



THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Letha Nussbaumer of La Grande

Smoky, hot weather expected to subside by Saturday

■ Thursday's temperature ties August 1971 heat

By Max Denning
The Observer

After record high temperatures on Thursday, the hot, hazy weather is expected to continue today, but Northeast Oregonians can look forward to a reprieve from the heat on Saturday, with temperatures expected to drop more than 20 degrees.

La Grande hit a high temperature of 105 degrees on Thursday, breaking a previous high for Aug. 9 of 102 degrees set in 1971. Records were set all around Northeast Oregon and Southwest Washington. Last year, the high temperature on Aug. 9 in La Grande was 96 degrees.

In Meacham, the National Weather Service recorded a high temperature of 102 degrees, which tied for their third hottest day ever.

An excessive heat warning combined with low levels of humidity and strong winds caused the NWS to issue a red flag warning, where the above weather qualities can contribute to "extreme fire behavior." Jim Smith, a meteorologist with the NWS in Pendleton, said red flag warnings are not particularly uncommon for Northeast Oregon.

The warning notes that "any fires that develop will likely spread rapidly. Outdoor burning is not recommended."

Compounded with the heat air quality has been rated as moderate to unhealthy for sensitive groups air quality around the Grand Ronde Valley. Smith said the smoke causing less than optimal air quality is coming from fires in Southwest Oregon and California. In Cove, the smoke has caused an air quality level of 111, which is considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. Yet, these levels don't begin to approach the levels of quality in Southern Oregon. At the Shady Cove School station, which is 22 miles outside of Medford, air quality is rated at 344, which is a hazardous level and the worst air quality on the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's scale.

With the high temperature expected to drop to the mid to upper 80s on Saturday, the haziness is also expected to, at least somewhat, subside.

Contact Max Denning at 541-963-3161 or mdenning@lagrandeobserver.com.



Submitted photo

Laura Mahrt, associate professor of biology at EOU, releases a Black Capped Chickadee after catching it to put a band on its leg that helps scientists track its migration.

EOU STIPEND HELPS BIRD TRACKING STATION



Submitted photo

Laura Mahrt, associate professor of biology at EOU, holds a Brewer's sparrow that she helped catch using a mist net.

■ Biology professor helped run a bird monitoring station with assistance from EOU Faculty Scholar award

By Max Denning
The Observer

From early June to the beginning of August, once every 10 days Laura Mahrt, an Eastern Oregon University associate professor of biology, woke up at 3:15 a.m. and made the trek out to Ladd Marsh off Hot Lake Road.

There, she and six other citizen scientists set up mist nets to catch songbirds, weigh them, take note of their age, wings and sex, and place a small aluminium band around one leg that will help other citizen scientists track the birds' migration patterns.

This summer, Mahrt utilized an Eastern Oregon University Faculty Scholar award to help establish a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship station.

MAPS stations are overseen by the Institute for Bird Populations, which has operated more than 1,200 such stations

See **Birds** / Page 5A

Resource fair provides La Grande students with free supplies, community outreach

■ Annual back-to-school fair prepares students and families through community resources, outreach

By Audrey Love
The Observer

As we usher in the end of summer, so we also welcome that freshly sharpened pencil smell and the joy of loading down backpacks with new school supplies. La Grande School District helped families in the local community do just that through its annual resource fair, held Thursday at La Grande Middle School.

From 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., new and returning students and families were welcome to explore a number of vendor booths, grab snacks prepared by the school's new food service program, help themselves to school sup-

plies provided by the La Grande School District and browse a selection of free clothing from the Salvation Army. New students entering kindergarten through eighth grade were also able to register for the upcoming school year.

Now in its fourth year, the resource fair is sponsored by the La Grande School District as a way to help students and families in the community get information on everything from Girl Scouts and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to dental care and physicals through Grande Ronde Hospital.

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Audrey Love / The Observer

Multiple vendors were set up Thursday at the La Grande School District resource fair, providing students and families with school supplies, free clothing and more.

Mt. Emily Safe Center provides space for children to tell the truth

The Observer continues a series focusing on child sexual abuse in Union County. This is the second story in the series.

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

The Mt. Emily Safe Center is tucked away in a residential neighborhood in La Grande. It is situated in a home and is furnished like one. The intent is to make it as comfortable as possible because the conversations that take place within its walls are anything but.

Kim McDonald, executive director, Tiffany Burns, forensic interviewer, and Amy Morgan, child and family advocate, sit in the living room area. The office is quiet, except for the occasional ringtone going off, as the three talk to one another.

The Mt. Emily Safe Center is the second step in the process of a child sexual abuse investigation. Burns especially is the one whose job is to get a disclosure from the child regarding abuse allegations. Children come to the Safe Center for a number of reasons, but the vast majority of the cases involve sexual abuse.

The Department of Human Services or law enforcement will contact the center after a complaint has been filed or a disclosure has been made, McDonald said.

"The child will come here first,

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Central bus route progress discussed by La Grande school board

By Dick Mason
The Observer

A new bus pickup and drop-off route on La Grande School District property for Central Elementary School students is almost finished.

The route, discussed at Wednesday's La Grande School Board meeting calls for buses to pick up and drop off students at the north edge of the Central playground where its staff parking lot is. Bus drivers will reach the parking lot by turning south off K Avenue between the new tennis courts and the high school, and then proceed south about 150 yards before turning east where the school's greenhouses and wood shop are and traveling about 200 yards east to Central's north parking lot.

In 2017-18, the new Central Elementary's first year of operation, unloading and loading of students was conducted on Second Street between K and H avenues, a safe and easily accessible loading zone for students, according to School District Superintendent George

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Friday
61 LOW
Mainly clear



Saturday
86/49
Hazy and cooler



Sunday
83/44
Sunny; pleasant

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.



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MONDAY

AIR TANKERS ARE READY FOR WILDFIRES

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