

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

50 YEARS AGO

from the Democrat-Herald

October 24, 1972

Baker could have a YMCA program by April 1, if estimated first year costs of \$30,000 can be raised.

That's the consensus of the Chamber of Commerce Youth Committee after three days of meetings with William Thiess, general manager of the Central Lane Family YMCA in Eugene.

25 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

October 24, 1997

The 1997 CropWalk for World Hunger had a great turnout with 146 walkers from 10 organizations and churches on Oct. 19.

Representatives from the Seventh-Day Adventist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Nazarene, Christian, Methodist, Episcopal and Catholic churches were active as well as the Baker 5J Wellness team and the Baker High School Earth Club.

10 YEARS AGO

from the Baker City Herald

October 24, 2012

Baker had a little more trouble disposing of Ontario Tuesday than it should have in the Greater Oregon League volleyball finale for both teams.

The Bulldogs won the match 22-25, 25-18, 25-15, 31-29 on the Baker floor.

"We stuck with it pretty well," said Baker coach Michele McCauley. "I was impressed with the way we stuck with it."

ONE YEAR AGO

from the Baker City Herald

October 26, 2021

Crews from Baker and Union counties rescued a Baker County man in the snowbound Wallowa Mountains north of Halfway Monday, Oct. 25, the day after he was stranded by a blizzard while packing in supplies with horses for an elk-hunting trip. Robert Derald Borders, 67, who lives near Baker City, did not need medical treatment, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash said in a cellphone interview Monday afternoon.

Borders, who had four horses, was able to use his satellite device, which works even when cell service is limited or nonexistent, as is the case in that remote part of the county, to send a text message to a friend late Sunday morning, said Ashley McClay, the sheriff's office's public information officer.

The friend then called the Baker County Dispatch Center around noon Sunday.

The text message also included Borders' precise location, which aided rescuers, McClay said.

Around 2:30 p.m. on Monday, McClay said rescuers had reached Borders, who had sent text messages to rescuers with his satellite device while they were en route.

Although Borders' use of the device was a significant help to rescuers, the weather, especially on Sunday, was a major hindrance.

A group of Baker County Search and Rescue team members, summoned Sunday afternoon by Ash, started traveling to the location, which is in the Eagle Cap Wilderness several miles north of Cornucopia, in the Soldier Lake and Sugarloaf Mountain area.

McClay said rain was falling, snow was on the ground and powerful winds were toppling trees as rescuers traveled higher into the mountains.

They eventually had to retreat late in the evening on Sunday, McClay said.

On Monday morning, Baker County crews were joined by search and rescue members from Union County to resume the effort, McClay said. The Union County team members arrived at the Baker County Sheriff's Office around 5 a.m., traveling from there to the mountains.

The sheriff's office had few other details Monday afternoon. McClay said Borders apparently had left from the Cornucopia trailhead on Saturday, Oct. 23.

The weather deteriorated on Sunday, and according to the text message the man sent to his friend, he was unable to get back to the trailhead and needed help.

OREGON LOTTERY

MEGABUCKS, OCT. 22

1-16-31-34-47-48

Next jackpot: \$7.7 million

POWERBALL, OCT. 22

19-25-48-55-60 PB 18

Next jackpot: \$610 million

MEGA MILLIONS, OCT. 21

34-36-43-45-68

Mega 22

Next jackpot: \$45 million

WIN FOR LIFE, OCT. 22

12-15-34-42

PICK 4, OCT. 23

• 1 p.m.: 8-8-0-7

• 4 p.m.: 4-0-0-8

• 7 p.m.: 0-3-2-2

• 10 p.m.: 6-4-7-5

LUCKY LINES, OCT. 23

4-8-10-15-19-22-27-30

Next jackpot: \$83,000

SENIOR MENUS

WEDNESDAY (Oct. 26): Meatloaf, au gratin potatoes, corn, rolls, coleslaw, ice cream

THURSDAY (Oct. 27): Chicken cordon bleu, rice, broccoli, rolls, macaroni salad, lemon squares

FRIDAY (Oct. 28): Beef stroganoff over fettuccine noodles, carrots, rolls, apple crisp

MONDAY (Oct. 31): Sweet and sour chicken, rice, peas, rolls, green salad, pudding

Public luncheon at the Senior Center, 2810 Cedar St., from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; \$5 donation (60 and older), \$7.50 for those under 60.

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Tony Chiotti/Blue Mountain Eagle

Firefighters tend the line on a prescribed burn in the Malheur National Forest on Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022. The fire was executed under strict new Forest Service rules, yet managed to briefly escape containment lines later that afternoon.

Forest Service employee's arrest after fire jumps line sparks debate

BY TONY CHIOTTI

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — When Rick Snodgrass approached Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley on the county road, he thought the sheriff was there to help him.

According to Snodgrass, he'd called for law enforcement to help control traffic and deal with harassment his crews had been receiving while implementing a prescribed burn on the Malheur National Forest.

But instead of getting assistance, he got arrested.

When the sheriff cuffed Snodgrass, it is thought to be the first time a U.S. Forest Service firefighter has been arrested in the course of performing their job.

The fire had jumped containment lines and had burned an estimated 20 to 40 acres of private land owned by members of the Holliday family.

Snodgrass, the "burn boss" on the day's operation, was charged with reckless burning, a Class A misdemeanor that carries a maximum penalty of a year in jail and a \$6,250 fine.

The arrest of Snodgrass has drawn national attention and has fanned the debate over Forest Service fire mitigation policies, especially as it pertains to intentional burns adjacent to private lands.

"Every individual has a different opinion and motivation," said Craig Trulock, supervisor of the 1.7 million-acre Malheur National Forest.

"You have people that are just anti-federal and don't want any federal agency doing anything that could affect their lands.

Others don't like prescribed burning for various reasons, whether it's risk or a sense

that it doesn't achieve what we should be doing out there because they want every log to go on a log truck. And then you have people that are saying, 'When you burn, would you please burn my property as well?'"

According to Trulock, the burn was going to plan. "We were within prescription on the burn," Trulock said, noting he couldn't say much more as the incident is now the subject of an active federal and local investigation.

The fire was the second day of prescribed burning in as many weeks. The burn area planned for Wednesday, Oct. 19, was 300 acres, including trees and meadowland within the Malheur National Forest in an operation involving federal, state and contract firefighting crews, according to information from the Forest Service.

This was among the first prescribed burns to be allowed after a new set of restrictions came into effect this year, following high-profile cases of prescribed burns getting out of control on federal land and causing massive damage, including this year's Calf Canyon/Hermit's Peak blaze in New Mexico, which burned several hundred thousand acres and hundreds of structures this spring. After a 90-day pause on all prescribed burns, a revised set of restrictions was published.

As part of those new rules, before ignitions could begin in Bear Valley, a go/no-go checklist had to be completed on site.

The burn plan takes the form of a 100-plus page document, updated year over year as the preparatory steps of thinning, fuel removal and tree grinding continued, all to get the area into ideal shape

for a burn.

As part of the new rules, the final ignition authorization had to be signed by four people: the agency administrator, local unit line officer, burn boss and fire management officer or duty officer. This process only authorizes ignitions for 24 hours, in effect giving all four officers veto power over the burn based on that day's conditions.

On this day, all four signatures were affixed to the burn authorization and ignitions could begin. One of those four signatures belonged to Rick Snodgrass.

Smoldering tensions

The ignition was delayed for about 45 minutes while crews did a grid search to ensure there were no cows in the burn area after hearing reports that the Hollidays still had some "stragglers" left on national forest land, a common occurrence as cows are seasonally moved off grazing allotments.

The Windy Point Ranch allotment specified an Oct. 15 "off date," but Chad Holliday explained that some fence that was burned the previous week, along with gates being left open by fire personnel, meant he couldn't be sure the cattle were all out.

Initially, the burn was according to plan, with light winds of 1-3 mph and the heat of the fire drawing smoke

up into a clean, bent column over the county road. The fire moved slowly across 50 acres over the course of five hours, with fire crews monitoring the progress of its leading front and continuing drip-torch ignitions.

Ignitions paused in the afternoon, to begin again a couple hours later. It was then that the wind picked up and a few trees in the interior of the already-burned area torched, sending up "duffers" with the smoke, up and over the road.

Members of the Holliday family who own the Windy Point Ranch and other land adjacent to the burn area were standing across the county road from the fire as an ember from the burn area touched town on their ranch, starting a new fire that soon began to spread.

"We were glad to see Oregon Department of Forestry and Grayback (contract crews) show up," said Mandy Taylor, Chad Holliday's sister.

ODF and Grayback Forestry crews were contracted to work alongside Forest Service employees throughout the day's burn, but due to tensions between the landowners and the federal crews, they were eventually asked to take over mop-up after the flames of the spot fire were extinguished, according to Trulock, who said the move was meant to calm tensions on the scene.

See Arrest / A5

News of Record

DEATHS

Charlene Immoos: 82, of Richland, died Oct. 23, 2022, at her home with her family by her side. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences can be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.

Kenneth "Darwin" Potter: 84, of Baker City, died Oct. 23, 2022, at his home. A memorial service will take place later, the date and time to be announced as soon as details are confirmed. To leave an online condolence for the family of Darwin, go to www.grayswestco.com.

FUNERALS PENDING

Clay Gyllenberg: Memorial service will be Saturday, Oct. 29 at 1 p.m. at the Baker City Church of the Nazarene, 1250 Hughes Lane. Friends are invited to join the family for a potluck reception immediately following the service at the Nazarene Church's Family Life Center, adjacent to the church. Online condolences can be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.

Gerald Omer Maxwell: Graveside memorial service with military honors on Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 1 p.m. at the Haines Cemetery, with Sally Wiens officiating the service. Memorial contributions can be made to the Anthony Lakes Ski Patrol or to the United Methodist Church through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel, 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

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