuffed Dethloff, who was checked by an EMT/paramedic, as the police department policy requires when a taser is deployed.

Essex wrote that Dethloff had 3.4 grams of methamphetamine, which is considered a "user amount" in Oregon and is subject to a citation but not a criminal charge.

Lifeguards

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June 20 saw 140 users of the pool, who can range in age from 93 years to six months.

Some are here for their first time in the water; others have logged more laps than they'll ever know.

But Moe and Koby Myer, CEO of the Y, are worried about the pool.

They need lifeguards.

"We lose five" lifeguards over the next few months, Moe said.

One family is moving, and other lifeguards will be heading back to college toward the end of summer.

This means she'll lose swim instructors too, because lifeguards fill the dual role of teaching youngsters how to swim and making sure all swimmers are safe in the pool.

Moe needs one lifeguard for every 25 swimmers.

A typical open swim brings 65 people, which means at least three lifeguards are needed to keep an eye on the pool, plus one to work at Sam-O's front counter.

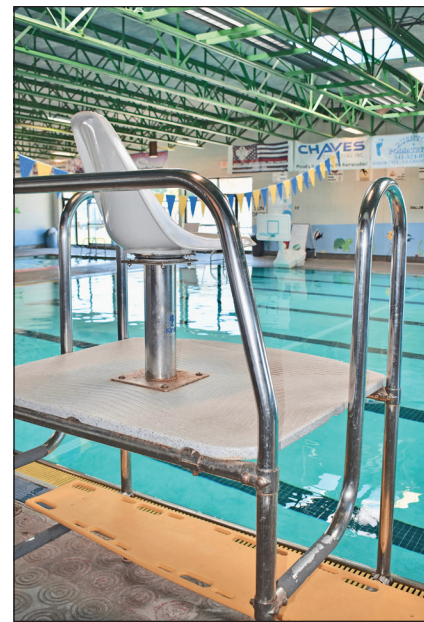
And they have to rotate every 15 minutes — this is necessary, Moe said, for a break from sitting in the humid heat.

What's it take to be a lifeguard?

Moe doesn't mince words about the certification to become a lifeguard.

"It's not an easy test," she said. First, a candidate must be at least 15, and pass three tests to even qualify for the training:

- Swim 300 continuous yards (the pool is 25 yards).
- Rescue a 10-pound brick from the bottom of the deep end, then swim while holding it out of the water for 20 yards —



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Paula Moe, aquatics director for the Baker County YMCA, said more lifeguards are needed to continue offering swimming lessons, open swim and other activities at Sam-O Swim Center. To become a lifeguard, an applicant must be 15 or older and pass a prerequisite test to begin the training.

all in less than 1 minute, 40 seconds.

- Tread water for two minutes.

Swimmers who pass those tests can then begin the 30-hour certification class. The \$350 cost is covered by the YMCA. Lifeguards must be recertified every two years, and have in-service trainings once a month.

"Lifeguards are such a good team," Moe said.

Anyone interested in learning more about the lifeguard process is encouraged to call Moe at the pool, 541-523-8328.

Police

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In that scenario — which Cannon emphasized is only one of multiple possibilities, all of which will be considered — Duby said calls to the emergency dispatch center would be forwarded to the city police department's on-call supervisor, who would then decide, based on the circumstances, whether to call in an officer to respond.

In an email to the Herald on Monday morning, Cannon wrote that although there is "no plan to have zero coverage in the city between the hours of 3 a.m. and 7 a.m." — meaning that police would respond to calls but wouldn't necessary be on patrol — "we may need to consider different variations of coverage at targeted hours of the day. Heavier coverage during peak hours and lighter coverage at other hours of the day. What this looks like is yet to be determined."

Duby said maintaining 24-hour patrols has been a constant challenge since he started with Baker City Police, as a lieutenant, almost three years ago.

Duby, who formerly worked for Oregon State Police, has been chief for the past year.

Even when the department is fully staffed based on its current budget, with eight patrol officers, it can be difficult, due to vacations, illnesses and other absences, to keep two officers on patrol around the clock, Duby said.

The city has six patrol officers now. A seventh officer is at the state training academy and will be available to start work in August, Duby said.

The city is also advertising for a patrol officer vacancy. Another current patrol officer is scheduled to go to the training

academy in August.

To maintain 24-hour patrols, Duby said the department often has to call in off-duty officers to work overtime.

He said that has contributed to what Cannon, in his email, described as "an undesirable turnover rate of officers."

The department has had an average of one or two officers resign each year for more than a decade, Duby said.

Cannon wrote in his email that "some reasons for this include burnout and the inability to use accrued leave."

Duby said that in assessing the staffing issues, he has looked at switching from the current schedule, with patrol officers working 12-hour shifts, to a 10-hour shift. That could result in the city dropping patrols, but not ending police emergency response, for some period, potentially four hours, each day, he said.

Duby said that as part of his assessment, he asked a department employee to compile a schedule, for discussion purposes only, that included the 10-hour shifts and reduced patrol schedule.

Duby said that conceptual schedule was inadvertently released as an actual work schedule, what Cannon described in his email as "a miscommunication."

Duby said he takes responsibility for the mistake.

"That released schedule was then posted to social media," Cannon wrote in his email. "That created an unnecessary stir and excitement as knee-jerk posts are prone to do. We want to calm the discussion down and bring it back to where it needs to be, which is a discussion on how to solve the above-mentioned challenges. The above issues need to be addressed in a slow, methodical and open discussion with Council."

That discussion will start during Tues-

day's meeting, which is earlier than Cannon and Duby had intended, since they have not settled on a list of proposals to present to councilors.

Duby said he would prefer to maintain the current 24-hour patrols.

"I think we can all say that's absolutely the best," he said. "But it's really, really difficult."

Councilors react

Mayor Kerry McQuisten said Tuesday's presentation from Duby is important.

"So we can separate rumors from fact in public. I'm clearly not in favor of ANY gaps in patrol coverage," McQuisten wrote to the Herald.

Councilor Johnny Waggoner Sr. agreed.

"This couldn't ever pass council," he said on Monday morning, referring to the potential for less than 24-hour patrolling. "It makes no sense. I just want to know what's going on."

Waggoner said public safety is a top priority for the council, including 24-hour patrol coverage.

Councilor Shane Alderson said he would not support reducing patrol coverage.

Councilor Joanna Dixon declined to comment until she had talked about the situation with Cannon and Duby.

The council is scheduled during Tuesday's meeting to adopt the budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

The budget for the police department is close to that for the current year, with the staffing actually increasing slightly, from 18.68 full-time equivalents to 19.08. Total personnel costs for the coming fiscal year are \$2,317,888, compared with an approved amount of \$2,328,757 for the current fiscal year.

Trapshooting

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"I am extremely proud of them all," Kimball said. "A lot of the kids shot personal bests and overall had a good time. We are all looking forward to working hard next year to make sure we bring home the No. 1 team trophy."

Twenty-one of the 23 Baker team members who qualified for state competed in Hillsboro. Kimball said Skye Smith and Anthony Betts were unable to attend.

Bulldogs competed in novice, junior varsity and varsity categories.

Boys varsity

(Scores are out of 100 total targets)

- Jimmy Sullivan Jr., tied 4th, 96.
- Gage Hatfield, tied 7th, 93.
- Conner Norton and Seth Holden, tied 16th, 90.
- Alex Wise, tied 34th, 86.
- Ryan Brown, Jaxon Ford, Jack Heriza, tied 57th, 84.
- Ethan Morgan and Samuel Nelson, tied 77th, 81.
- Alexander Jaca, tied 82nd, 80.

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