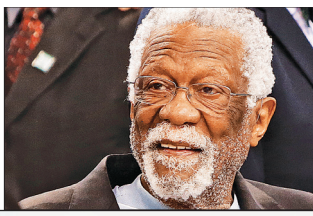




**LOCAL A3**  
Governor candidates  
have first debate



**SPORTS A5**  
NBA legend Bill  
Russell dies at 88



**HOME B1**  
Making the most of  
ripe tomato season

# Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • HOME & LIVING • SPORTS

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2022 • \$1.50

**QUICK HITS**

**Good Day Wish To A Subscriber**

A special good day to subscriber Robin Crowell of Baker City.

**BRIEFING**

**Missoula Children's Theatre returns**

Missoula Children's Theatre returns this month with "The Little Mermaid." Registration is still open for the camp, which runs Aug. 15-20. MCT is brought to Baker City by Crossroads Carnegie Art Center.

MCT is open to students from grades 1-12. Registration closes Aug. 14. Cost is \$40 for members of Crossroads, or \$60 nonmembers. Scholarships are available. Sign up at [www.crossroads-arts.org](http://www.crossroads-arts.org) or call 541-523-5369.

Auditions are held at 10 a.m. Monday, Aug. 15, at Baker High School. Rehearsals are held throughout the week, and culminate with community performances at 6 p.m. Friday, Aug. 19, and 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 20. Admission is \$5 for adults, and free for children 12 and younger who come with a paid adult. These shows include a treat of ice cream, thanks to the Oregon K-12 Summer Grant Program.

**BHS football camp planned**

Signup for Baker Bulldog Football Camp has started. The camp will run Aug. 15-18 at the Baker High Memorial Stadium, hosted by the Baker High School coaching staff and players.

Grades 7-8 will play from 10:30 a.m. to noon and can sign up at class registration.

Grades 3-6 will play from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and can sign up at Les Schwab's or the YMCA.

The camp will wrap up with the Quarterback Club barbecue at 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 18.

Signup fee is \$20, including the meal and an event shirt.

**WEATHER**

**Today**  
91/53  
Partly sunny

**Wednesday**  
92/55  
Partly sunny

**CORRECTION**

A story in the July 30 issue about the Baker County Republican Party meeting incorrectly stated that a Jan. 25 meeting was private. The event was a public forum for GOP gubernatorial candidates. It took place at a privately owned venue, the Baker Elks Lodge.

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

**BIG RATTLESNAKE FIRE**



The Big Rattlesnake fire burning west of Medical Springs on Sunday evening, July 31, 2022.

Baker County Sheriff's Office/Contributed Photo

## GALE-FORCE WINDS FANNED THE FLAMES

**Winds subsided before a lightning-sparked blaze near Medical Springs — Baker County's largest fire this year — reached any structures**

BY JAYSON JACOBY • [jjacoby@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jjacoby@bakercityherald.com)

The combustible combination of lightning, a record-setting heat wave, a weeks-long dry spell and gale-force winds on Sunday afternoon, July 31, contributed to Baker County's biggest wildfire so far this year.

The Big Rattlesnake fire burned 425 acres in the remote Powder River Canyon between Thief Valley Reservoir and Highway 203, and for a few hours posed a threat to several homes.

The Baker County Sheriff's Office issued a Level 2 evacuation notice — be prepared to leave at a moment's notice — for five or six homes on the west side of Highway 203 on Sunday evening, and a Level 1 notice — be ready for the possible need to evacuate — for residents east of the highway along Miles Bridge Road.

No one was evacuated, and no structures were damaged, said Jayson Yencopal, the county's emer-

gency manager. The evacuation notice was canceled for areas east of the highway on Monday morning, Aug. 1, and reduced to Level 1 for homes west of the highway, Sheriff Travis Ash said.

There are three levels of evacuation notice. Under Level 3, which was not initiated for the Big Rattlesnake fire, residents are told to leave immediately.

Ash said on Monday morning that the preliminary evacuation notices were given as a precaution mainly due to the strong winds that initially caused the fire, which was reported a little before 5 p.m., to grow rapidly. When the wind calmed later

Sunday evening, the fire activity also slowed, Ash said.

Jonathan Dunbar, fire duty officer for the Bureau of Land Management's Vale District, said the fire did not grow overnight Sunday into Monday.

"Crews will continue to secure the perimeter and mop up today," Dunbar said in a press release Monday morning.

**Rancher grateful for fast work by firefighters**

Mike McGinnis smelled the smoke and watched the powerful gusts bending the grass near the ranch he and his wife, Nicky, own just west of High-

way 203 between the Powder River and Medical Springs.

He was worried. McGinnis feared that if the flames crossed the Big Creek canyon, which is between his home and where the fire started, those winds could quickly push the fire toward his house and outbuildings.

But later on Sunday evening the wind shifted direction, he said, blowing the flames back toward areas that had already burned.

McGinnis said the fire didn't get closer than about a mile to his home.

See **Flames** / A2

*"You just cannot say enough about these rural volunteer firefighters. They're willing to put everything on the line. We're blessed with a great community. People truly care. It's a great feeling."*

— Mike McGinnis, Baker County rancher whose home was threatened by the Big Rattlesnake fire

## A trip to Rosemarie's garden

**Rosemarie O'Donnell has transformed her Huntington yard into a green bounty**

BY IAN CRAWFORD  
[icrawford@bakercityherald.com](mailto:icrawford@bakercityherald.com)

HUNTINGTON — Beyond the corner fence, the hillsides roll away in every direction from this town at the southeastern corner of Baker County.



O'Donnell

Golden grass sways in the morning breeze and casts shadows of platinum blonde.

But bursting through and over the fence, a green bounty nearly escapes containment. Within, an abundance. Flowers, fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants, a streaming fountain and



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Rosemarie O'Donnell's gourds are growing well, with a honeybee actively pollinating the flower on July 22, 2022.

glints of rainbow from discs on string.

A passer-by might feel a wince of concern, seeing an 80-year-old woman on hands and knees working the earth, lugging stones and

chopping with shovels.

But for Rosemarie O'Donnell, the physical strain is secondary to the freedom it affords.

See **Rosemarie** / A3

## Woman accused of hitting officers during her arrest

BY JAYSON JACOBY  
[jjacoby@bakercityherald.com](mailto:jjacoby@bakercityherald.com)

A Baker City woman is accused of hitting two police officers and a motel employee during an altercation on July 28 at the Best Western Sunridge Inn.

Christine Marie Mills, 35, is in the Baker County Jail, charged with resisting arrest, interfering with police, second-degree criminal trespassing, second-degree disorderly conduct and three counts of harassment.

She is scheduled to enter a plea to the charges on Sept. 12 at 1:30 p.m. in Baker County Circuit Court.

According to a report from Baker City Police officer Justin Prevo, the incident started just before 3 p.m. on July 28 when he responded to the Sunridge Inn after a report of a woman who was in the parking lot, trying to fight with customers and employees.

See **Arrest** / A2



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**TODAY**  
Issue 35  
14 pages

Classified .....	B3-B6	Crossword .....	B3 & B4	Horoscope .....	B4 & B5	Opinion .....	A4	Sudoku .....	B5
Comics .....	B7	Dear Abby .....	B8	Lottery Results .....	A2	Senior Menus .....	A2	Turning Backs .....	A2
Community News .....	A2	Home & Living .....	B1-B3	News of Record .....	A2	Sports .....	A5	Weather .....	B7