



LOCAL A3
Scenes from the Shrine parade



SPORTS A6
West nips East in Shrine OT thriller



HOME B1
Make the most of the zucchini bounty

Baker City Herald

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QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Glen Vandenbos of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Passenger train advocates meeting

A group that wants to return passenger train service to Eastern Oregon has scheduled public meetings this week in La Grande and Pendleton.

All Aboard Northwest's Charlie Hamilton and Dan Bilka will talk about how communities can try to tap state and federal funding to restore passenger rail service, which ended in the region when Amtrak's Pioneer route was canceled in 1997.

The Pendleton meeting is set for Friday, Aug. 12 at 1 p.m. at Hamley's Steakhouse. The La Grande meeting will be Saturday, Aug. 13 at 10 a.m. at Cook Memorial Library at Eastern Oregon University.

Baker City watershed project open house

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will have a public open house on Aug. 17 to present information about a proposed project to reduce the wildfire risk in the Baker City watershed. The Wallowa-Whitman manages the 10,000 acres of public, forested land within the watershed. The proposal calls for thinning trees and lighting prescribed fires to reduce the amount of fuel in the area. The open house will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Baker County Events Center, 2600 East St.

WEATHER

Today
95/60
Storms possible

Wednesday
90/53
Storms possible

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

City tears down 'chronic nuisance' home

City deemed it unsafe to occupy

BY JAYSON JACOBY and SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
Baker City Herald

Baker City hired a contractor this week to tear down an eastside home that the city's building official deemed a dangerous structure that could have collapsed at any point.

The dismantling, which started Monday morning, Aug. 8, ends a years-long issue with the house at 1975 Birch St., at the corner of Birch Street and Washington Avenue.

The home, owned by Lucas Buddy Lee Gwin, 37, was the first to be deemed a "chronic neighborhood nuisance" under a 2019 revision to the city's property maintenance ordinance.



Samantha O'Conner/Baker City Herald

Work began Monday morning, Aug. 8, 2022, to tear down a home in east Baker City that the city declared unsafe due to structural problems.

Brent Kerns, Baker County Justice of the Peace, made the chronic nuisance judgment on Jan. 11, 2022.

Gwin appealed that decision, but the appeal was dismissed July 19.

Although the city paid to remove trash and other debris from outside Gwin's home four times from 2017-21, the recurring violations of the city's property maintenance ordi-

"At some point that structure would have failed. It was in terrible shape."

— Dawn Kitzmiller, Baker City building official

nance, culminating with the chronic nuisance designation, are not the reason Gwin's home was torn down, said Dawn Kitzmiller, the city's building official.

The structure was taken down because she deemed that it had multiple structural problems that clearly made it a dangerous building, Kitzmiller said.

The 950-square-foot home, built in 1900, has a market value of \$3,740, according to the Baker County Assessor's Office, which last appraised the property in 2019.

See **House** / A3

WELCOME WATER



Baker City Public Works/Contributed Photo

Goodrich Reservoir, in the Elkhorn Mountains west of Baker City, is one of the city's two supplementary water sources.

Baker City's water supply situation much better than a year ago

BY SAMANTHA O'CONNOR • soconnor@bakercityherald.com

Baker City's cool June might have disappointed residents who relish summer weather, but Michelle Owen certainly enjoyed the hottest season's late arrival.

Owen is the city's public works director.

She said summer's tardiness has helped the city avoid a repeat of 2021's water supply challenge.

The city went through about 84 million gallons during this June, compared with 130 million gallons in June 2021, which ended with a record-setting heat wave.

The higher-than-usual consumption during June 2021 prompted city officials to enact stage two of the city's 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.

But this year, with the much lower water use during June, the city has not moved to stage 2.

And that's despite residents using slightly more water this July than last, Owen said.

The city went through about 9 million gallons more this July, she said.

But with the much-lower use during June, the city hasn't needed to

impose restrictions, Owen said.

"I think the bigger difference came from June of last year to June of this year. That's a greater difference. We were using water like crazy last June," she said. "July's numbers are up from last July's but we're not under curtailment so that would explain that."

As is typical, water use began to rise along with the temperatures in the middle of July.

At the end of the month, when the temperature exceeded 90 on seven

See **Water** / A3

"We haven't had to tap into Goodrich, which is really incredible, again because of the wet spring we had, it kept the creeks flowing."

— Michelle Owen, Baker City public works director

Forest Service restarts forest plan revisions

Baker City Herald

The U.S. Forest Service is reviving its oft-delayed effort to update the long-term management plans for the three national forests in the Blue Mountains.

The current plans for the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla and Malheur national forests, which cover almost 5 million acres in Northeastern Oregon, date to the early 1990s.

Forest plans typically are updated every 10 to 15 years.

A draft version of the revised plans for the three forests was finished in 2014 after about 15 years of work.

But after hearing complaints, from people who believe the proposed plans allow too much logging, livestock grazing and other uses, and from people who think the plans were overly restrictive, Forest Service officials decided to come up with new proposals.

The agency released a final environmental impact statement in 2018, but that, too, prompted widespread complaints.

The Forest Service withdrew the proposed updates on March 14, 2019.

That prompted the creation of the Blues Intergovernmental Council, which includes representatives from counties, federal and Tribal agencies. Over the past two years the Forest Service has been working with the council to address some of the major concerns residents and groups have expressed about previous forest plan revision proposals.

The Forest Service announced on Friday, Aug. 5 that the agency is putting together a team of agency employees to write draft separate management plans for each of the three national forests.

"The Forest Service is eager to begin the official planning process and hear input on Tribal, individual, and community values," according to a press release. "Public involvement will help the Forest Service gain local knowledge about existing forest conditions and understand concerns about community or resource impacts from proposed changes in the revised Forest Plans.

"Multiple uses provided by the national forests (including livestock grazing, timber harvest, forest recreation, tourism, and subsistence activities) are all important to economic and social life in the Blue Mountains area," the press release states.



TODAY
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14 pages

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Community News	A2	Home & Living	B1-B3	News of Record	A2	Sports	A6	Weather	B8