

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

Serving Baker County since 1870 • bakercityherald.com

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 • \$1.50** 

### **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** 







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 saffron stitching

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

## **BY IAN CRAWFORD**

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

Trom 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

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 Carn-

'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

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 base-

ball connection.

Kiefer is raising money to provide the youth of Bhutan with the equipment, training and travel See Baseball / A3

# **Eagle Cap** fires slow as winds subside

**Both major blazes have** surpassed 2019 fire as largest in wilderness in decades

#### **BY JAYSON JACOBY**

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Two lightning fires in the Eagle Cap Wilderness grew substantially on Saturday, Sept. 3, fueled by strong winds, hot temperatures and hu-

midities that dipped into single digits in places.

Another lightning-sparked blaze, the Double Creek fire northeast of the wilderness in Wallowa County, has also continued to spread, reaching 43,668 acres as of Monday, Sept. 5.

The Double Creek fire has prompted an evacuation order for the town of Imnaha.

All three fires were less active on Sunday, Sept. 4, as winds subsided and temperatures cooled, according to an update from the overhead team managing the blazes.

The Double Creek fire is a "full suppression" blaze, which means officials are trying to douse it as soon as possible. The fire has led to evacuation notices in the Imnaha and upper Imnaha River Road areas.

The two fires in the wilderness, by contrast, are "managed" fires. That means officials are using a variety of tactics, monitoring the fires in some areas but taking actions, such as having helicopters drop water and dispatching firefighters on the ground, to try to limit the fires' spread in certain directions.

Both wilderness fires — Sturgill, estimated at 12,703 acres on Monday, and Nebo, estimated at 7,277 acres — have surpassed the 2019 Granite Gulch fire as the biggest in the Eagle Cap

# **Back to school** in record heat

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Summer vacation has ended for Baker School District students, but summer weather is stubbornly holding on.

Classes convened on Tuesday, Sept. 6 in the midst of the latest in a series of record-breaking

The temperature on Tuesday was forecast to top out at 99 degrees at the Baker City Airport, easily exceeding the record of 94, set in 1944 and tied in 2018.

And the National Weather Service is predicting the abnormal heat to continue on Wednesday, Sept. 7, with a high of 98 at the airport.

# **Good Samaritans** help douse fire

### **BY IAN CRAWFORD**

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

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

See Samaritans /A3

# **COVID** cases drop in August

### BY JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com 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

cfranke@bakercityherald.com 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.

flu shots.

The department posted

The same goes for seasonal

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

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





Crossword.....B2 & B4 Dear Abby.....B6 Horoscope .....B2 & B4

Jayson Jacoby .....A4 Lottery Results.....A2 News of Record......A2 Opinion ......A4 Home & Living......B1 & B2 Senior Menus......A2

Turning Backs ......A2 Weather.....B6