

Fires

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Such clouds typically form late in the afternoon and dissipate relatively rapidly after sundown as the air cools, Breidenbach said.

Wallowa-Whitman fire managers said they expected both the Sturgill and Nebo fires would generate smoke plumes both Tuesday and Wednesday, which was forecast to be even hotter, said Matt Burks, public affairs officer for the Wallowa-Whitman.

A press release from the forest on Tuesday afternoon stated that the Sturgill and Nebo fires are having beneficial effects by reducing the fuel load and creating a “mosaic” pattern of heavily and lightly burned areas, as well as areas that don’t burn.

“This range of fire effects is expected and desired,” the press release states. “As temperatures increase (and) humidity decreases this week, fire activity on the Nebo and Sturgill Fires is expected to increase and large smoke columns or plumes may be visible from nearby areas.”

Although Wallowa-Whitman officials are monitoring the fires, as they have done with more than 30 lightning-sparked blazes in the 365,000-acre Eagle Cap over the past quarter century, fire managers intended to have helicopters drop buckets of water on both the Sturgill and Nebo fires today to try to curb their spread in certain directions.

Todd Pederson, an assistant fire management officer on the Wallowa-Whitman, said the goal is to keep the Sturgill fire from crossing the Minam River, and with the Nebo fire the objective is to prevent flames from spreading into the upper Imnaha River drainage.

Pederson said on Wednesday morning that both fires are behaving about as fire officials expected.

Among the criteria that officials use to determine whether to monitor or fight a fire is its proximity to private property and to the wilderness boundary.

As a current example, Pederson cited a fire reported on Tuesday, but confirmed on Wednesday in the upper Lostine River area, where a road corridor penetrates into the wilderness for several miles.

Because that fire is near the wilderness boundary, the Wallowa-Whitman is treating the blaze as a regular fire, and trying to put it out as soon as possible, Pederson said.

Firefighters rappelled to the fire on Wednesday, and air tankers dropped retardant, he said.



Above: Looking northeast across Baker Valley to a pyrocumulus cloud towering above the Wallowa Mountains on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2022. The Sturgill fire in the Eagle Cap Wilderness helped spawn the cloud, which is basically a fire-induced thunderhead. Below: The Sturgill fire is burning near the North Minam River in the Eagle Cap Wilderness northeast of Baker City.



U.S. Forest Service/Contributed Photo

Sturgill fire

The blaze, on the east side of the Minam River Canyon, is about 6 miles from the nearest private property. There were initially two separate fires in the area, but they have burned together, Burks said.

Firefighters are working on a strategy to protect private land at Red’s Horse Ranch and Minam River Lodge to the northwest.

The Wallowa-Whitman has closed sections of three trails near the fire.

- Minam River trail, No. 1673, from the Bear Mt. trail junction south to the Rock Creek trail.
- North Minam trail, No. 1675, from the Minam River trail to the Bowman trail.
- Green Lake trail, No. 1666, from the North Minam trail to Green Lake.

Nebo fire

The fire was estimated at 800 acres on Wednesday, Aug. 31. Firefighters are working along roads and trails outside the Eagle Cap Wilderness to potentially use them as control lines if necessary to protect the Lick Creek Guard Station, structures at Big Sheep Camp, and Indian Crossing campground along the Imnaha River should the fire threaten those, according to the Wallowa-Whitman.

There were no trail closures around the Nebo fire as of Wednesday, Aug. 31, but Pederson said officials were planning to temporarily close the roads leading to the Tenderfoot and Lick Creek trailheads.

Croquets Knob fire

This blaze, started by lightning on Aug. 22, continues to burn on the Malheur National Forest, in the Greenhorn Mountains about 19 miles north of Prairie City.

The fire has burned about 1,900 acres. Gusty winds and higher temperatures on Tuesday, Aug. 30 resulted in active burning, and the fire produced a significant smoke column.

The fire has moved close to the west Princess trailhead south of Indian Rock Lookout, and it has spread northeast onto a small part of the Umatilla National Forest.

Hot Shot crews are working on the east side of the fire, as well as in the roadless areas to the north and west, building and plotting containment lines.

On the southern flank, crews have blocked the fire in the Big Boulder Creek area.

Aircraft, including helicopters dipping water from Olive Lake to the north, continue to work on the fire.

Judge: Oregon State Hospital stays to be strictly limited

PORTLAND (AP) — A federal judge has ruled that the Oregon State Hospital must impose strict limits on the length of time it treats patients accused of crimes who need mental health treatment.

Judge Michael W. Mosman’s ruling seeks to ease the psychiatric hospital’s overcrowding, speed up patient admission and stop people waiting for admission from languishing in jail. The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Monday, Aug. 29.

Effective immediately, the hospital must release “aid-and-assist” patients accused of misdemeanors within 90 days of admission, and those accused of felonies within six months of admission. Aid-and-assist are patients found by a judge unable to participate in their own defense at trial.

The judge’s decision overrules an Oregon law that says the hospital can hold an aid-and-assist patient for up to three years, or the maximum amount of time that a person could have been sentenced to prison for their alleged crime, whichever is shorter.

Disability Rights Oregon and Metropolitan Public Defenders requested the order after protesting the hospital’s lengthy admission delays. Disability Rights Oregon in 2002 won a court order that required the hospital to admit aid-and-assist patients within seven days so they can begin mental health treatment quickly.

The hospital has struggled to meet that timeline, and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the problem.

Council

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The two others — Guyer and Damschen — were both appointed.

Guyer was appointed in December 2021 to replace Lynette Perry, who resigned in August 2021 due to health issues.

Damschen was appointed in March 2022 to replace Heather Sells, who moved from Baker City and was no longer eligible to serve as a city councillor.

To qualify for the Nov. 8 ballot, prospective candidates had to collect at least 46 signatures from registered voters who live within the city limits.

City Recorder Dallas Brockett said the Baker County Clerk’s office verified at least that many signatures for each of the eight candidates.

- Individual totals:
- LaFavor and Waggoner, 69 each
 - Calder, 65
 - Damschen, 63
 - Diaz, 60
 - Cody, 59
 - Guyer, 55
 - Johnson, 47

Hub

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New dining options at the site would provide most of the buzz. Space on the main floor of the building could feature a small cafe or restaurant that would include a drive-thru area. Three temporary food trucks will join the existing truck on the south end of the parking lot — The Express, which specializes in smash burgers and hot mini doughnuts.

Aizpitarte said the other food trucks will provide a variety of choices for eaters.

“We’re hoping to solicit some different flavors and different food types,” Aizpitarte said.

The lot will also feature bathrooms, seating, covered dining area and event space at the south end.

“We would like to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a family friendly place for everyone in the community to enjoy while dining at

the various options,” Aizpitarte wrote in the narrative.

“Whether it’s a family with kids and dogs, a couple out on a date, or just somebody out for a bite and a drink, it’s just a place that everybody can hang out outside,” he said.

The building and parking lot are in the downtown historic district and in the central commercial zone.

The planning department approved the project on July 26, which required a land use review because Aizpitarte plans to convert the use from a large-single user office space to a mixed-use building. Pioneer Bank formerly used the space as their corporate office.

Aizpitarte said it hasn’t been determined who will fill two sections of office space on the main floor — one 1,500 square feet and the other 500 square feet.

The school district’s special education department got the largest chunk of office space — the entire 3,500-square-foot

second floor, which includes eight office spaces.

Barry Neme, the district’s special education director, said the department moved into the building on Aug. 1.

He said the department was previously spread out across multiple buildings, but moving into the top floor will allow the whole department, which serves 250 students locally and an additional 500 virtually across the state of Oregon, to work in the same place.

“Special education often faces many unique challenges that require a team approach to solve,” Neme wrote in an email to the Herald. “Now that the district special education team is all together, we can easily collaborate in a timely manner to increase student success.”

The special education staff includes an occupational therapist, school psychologist, diagnostician, three case managers and special programs and special education coordinator. The



Clayton Franke/Baker City Herald

The Express, which specializes in smash burgers and mini doughnuts, is the first food cart to set up in the parking lot at Second and Broadway streets, west of the former Pioneer Bank building. The property developer hopes to add three more food trucks.

new office is not a classroom, as the special education staff works with students who attend Baker schools.

Aizpitarte said he hopes to start construction on some of the interior spaces “as soon as possible.” The construction would mostly consist of building partition walls, and he said he’ll use existing structures as much as possible.

The actual interior designs, as well as the completion date, which probably won’t be for a few years, Aizpitarte said, is dependent on who moves into the office space.

Frieda Wood George

February 24, 1925 – August 28, 2022

Freida Wood George passed peacefully on August 28, 2022, at the age of 97 in Sherwood, Oregon. She was born in Baker, Oregon, on February 24, 1925. Her parents were Carl Wood and June Woodcock Wood. Freida attended Baker schools, graduating from Baker High School in 1943. Upon graduation she worked for the Baker County Health Department and the Leo Adler Magazine business.

She married Aaron George in July 1945 and became a housewife and mother for the next 16 years. They lived in the Portland area for two years in the late 1950s. After a divorce Freida moved back to Baker City and joined the staff in the Baker County Assessor’s office. Her career in that office lasted 25 years and she eventually became the Chief Deputy Assessor.

Freida is survived by her daughter, Linda Cutting (Buck) of Keizer, OR; her son, Richard George (Neta) of Tualatin, OR; her grandchildren, Bree Sibbel (Mark) of Hillsboro, OR; Mac Cutting of Bend, OR; Heather George of Goodlettsville, TN; Ryan George (April) Ludowici, GA; her great-grandsons, Kal and Oz Sibbel and Drake and Donovan George. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister, Ernibebe Patton, and her brother, Hershel Wood. Contributions can be made to a charity of your choice. Cremation will be performed and there will be no service.



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