

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Friday, July 20, the 201st day of 2018. There are 164 days left in the year.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On July 20, 1944, an attempt by a group of German officials to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a bomb failed as the explosion only wounded the Nazi leader. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for a fourth term of office at the Democratic convention in Chicago.

ON THIS DATE

In 1861, the Congress of the Confederate States convened in Richmond, Virginia.

In 1923, Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa was assassinated by gunmen in Parral.

In 1942, the first detachment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps — later known as WACs — began basic training at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. The Legion of Merit was established by an Act of Congress.

In 1954, the Geneva Accords divided Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1968, the first International Special Olympics Summer Games, organized by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, were held at Soldier Field in Chicago.

In 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon after reaching the surface in their Apollo 11 lunar module.

In 1976, America's Viking 1 robot spacecraft made a successful, first-ever landing on Mars.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.8 million
4-20-23-24-28-42

Mega Millions: \$422 million
40-41-61-66-67-12-x5

Powerball: \$130 million
1-10-27-28-36-PB 12-x2

Win for Life: July 18
3-13-49-75

Pick 4:

July 19

• 1 p.m.: 0-2-0-5

• 4 p.m.: 3-9-8-9

• 7 p.m.: 9-4-9-4

• 10 p.m.: 8-7-3-9

Pick 4:

July 18

• 1 p.m.: 9-6-2-6

• 4 p.m.: 8-4-4-8

• 7 p.m.: 4-1-9-8

• 10 p.m.: 0-6-8-7

ROAD REPORT

Numbers to call:
• Inside Oregon: 800-977-6368.
• Outside Oregon: 503-588-2941.

NEWSPAPER LATE?

Every effort is made to deliver your Observer in a timely manner. Occasionally conditions exist that make delivery more difficult.

If you are not on a motor route, delivery should be before 5:30 p.m. If you do not receive your paper by 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, please call 541-963-3161 by 6 p.m.

If your delivery is by motor carrier, delivery should be by 6 p.m. For calls after 6, please call 541-975-1690, leave your name, address and phone number. Your paper will be delivered the next business day.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The regret on our side is, they used to say years ago, we are reading about you in science class. Now they say, we are reading about you in history class."

— Neil Armstrong, American astronaut (1930-2012)

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SUBSTATION FIRE

Fire torches farmland near The Dalles

By Gillian Flaccus

The Associated Press

Farmers rushed to save their livelihoods as a wildfire roared through vast Oregon wheat fields Thursday and crushed their hopes at the peak of what was expected to be one of the most bountiful harvests in years.

Farmers used water tanks on the backs of pickup trucks and tractors to battle flames whipping across fields for the third straight day. One man was found dead near his charred tractor Wednesday, apparently overrun as he tried to clear a strip of land to protect a neighbor's property.

Farmers who grow tens of thousands of acres of soft, white wheat typically bound for Asia said they are confronting walls of fire up to 30 feet high and wind so strong that it tosses embers ahead of the fire's leading edge. The conditions threaten farmers working to stop the blaze from reaching the wheat.

"It's been day after day after day of pretty horrendous winds and then the fire creates its own wind," Alan von Borstel, who has battled the flames with his son, said by phone. "As the fire gets closer, you actually start to feel threatened, and if it gets too close, we realize we can't do it, (and) we get the hell out of Dodge."

Wheat farmers like von Borstel always have water tanks loaded on the back of trucks during the hot, dry summers. When a fire breaks out, they race to the scene alongside professional fire crews. If they have time, the farmers mow down standing wheat to slow the fire's progress and come behind firetrucks to tamp down flames with their water.



Mark Graves/The Oregonian via AP

The Substation Fire, near where the Deschutes and Columbia Rivers meet along Interstate 84 and state Highway 15 east of Portland, is shown Thursday.

But their most important job is called "disking." They use a tractor attachment to till the wheat into the soil, creating a gap up to 150 feet wide between the advancing flames and the rest of the field. That gives firefighters a chance to get ahead of the blaze.

"Without the help of the farmers, this thing wouldn't get stopped," von Borstel said. "There are lots of us out there. We look out for each other."

Von Borstel's crops so far are untouched. But his cousin lost just over a square mile on Wednesday, and the fire is only a few miles from his home.

The blaze about 85 miles east of Portland has scorched nearly 80 square miles of wheat fields and grasslands since igniting Tuesday.

Authorities on Thursday designated it as the top firefighting priority nationwide.

It was the largest of more than 200 wildfires across Oregon, many sparked by lightning. Other fires dotted states throughout the drought-stricken Western United States.

A man's body was found Thursday near a homeless camp inside the perimeter of another fire that burned earlier in the week in southwestern Oregon. It wasn't clear if he died before or during the blaze, and an autopsy was planned.

In wheat country, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said the fire may have been intentionally set and the state will help investigate. Firefighters were trying to protect homes and other structures in the hardest-hit areas.

Authorities have told residents of 900 houses to evacuate or be ready to go as the flames spread rapidly.

The wheat at risk isn't good for making bread and is primarily shipped to Asian markets — particularly Japan and Korea — for use in ramen noodles, steamed breads and flatbreads.

The crop this year looked particularly bountiful, with farmers estimating they might get 15 or 20 bushels more per acre than the average 55. The wheat would normally be harvested within the next 10 days.

Each crop takes two years to grow because farmers leave half the land fallow to improve environmental conditions and reduce erosion.

"There's some years when you wouldn't mind your wheat crop burning, but

this isn't one of them. I don't know how much crop has burned, and it's still burning," said Tom McCoy, who lost 300 acres overnight.

He estimates the lost value at about \$91,000. He's insured, but this year's crop looked so good he worries he might not have enough insurance and will still wind up with less than he would have gotten on the market.

"There has been tens of thousands of acres of cropland lost," said Logan Padgett, a fifth-generation wheat farmer who was battling the flames Thursday.

"I've heard that some people have lost literally everything. ... You've got two years' worth of effort that's coming down to a two-week harvest, and all your time and care and effort for the land is wasted."

FIRE

Continued from Page 1A with the State Fire Marshal's office. Wooldrige was asked if Union County had people available to help with the Substation Fire. Wooldrige put the word out and by 3 p.m. the six firefighters were bound for Wasco County. They began fighting the blaze Wednesday night.

"They are securing the line on the southern edge of the fire," Wooldrige said.

The six Union County firefighters teamed with five Umatilla County firefighters to form a Strike Force unit for the Substation blaze. Fire departments in Umatilla County contributed a brush truck and a tender truck for the Strike Force.

Imbler Fire Chief Mike Barry said the blaze is particularly challenging because it is wind driven in an environment with low humidity and high heat, giving it volatility.

"Wind-driven fires have high flame lengths and move fast," he explained.

Wooldrige said that with explosive fires like this, it is more important than ever for firefighting teams to focus on the direction and speed the blaze is traveling, to communicate with one another and to know where escape routes and safety zones are. Safety zones include areas that have no fuel because they have already been scorched.

Working at night, crews have a chance to be more aggressive when taking on

a blaze.

"At night you can make a direct attack on a fire because fire activity goes down as the humidity rises," Wooldrige said.

La Grande Fire Chief Les Thomas concurred, saying, "A fire lays down a little at night."

Firefighters working on blazes in the daytime often must be more defensive as a blaze reaches the peak of its destructive powers. Wooldrige said firefighters working day shifts focus more on burning out fuel sources and making homes less vulnerable to an approaching fire.

Although working the night shift gives firefighters more opportunities to make inroads, they must get their shuteye in the daytime under less than ideal conditions.

"Trying to sleep in the daytime is difficult because it is hot," Wooldrige said.

Firefighters from at least 32 Oregon counties are helping to combat the Substation Fire.

"We help each other," Barry said. "It is important because someday we will need the same help. It is just a matter of time."

Wooldrige said that having firefighters from the different departments working together on a fire produces a lasting benefit.

"You build relationships and make relationships already in place stronger," he said.

Man sentenced in rape case

By Phil Wright

East Oregonian

Umatilla County jurors last week convicted a former Milton-Freewater man of raping his stepdaughter for years.

Now Kenneth Eugene Christopher, 49, will serve almost three decades in prison for his crimes.

Christopher pleaded not guilty to 30 counts of sex crimes, including four of first-degree rape, five of first-degree sexual abuse and four of first-degree sodomy. The district attorney's office accused Christopher of molesting and sexually assaulting two victims, according to court records, in 2009 and 2010 in Milton-Freewater.

Christopher's trial was July 9 and 10, and the state at the start dropped all but nine counts — five of first-degree sexual abuse and four of first-degree rape. The remaining charges related to the one victim who came to Pendleton to take the witness stand.

She is 22 now, according to a sentencing memo from prosecutor Jady Jenkins, and testified she was 13 the first time Christopher molested her and 14 the first time he raped her. She told the jury she did not believe she could say no to Christopher because he was violent and threatened to harm her animals and tear apart the family.

From then until she was 19, according to Jenkins' memo, Christopher "had

persistent and consistent sexual contact" with the girl.

Christopher on July 10 sought to move the case, court documents show, arguing he could not get a fair trial in Umatilla County. That same day the jury found Christopher guilty on all nine counts.

First-degree rape in

Oregon carries a mandatory minimum sentence of eight years, four months, and first-degree sexual abuse carries a mandatory minimum of six years, three months.

Circuit Judge Jon Lieuellen, according to court documents, found Christopher deserving of a little more than 29 years.

2018 Union County Fair Entry Times

Saturday, July 28, 2018

9am-5pm Canning, Home Crafts, Poetry, Textiles, Arts and Photography, Land Products, Flower Entries

Sunday, July 29, 2018

9am-6pm Baked Goods, Cream/Egg Pie Entries

1pm-6pm Textiles, Arts and Photography Land Products, Flowers Entries

Monday, July 30, 2018

9am-8pm All Quilts Entered

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

8am-8pm Open Class Livestock

8am-7pm All Open Class Livestock Allowed on Grounds

2pm-7pm 4H and FFA Market Animal Weigh-in

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