

2021 ...

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anek adjusted to his new position with the city. Previously, Ziemi- anek worked as transmissions and distributions operations manager at Seattle City Light.

- Enrollment numbers at Blaine schools continued to drop from the start of the school year, worrying the district about financial impacts. By January, the district was down 75 students from what it had planned.
- The Crisis Stabilization Center opened in Bellingham to serve Whatcom County residents experiencing mental health and substance abuse crises.
- Washington State Department of Ecology said crews were unable to recover 5,400 to 8,000 gallons of Bakken crude oil after nearly 30,000 gallons of oil leaked during

the Custer train derailment.

- The city of Blaine ditched pursuing a grade separation at the Bell Road and Peace Portal Drive intersection for streetlights and bypass lanes after the grade separation was deemed too expensive at \$50 million. The new project to ease traffic congestion is estimated at \$3 million.
- Good Samaritan Society – Staff- holt nursing home experienced a second Covid-19 outbreak since the pandemic began. The What- com County health department confirmed three people tested positive, including one of whom died from the virus.
- Blaine City Council began con- sidering the annexation of a 3.5- acre property at 4455 H Street Road during a work-study ses- sion. If approved by the city and county, this would be the first time the city has annexed land in east Blaine since 1996.

February

- Over 200 Blaine and Birch Bay residents fell behind on bills as the state utility moratorium pre- vented shutoffs. The city of Blaine and Birch Bay Water and Sewer District created payment plans to help those behind on their bills.
- The city of Blaine appointed Sukhwant Singh Gill as the at- large councilmember, filling for- mer councilmember Alicia Rule's seat.
- Covid-19 vaccine supply con- tinued to not meet the numbers of people eligible for the vaccine and frustration grew by those anxious to receive a vaccine.
- Discovery Plus released a docu- mentary on the Asian giant hor- nets found in east Blaine called "Attack of the Murder Hornets" that featured local beekeepers and landowners.
- North Whatcom Fire and Res- cue and Whatcom County Fire

District 4 considered creating a regional fire district to encompass both jurisdictions.

- Whatcom County Council, act- ing as the health board, sent a let- ter to governor Jay Inslee express- ing frustration with the impact of his Roadmap to Recovery plan for smaller counties.
- Whatcom County Council closed the road adjacent to Tony's Tavern to allow outdoor dining while state indoor dining restric- tions remained in place.
- A new, drive-through Covid-19 testing site opened at Bellingham International Airport in part- nership with Whatcom County Health Department and North- west Laboratory.
- Infinity Dance Company opened a studio in Birch Bay.
- Blaine and Birch Bay restaurants opened to 25-percent capacity af- ter three months of being closed indoors because of the state's

Covid-19 restrictions.

- City council discussed future ac- tion options after a January king tide storm eroded several spots along Blaine Marine Park and ex- posed dump debris from the for- mer landfill in the area. The 2021 city budget didn't include enough money for repairs, but the city faced losing parts of the park's trail if it didn't act.
- Local law enforcement faced hir- ing challenges.

March

- The Blaine Chamber of Com- merce named Nimbus Real Estate as 2020 business of the year.
- Blaine school board directed su- perintendent Christopher Grang- er to plan for district layoffs for the next school year if state fund- ing was reduced because of a de- cline in enrollment numbers.
- Whatcom County's first mass

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6 tips to keep your pets safe and warm this winter

Just as people prepare their homes, cars and families for extreme temperatures of winter, it's important to remember pets' needs this time of year.

As cold weather sets in, Dr. Jennifer Freeman, DVM, resident veterinarian at PetSmart, shares these tips to prepare and ensure your pets are warm and happy throughout winter.

Take caution when outdoors

When temperatures reach levels of extreme cold, Freeman recommends limiting outdoor walks and monitoring your pet's behavior for signs of stress or discomfort. Letting your dog outside to use the bathroom or go for a quick walk is OK, but never leave a pet outside for a long period of time, especially during a winter storm.

"Don't let your dog off its leash after snowfall, as snow can mask familiar scents," Freeman said. "This can cause your pet to become disoriented or lost if they get too far away."

Add extra layers

Despite efforts to limit time outdoors, your pet needs to go outside for bathroom breaks and exercise. Pets who are small, short-haired, old or have any

health issues or illnesses may be more sensitive to cold weather.

Pet sweaters can help keep your pet warm. If your pet is shivering, that's a sign they need extra layers. To help trap body heat and protect paws from extreme cold, consider using booties when venturing outside.

Watch for hazardous chemicals

Many people use snow-melting products like deicers, antifreeze and salt, which can cause skin irritation and be fatal if ingested by your pet. Pet parents should keep an eye on their pets when they're outside and be mindful of hazards. After a walk, it's important to thoroughly rinse your pet's paws and stomach, Freeman said, especially after walking in areas where these products are frequently used.

Keep skin protected

Just like humans, many pets get dry skin during the winter. When your pet needs a bath, try using a pet-friendly moisturizing shampoo to help keep skin healthy and hydrated. If your pet's skin seems extra dry, supplements like fish oil can be added to your pet's food to help the skin and coat. It's important to keep an eye on skin health and check with your vet

if issues persist as they could be signs of larger problems.

Have an emergency plan

"While creating emergency kits in case of a storm or power outage, don't forget about your pet's needs," Freeman said. "A pet's kit should include supplies needed to keep them fed, warm and secure during emergency conditions like blizzards or extreme cold. Items like sweaters, insulated vests, paw booties, pet-safe ice melt and a heated bed or pad can help avoid risks associated with freezing temperatures."

Gather any other care items your pet may require such as medications, puppy pads, waste bags, litter box supplies and calming spray. Freeman also suggests storing a one-week supply of food in a waterproof container along with bottled water and portable bowls as well as a list of feeding routines and behavioral considerations in case others need to care for your pet.

Ensure identification information is current

While winter emergencies may add to the importance, it's crucial your pet wears a tag displaying your phone number year-round. Microchip and register your pet

with current contact information and tuck a copy of their vaccination and medical records, veteri- nary contact information and a current photo in your emergency kit.

Article courtesy Family Features

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