



THE  
**OBSERVER**

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**Weekend**

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Good day to our valued subscribers Dante and Mary Fiorillo of La Grande

**LGPD sergeant reflects on three years in detective field**



Cherise Kaechele / The Observer

La Grande Police Sgt. Dusty Perry drives a patrol vehicle in early July. It was his first week back in patrol after his three years of detective work was complete. He said he's looking forward to the less intense requirements of the job.

By **Cherise Kaechele**  
 The Observer

La Grande Police Department Sgt. Dusty Perry sat in the driver's seat of his patrol car the first week of July. He had his uniform on, which he hadn't worn in a while. It was his first week back on patrol, and he was still getting used to some things. Perry had just completed a

three-year stint as a detective for the police force. He was one of only two at the police department, and while he said it was the most rewarding experience in his law-enforcement career, he was glad to be back on patrol.

On that early July day, he talked about the home projects he's got planned. He bought an old Volkswagen

Beetle for his wife years ago that he wants to fix up. He said he didn't have the opportunity to work on the car when he worked as a detective.

"We used to have four detectives," Perry told The Observer. "One for the drug task force, one who focused on adult sex abuse cases and two for everything else."

A couple years ago, the police department lost a grant that funded a detective to cover domestic violence and adult sex abuse cases. The drug task force detective has since been taken away as well. This leaves the two detectives on the force with the heavy responsibility of covering all investigations, from crimes such as arson

and assault to neglect and abuse.

According to LGPD Sgt. Jason Hays, who took over for Perry as the detective, an average of 29 reports of abuse are made to the detective unit each month. Those complaints don't necessarily lead to investigations, Hays said. However, they all are followed up on. Generally, 70 percent of the investigations revolve around neglect, he said. Fifteen percent involve elder abuse and the other 15 percent are reports of child sex abuse.

Perry said he gradually learned what worked best for him as an investigator during his three years in that role. The first year, he said, he had to get used to managing a wide variety of cases.

"It's a juggling act with the cases," Perry said. "You have to set a priority list for them." Some of the cases he worked on were about events that happened years ago. While those are important, he said, priority has to be given to investigations into events that just happened.

After that initial first year, he said, he began to trust his decisions more.

"At that point, when you're getting more cases, you're

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**Grande Ronde Hospital welcomes new senior director**

By **Audrey Love**  
 The Observer

Tammy Winde has been a familiar face in the hallways of Grande

Ronde Hospital for nearly 12 years, and in that time she has worn many hats — or rather, scrub

caps. However, her recent promotion to senior director of provider services is set to be her most challenging to date.

Winde was officially promoted June 26 but has been transitioning into the position since February. She says the role was a "natural progression" due to years of close work with Paul Shorb, whom she replaced. Shorb transitioned to an advisory capacity in July and will retire later this year.

"I guess the hardest thing would be following Paul after (his) 37

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Winde

**Progress on Imbler SD septic project continues**

By **Dick Mason**  
 The Observer

Imbler School District officials will have much less reason to worry the next time heavy rains hit.

The reason — the district's \$500,000 septic system replacement project is nearing completion. Imbler School District Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell said there is a good chance the system will be finished by September.

She said the project "is going very well" and added that it "will be a great relief" when the new system is in place.

The upgrade was needed because there have been problems in recent years operating the elementary and high school septic systems when the water table rises. Effluent from the school district's buildings has sometimes not been able to dissipate when this happens and has backed up into district school buildings as a result.

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Mark B. Gibson / The Dalles Chronicle via AP

A tractor with a disk trailer rolls toward the Substation Fire on its way to cut fire lines just off state Highway 197 south of The Dalles on Tuesday. Gov. Kate Brown has invoked an emergency order in response to the wildfire.

**Six Union County firefighters combating 50,000-acre Substation fire in The Dalles**

By **Dick Mason**  
 The Observer

Six firefighters from Union County, all of whom responded on virtually a moment's notice, have stepped forward to help combat the 50,000-acre Substation Fire in The Dalles area.

The firefighters arrived on the scene in Wasco County on Wednesday and are now working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. shifts. The

firefighters are J.B. Brock, Justin Hughes and Nate Harden of the La Grande Rural Fire Department; James Petty of the La Grande Fire Department and Forrest Warren and Justin Clark of the Imbler Rural Fire Department. Five of the six are volunteer firefighters.

"They are giving up their time for the cause. Hats off to them," said La Grande Rural Fire Chief

Larry Woolldridge. The firefighters' departments each provided a brush fire truck, which can carry 300 to 500 pounds of water.

The six firefighters volunteered their help Wednesday after Woolldridge received a call from the State Fire Marshal's office. Woolldridge was asked if Union County had people available to

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**Walden highlights accomplishments in recent visit to Eastern Oregon**

By **Max Denning**  
 The Observer

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai recently visited Eastern Oregon to talk about the Next Generation 911 program, the Rural Health Care program and closing the digital divide in rural America. Walden also highlighted the recent passage of the Ray Baum's Act.

**Next Generation 911**

The Next Generation 911 program calls for a digital upgrade of current analog-based 911 programs. Walden said he is working with the FCC to get the Next Generation 911 program brought to rural areas. In 2012, congress passed \$115 million in federal funds to help the country transition to Next Generation 911 systems. In a press release, Walden said he helped pass the act.

"I will continue to work to ensure this transition reaches rural Oregon," Walden said in a press release.

The National 911 program's website, www.911.gov, states: "The success and reliability of 911 will be greatly improved with the implementation of NG911 as it will enhance emergency number services to create a faster, more resilient system that allows voice, photos, videos and text messages to flow seamlessly from the public to the 911 network."

Lola Lathrop, communications manager for the La Grande Police Department, said in an interview with The Observer that the Next Generation 911 program would be beneficial if

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**WEATHER** Full forecast on the back of B section

Friday 48 LOW Clear	Saturday 84/47 Mostly sunny	Sunday 88/49 Sunny and nice
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 La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com).  
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