



**LIVING B1**  
Burger recipe's a smashing success



**LOCAL A2**  
Large load to affect traffic on Hwy. 86



**SPORTS A6**  
Baker avenges 2021 loss to Cascade

# Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • HOME & LIVING • SPORTS

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## QUICK HITS

### Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Camille Warner of Baker City.

## BRIEFING

### Public transit plan meetings scheduled

Baker County Coordinated Human Services Plan (public transit plan) is being updated, as required by state regulations. The second public meeting will take place Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers the Baker County Courthouse, 1995 Third St. A link to the Zoom meeting is available on the county's website, www.bakercounty.org. More information is available by calling 503-442-7867.

The third public meeting will be Wednesday, Sept. 21 at 9 a.m. during a county commissioner meeting at the courthouse. The final public transit plan is scheduled to be approved during that meeting.

### Expect lane closures, reduced speeds on I-84

Work has begun to repave a 13-mile section of Interstate 84 between Ladd Canyon and North Powder, and drivers should expect lane closures and reduced speeds to 55 mph during daylight hours. Later in September the contractor will work at night to reduce traffic effects. The project is scheduled to be done by Nov. 1. Workers are paving rutted and cracked pavement between Mileposts 272 and 285, including bridges at exits 278 and 283. That section of freeway was last paved in 2003, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

## WEATHER

**Today**  
99/50  
Sunny

**Wednesday**  
96/48  
Storms possible

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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

## BAKER CITY'S CONNECTION WITH BASEBALL & BHUTAN



Kathleen Kiefer/Contributed Photo

A Bhutanese youth gets his turn to perfect catching a baseball in Thimphu, Bhutan.

# A baseball story with saffron stitching

## Baker anthropologist Kathleen Kiefer fundraises for youth baseball on the other side of the world

BY IAN CRAWFORD  
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From Mount Everest's peak you can see the curvature of the earth, high enough for the atmosphere to unveil stars to spite shining sun. You can peer east and you'll see the Himalayan mountains spearing over the cloud line for hundreds of miles, all the way into the Kingdom of Bhutan.

On a clear day, a young saffron-robed monk might be gazing back, his mind on his breath and posture, his eyes on the pitcher.

And then the crack of the bat, sending the baseball piercing through the thin air.

The ball's flight, in this distant region which is 98% mountainous, has a connection not just to America, birthplace of baseball, but also to Baker City.

"The ethos of the game of baseball is truly simpatico with Bhutanese character," said Kathleen Kiefer, an anthropologist, writer and filmmaker from Baker City. "It has a meditative quality to it."

Kiefer operates the nonprofit Bhutan Cultural Exchange in Baker City, a program she's been running since 2015 when she chanced to meet the Venerable Karma Namgyel. Namgyel, a resident Buddhist monk, lives in Colorado and was hosted in Baker City for 10 days by the Crossroads Carnegie Art Center.

"I asked while he was here for 10 days to photo and video his whole deal here in Baker," Kiefer said. "I suggested we go on this hike, I know he's from the southern Himalayas. I thought he'd ap-



Ian Crawford/Baker City Herald

Kathleen Kiefer, local anthropologist and filmmaker, hosts the Bhutan Cultural Exchange in Baker City, supporting baseball in distant Bhutan.

preciate a hike, and he did. He was out there in his flowing orange robes and sandals!"

The experience, which she filmed and published, compelled Kiefer to visit Bhutan for the first time.

She's since returned four more times, ceasing her trips only during the pandemic, but she's planning a sixth visit, this time staying for a year.

"I fell in love with the country, and everything about it," Kiefer said.

Her relationship with Bhutan led to the baseball connection.

Kiefer is raising money to provide the youth of Bhutan with the equipment, training and travel

See **Baseball** / A3

## Good Samaritans help douse fire

BY IAN CRAWFORD  
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A fire in north Baker City was swiftly contained on Friday afternoon, Sept. 2, after two good Samaritans used garden hoses to spray water on the flames.

The fire, reported at 2:17 p.m., was at the former Baker Exchange building at 3780 10th St., on the east side of 10th Street.

Shannon Conklin and her husband, Bryan, of Baker City, were among those having lunch on the patio outside the Little Pig restaurant, just across 10th Street.

"You could see flames out of the back," Shannon said.

Bryan, who is a correctional officer at Powder River Correctional Facility and a former wildland firefighter, went into action.

"The wife and I were having lunch and we went up to the counter to pay, I looked out the door and thought, 'That's a lot of smoke coming out of that building,'" Bryan said.

See **Samaritans** / A3

## COVID cases drop in August

BY JAYSON JACOBY  
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The number of COVID-19 cases reported in Baker County dropped by about 33% in August compared with July and June.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recorded 79 cases in the county in August.

July's total was 116, and June's was 121.

Baker County's total during the pandemic is 3,581 cases.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rates the COVID-19 community level at medium. Baker County's level, which is based on case rates and hospital admission rates, was high during July and early August.

OHA reported two COVID-19-related deaths of county residents during August. The brings the total since the start of the pandemic to 56. There have been

## Health Dept. gauges interest in new COVID-19 vaccine

BY CLAYTON FRANKE  
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The Baker County Health Department wants to find out how many people are interested in receiving a newly approved COVID-19 booster vaccine so it can prepare staff and resources accordingly.

The same goes for seasonal flu shots.

The department posted

eight deaths since mid March. Neither the state nor the county has released age, gender or other information about the deaths this summer.

After a monthly record of 646 cases in January 2022 during

a link to the seven-question survey on its Facebook page Wednesday morning, Aug. 31. The survey asks if an individual plans to get a flu shot, if they plan to receive the new bivalent COVID booster, and which brand of booster they prefer.

The US Food and Drug Administration on Aug. 31 authorized the use of a new bivalent

See **Survey** / A3

the omicron surge, Baker County's case rate plummeted to 230 during February and then dropped even more rapidly during March, when there were 14 cases.

See **COVID** / A3



**TODAY**  
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12 pages

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