



SPORTS

Tigers sweep Baker

Inside
Baker School District expands outdoor school 2A



Follow us on the web

WEDNESDAY • September 19, 2018 • \$1 Good day to our valued subscriber Judie Arritola of La Grande

URA, URAC discuss Call for Projects policy

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

The Urban Renewal Agency and the Urban Renewal Advisory Commission held the first of multiple meetings to discuss the policy — and specifically the point system — of the agency's annual Call for Projects.

At a special work session

Monday night, the URA and URAC met to listen to business owner Gust Tsiatsos' request to scale back his Texaco Station project, which he received \$50,000 for during the 2018 Call for Projects. He originally requested \$125,000, which is the amount he based the project's budget on. He said he may not be able to go for-

ward with the project since he received less than half of what he had requested.

"We considered backing off the project until next year," Tsiatsos told The Observer on Tuesday.

The Call for Projects program was designed to focus on buildings in La Grande's Urban Renewal District that need to be revitalized.

Grants are awarded to projects that meet certain criteria: revitalize downtown; create high-quality family-wage jobs; provide retail development, housing, transportation or community facilities.

The Urban Renewal Agency weighs successful applications on a point system. Preference is given

to projects with a business plan that shows promise as a viable for-profit business, projects that revitalize the Central Business District, projects with a job creation component and projects that reduce blight.

Generally, the maximum amount of money a project can receive is \$75,000 and
See URA / Page 5A

Elgin City Council welcomes fresh face

■ Student councilor added to ranks, recreational vehicles on city streets up for discussion

By Audrey Love
The Observer

There was plenty of new business on the agenda for Tuesday's Elgin City Council meeting and a fresh face amongst its ranks.

Kaylee Smith, a senior at Elgin High School, was sworn in as the city's newest student councilor and sat among council members for the latter portion of the meeting. Smith and her family moved to Elgin in July from Pendleton and hopes to expand on her political interests and familiarize herself with the community through this opportunity, she said.

"I have an interest in politics with city government and how it works. I like to be a good role model for others and like working with the community," Smith said in a written statement to the council. "I'd gain knowledge in serving the community (and) learn more about communicating with the school and the city council. I know I can do the job the right way."

Mayor Allan Duffy said the position isn't just political and leadership experience for the student involved, but an opportunity for the council to garner a younger perspective and listen more closely to the wants and needs of Elgin's youth.

"It allows us to get the opinions of the younger folks in the community," Duffy said. "They're not only reporting back and forth (from the high school to the city council) but opening a lot of communication between the younger people, the community and the council."

When the council calls for a vote, as a member of the council Smith will be able to offer an advisory vote; Duffy said though the council is interested in hearing how Smith will vote on particular issues, her vote won't officially count toward the council's final decisions.

"We appoint them to have all the rights and privileges of a city councilor, other than that (advisory) vote. She can jump into the conversations of the council and share the opinions of her peers," Duffy said of the position. "They've got some responsibility. They're there to represent the students of Elgin and where they stand."

Past student councilors have also attended conferences with the council, represented the city at state gatherings and been assigned to council commit-

See Elgin / Page 5A

Enrollment up in many Union County school districts

■ Three districts see double-digit increases

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Enrollment is on the upswing in the majority of school districts in Union County.

Student head counts are up by double digits in three of the county's six school districts, up slightly in two others and down in one.

The Cove School District is leading the enrollment charge with an increase of 26 students. The school district now has 298 students, 8 percent more than it had at the end of the previous school year, according to Superintendent Earl Pettit.

Cove has 99 students in grades nine to 12 and 199 in kindergarten through eighth grade. Cove is a charter school district, which means students living outside of Cove can transfer in, even those from districts that do not have inter-district agreements with the district.

Pettit said Cove's increase is not due to more students living outside the district transferring in, but rather to changing demographics.

"A lot of young families are moving (to Cove)," he said.

The superintendent had anticipated an enrollment increase, but nothing close to 26 students.

"We built our budget based on a projection of 278 students," he said.

Enrollment has an enormous impact on school district funding since school districts receive about \$7,700 from the state per student.

The Union School District is
See Enrollment / Page 5A

EOU RECEIVES \$1 MILLION DONATION FROM WWII-ERA ALUM



Max Denning/The Observer

From left: EOU President Tom Insko gathers on stage with Patsy Gay and Dan Ginsey, daughter and son of Denver Ginsey, and Jim and Char Evan, Ginsey's brother- and sister-in-law and EOU Vice President of University Advancement Tim Seydel for the donation announcement Monday.

■ Denver Ginsey, class of '48, gives university its largest gift ever from a living alumnus

By Max Denning
The Observer

With faculty and staff in attendance for convocation, Eastern Oregon University President Tom Insko announced the EOU Foundation has received the largest gift ever given to the university on Monday in the McKenzie Theater.

Alumnus Denver Ginsey has established the Denver and Jean Ginsey Scholarship through a \$1 million endowment. The donation will fund multiple scholarships each year that could include full tuition scholarships for students studying business or science, engineering, technology and math programs. Denver's contribution is the largest ever given to EOU by a living alumnus.

While Denver could not attend the announcement of his gift, two of his children, Dan Ginsey and Patsy Gay,



Max Denning / The Observer

The above group stands with EOU Foundation President Patrick Nearing (far right) for a picture after the \$1 million donation announcement.

and his brother- and sister-in-law, Jim and Char Evans, who live in La Grande, were there in his stead.

Dan said his father created educational trusts for his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, which spurred him to make a large donation to EOU.

"He saw the impact it had on three (of his children) and then on

his six grandkids," Dan said. "It took the burden off myself, Patsy and my brother."

Denver was born in Spokane, Washington, and moved to La Grande when he was six or seven years old, Dan said. After graduating from La Grande High School, Denver served in the U.S. Navy in

See EOU / Page 5A

Imbler School District septic system soon to be operational

By Dick Mason
The Observer

A new septic system being installed by the Imbler School District may soon begin operating.

School board member Wade Bingaman said at Monday night's board meeting the system may be finished in about a month. Bingaman said a sealant is now being placed on the bottom of a pond created for the septic system. Once the sealant is in place and a berm is created for the pond, the system will be operational.

The new system is 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.

The problem became so bad in the spring of 2017 that students and staff at Imbler High School had to use portable restrooms from mid-March through May.

To address this problem, plans for a step septic system were developed and its installation began in the summer. Effluent

in the system will first enter a septic tank where bacteria will break down solids. Next the waste water will be sent via a pipe to a two-acre septic pond a mile north of Imbler and evaporate, Imbler School District Superintendent Angie Lakey- Campbell said.

The pond is on land the school district has access to via an easement. The easement was donated by Wade and Ange Bingaman and Carrie and Ross Bingaman. Wade Bingaman is vice chair of the school board.

The septic system project was planned by Anderson Perry and

Associates and the installation is being done by Hamilton Excavation, both La Grande companies. Crews did the excavation work at the school district's campus over the summer. The space for the pipe leading to the pond had already been bored, Lakey- Campbell said.

The pond is at least a half mile from the nearest home. The pipe will enter the pond 15 feet below the surface, which allow all gases in the effluent to dissipate under water, Lakey- Campbell said,

See Imbler / Page 3A

INDEX

Business1B Horoscope.....6B Sports6A
Classified4B Lottery.....2A Sudoku3B
Comics3B Obituaries.....3A Wonderword.....3B
Crossword6B Opinion.....4A
Dear Abby ...10B Record3A

WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
40 LOW
Mainly clear



Thursday
69/41
Mostly cloudy

CONTACT US

541-963-3161

Issue 110
2 sections, 18 pages
La Grande, Oregon

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Call The Observer newsroom at 541-963-3161 or send an email to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.



FRIDAY

TWO CANDIDATES VIE FOR ELGIN MAYOR POSITION

Online at lagrandeobserver.com