



GO! INSIDE
Getting ready for
the Baker County Fair



NEWS B6
The climate deal and
effects on farmers



SPORTS A6
Broadcaster Vin
Scully dies

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Roger Welter of Gresham.

BRIEFING

Fire restrictions tighten starting Aug. 5

Starting Friday, Aug. 5, campfires will be allowed only in designated campgrounds and recreation sites on the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla national forests.

Both forests are moving to Phase B of public use restrictions due to increasing fire danger resulting from the recent hot, dry weather.

Firewood cutters with a valid permit can use chain saws from between 8 p.m. and 1 p.m. daily. It's not legal, however, to use a chain saw around a campsite.

Haines Stampede Demolition Derby Saturday

The annual Haines Stampede Demolition Derby is set for Saturday, Aug. 6 at 6 p.m. at the rodeo arena on the east side of Highway 30, just south of Haines. Spectator gates open at 4 p.m.

Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and military members, \$5 for ages 6-12, and free for kids 5 and younger. In addition to the demolition derby (with welded and chain and bang classes), there will be youth and adult barrel racing, the Bill Taylor cow hide race, and an outhouse race.

WEATHER

Today
90/46
Mostly sunny

Friday
83/45
Mostly sunny

Full forecast on the back
of the B section.

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

Justus withdraws from commission race

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Kody Justus, one of two candidates for position 2 on the Baker County Board of Commissioners, has withdrawn his candidacy.

Justus, who was set for a runoff against Christina Witham following an exceedingly close vote in the May 17 primary, posted a video on his campaign Facebook page on Monday, Aug. 1, announcing that he wouldn't run in the Nov. 8 general election.

Justus noted in the video that Witham received more votes in the primary.

But her margin was a mere two votes out of slightly more than 5,000 cast. Witham received 2,518 votes, Justus 2,516.

"There are more people that disagree with me than agree with me," Justus said in the video. He said he didn't "see any way to change the outcome of the vote."

Justus hadn't returned a phone message by press time on Wednesday, Aug. 3.

Witham said on Wednesday that she was "shocked" when she read Justus' message two days earlier announcing his withdrawal.

Witham posted on her campaign Facebook page: "I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Kody Justus."

Witham said on Wednesday that based on the narrow margin in the primary, she was expecting a competitive race this fall, and a continuation of what she described as a "respectful" campaign with Justus prior to the May primary.

"I have a lot of gratitude for him," she said of Justus. "I was preparing to campaign hard starting in September



Justus

and continuing through October."

Witham said she still plans to meet with as many voters as possible, but she conceded that Justus' withdrawal, leaving her as the only candidate on the ballot, drastically changes the situation.

Justus said in his video that he's not "partial to politicians" and "I really don't enjoy being one."

"I still have a heart to serve my community," he said. "We'll just have to look for a different way to do it, that's all."



Wes Morgan/Contributed Photo, File

FIRE FEARS & STATE LAWS

Wes Morgan has strived to protect his Sumpter Valley home from wildfire by maintaining an expense of lush green lawn, pruning limbs from the ponderosa pines and taking other steps.

A new Oregon law seeks to reduce wildfire risk in rural areas, but some residents worry about the expense of possible mandates

Inside

Baker County's state legislators call for 'full-stop' on fire risk map project: **A5**

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Wes Morgan is an enthusiastic supporter of the effort to protect Oregon's rural homes from wildfire.

His own, for instance.

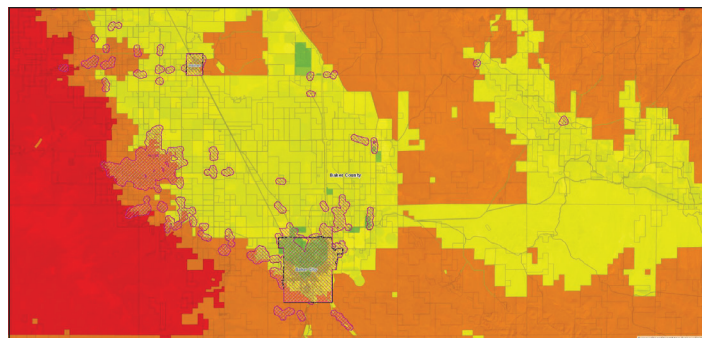
Morgan, who is chief of the Powder River Rural Fire Protection District, an all-volunteer agency with a station just outside Sumpter, has endeavored to reduce the risk of fire on his property among the ponderosa pines of Sumpter Valley.

He maintains a lush green lawn as an effective fire break.

He prunes the pines to deprive the trees of a ladder that flames could climb into the combustible crowns.

He stacks his firewood a safe distance from his home and makes sure needles and other tinder don't accumulate on his roof.

Yet for all that, Morgan is troubled by the prospect of the state compelling property owners, possibly including some of his



Oregon Department of Forestry map

This map shows the wildfire danger ratings in an area including Baker City and Baker Valley. Orange denotes high danger and red is extreme danger. Areas with diagonal lines are in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Yellow is moderate and green denotes either low or no risk. Owners of properties that are both within the WUI and have a high or extreme danger rating could be required to take steps to reduce the fire risk on their properties, and comply with new building codes, under a new state law.

neighbors, to take similar precautions under penalty of law.

"There are a lot of people that need to do something" to protect their properties, Morgan said.

"But I have mixed feelings." His ambivalence stems from

a law the Oregon Legislature passed in 2021.

Senate Bill 762 requires, among other things, that the state create a map that shows a wildfire danger level for each of Oregon's 1.8 million tax lots.

See **Wildfire** / A5

Group donates \$750 to Rachel Center

BY CLAYTON FRANKE

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The Rachel Pregnancy Center, which provides free services to those in unplanned pregnancies, received a \$750 donation from the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, on Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Matt Reidy, financial secretary for the Knights of Columbus Baker City Council, said the donation came from the Oregon State Knights of Columbus Council. He said the money is part of the Knights' Life Program.

Reidy said it's through this program, which includes resources such as Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP),

that the goals and values of the Knights overlap with those of the Rachel Center.

"We've had a long-standing relationship with the Rachel Center, where in the past we've made donations to assist them in helping young women and families make choices about life," Reidy said.

Tuesday's \$750 donation is in addition to yearly contributions the Knights of Columbus make to the Rachel Center, Reidy said.

He and Tim Delsman, grand knight of the Baker City Council, brought the \$750 check to the center at 2192 Court Ave. on Tuesday morning.

See **Donation** / A2



Clayton Franke/Baker City Herald

The Knights of Columbus donated \$750 to the Rachel Center in Baker City on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. From left, Vera Grove, the center's director, Patsy Hoelscher, chair of the center's board of directors, Matt Reidy, financial secretary for the Knights of Columbus Baker City Council, and Tim Delsman, grand knight for the local council.

GOP officials claim July 28 vote is invalid

Longtime county chair, former state GOP chair cite lack of quorum

BY CLAYTON FRANKE

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Suzan Ellis Jones, longtime chair of the Baker County Republican Party, contends a July 28 vote to suspend her and other executive committee members and elect a temporary committee and chair violated a party bylaw and thus is not valid.

Jones and Vance Day, former chair of the Oregon Republican Party, said in a Monday, Aug. 1 interview that due to the lack of a quorum of the county GOP executive committee during the July 28 meeting at the Baker County Library, the votes are a "nullity," meaning the results aren't official.

During that meeting, elected Republican precinct committee persons (PCPs) voted to suspend for 60 days the county party's six-member executive committee, including Jones, and to investigate complaints made about Jones.

See **Republicans** / A3

Police arrest man hours after he was released from prison

BY JAYSON JACOBY

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Baker City Police arrested a man on Monday, Aug. 1 on burglary, harassment and criminal mischief charges less than six hours after he had been released from prison.

Alan William Wolfe, 35, whom police described as a transient, was arrested at 4:46 p.m. at 1340 Auburn Ave. after officers responded to a report of a burglary in progress there.

Baker City Police, deputies from the Baker County Sheriff's Office and employees from the Baker County Parole and Probation Department arrived, finding Wolfe, shirtless and bleeding from cuts to his arms.

Police found that the back window of the home at that address had been broken. Officers also found blood.

See **Burglary** / A2



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