



SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

FRIDAY-SUNDAY • September 21 - 23, 2018 • \$1

Good day to our valued subscriber Jackie Bobbinger of Enterprise

Weekend



RIDING THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

JAMIE MCLEOD-SKINNER ATTENDS RODEO, CAMPAIGNS AT PENDLETON

Editor's note: U.S. Rep. Greg Walden has agreed to allow The Observer to shadow him for a similar story in October.

By Max Denning
The Observer

The Pendleton Round-Up might not seem like an ideal place for a Congressional Democratic candidate to campaign. Umatilla County, where the lion's share of the population lives in Pendleton, had 6,000 more registered Republicans than Democrats in the 2018 primary election. In the 2018 primaries, incumbent Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) received 63,817 votes, while the seven Democrats running for the nomination received only 49,760 votes.

Yet, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, who is challenging the 10-term incumbent in Oregon's Second Congressional District, spent three days at the Round-Up to

meet and listen to as many constituents as possible.

Democrat McLeod-Skinner, who lives in Terrebonne, has been crisscrossing Oregon's Second Congressional District since declaring her

candidacy in July 2017, having driven 40,000 miles so far within the country's seventh-largest congressional district to campaign. She's held town halls, meet and greets, attended county fairs and flew solo at what

was meant to be a debate, which Walden was invited to but did not attend.

To get an idea of what it's like to be on McLeod-Skinner's campaign journey, The Observer shadowed the candidate for two days

during last week's Round-Up. The rodeo event offered a chance to get her name and platform in front of an estimated 50,000 people flocking into Pendleton to attend the weeklong event. McLeod-Skinner did her fair share of campaigning — shaking hands, talking to voters and riding a horse in Friday's Westward Ho! Parade. But McLeod-Skinner was also there to simply enjoy the famed rodeo. She ate barbecue, cheered on the contestants in bareback horse riding and calf roping and talked to her neighbors.

Thursday: The Rodeo

McLeod-Skinner and her team arrive at the stadium around noon wearing various shades of pink. The only one not in pink? Taylor Jacobs, McLeod-Skinner's handler who was hired just two months prior. Cass

See **Rodeo** / Page 8A



Photos by Max Denning/The Observer

Jamie McLeod-Skinner spent three days at the Pendleton Round-Up, where she took photos with constituents, watched rodeo events and rode in the Westward Ho! Parade. McLeod-Skinner is the Democratic candidate for Congress in Oregon's Second Congressional District. She's seen above with her wife, Cass, riding in the parade and posing for photos with Michael Harper, OLCC Commissioner.

Kleng found guilty of sexual abuse

Observer staff

On Wednesday, a 12-person jury found Brett George Kleng guilty of four counts of first-degree sexual abuse, one count of first-degree unlawful sexual penetration and one count of second-degree sexual abuse.

Kleng, of La Grande, was originally arrested in September 2017 on 18 sexual abuse charges.

Two of the three victims in the case were minors and the incidents took place from 2000 through 2016, according to Kleng's indictment.

Kleng pleaded not guilty earlier this month to all of the charges and declined negotiations with the Department of Justice's prosecuting attorney, Victoria Roe.

After an eight-day trial, Kleng was found guilty of six of the original 18 charges. He will face another trial for the other charges.

His sentencing trial is scheduled for Sept. 26 at 3 p.m.

Union County officials meet with Walden to talk human trafficking

Representative meets with Commissioners, law enforcement and GRH staff to talk about victims' resources

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden met with law enforcement, Union County Commissioners, Grande Ronde Hospital staff and community members to talk about human trafficking Wednesday at the Meisner Conference Room in La Grande.

An estimated 300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked in the United States, according to documentation provided by Walden that listed old and new

See **Trafficking** / Page 5A

Walden discusses opioid crisis with Wallowa County law enforcement

By Katy Nesbitt
For The Observer

On Wednesday, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) made a stop at the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office to talk about the rising prescription drug addiction crisis and the county's efforts to combat it.



Walden

To give Walden an idea of the ef-

fectiveness of a prescription drug collection program sponsored by local law enforcement, officers piled half a dozen banker boxes and several two-gallon plastic bags on a conference room table — six months of pills voluntarily deposited into a receptacle at the sheriff's office by members of the community.

"When these 55-gallon bags come in, the officers team up and empty all the pill containers and

condense the contents," Sheriff Steve Rogers said.

Eventually the boxes and bags of prescriptions pills will be transported via U.S. mail or driven by a law enforcement officer to a high-security incineration site in the Oregon Coast Range, Rogers said.

Enterprise Police Officer George Kohlepp is on the front lines of the local drug crisis.

He said the big thing now is

an anti-seizure medication called Gabapentin that is also used for nerve damage from shingles. The drug is also prescribed for a long list of non-FDA-approved uses, including alcohol and cocaine withdrawal, excessive sweating, hiccups, restless leg syndrome, headaches, hot flashes and fibromyalgia.

"We get bottles with as many as 500 to 700 pills," Kohlepp said,

See **Opioid** / Page 5A

Elgin Mayor Duffy faces contested race in November

By Audrey Love
The Observer

After an uncontested race last election cycle, Elgin Mayor Allan Duffy faces competition this go-around in the form of Jon Rutherford.



Duffy

An Observer interview was scheduled with Rutherford earlier this week, but he did not attend and did not respond for comment in time for publication.

In his fourth year as mayor, Allan Duffy's passion for his role hasn't wavered.

"It's an honor and a privilege when people vote for you to serve them and carry out the business of the city," Duffy said. "It's satisfying when you can make changes and make things better. I love promoting my city and 'putting us on the map,' letting people know we're (here) and we're doing great things."

An Elgin resident for 11 years, Duffy has been involved with city government since 2011 when he served on the city's planning commission. When a city council seat became vacant, Duffy was appointed to the position and served for the next year and a

half, eventually running and being elected to a four-year term as a city councilman. After serving two of those four years, however, he decided to run for mayor and successfully defeated the incumbent, John Stover, thus beginning the first of his two terms as Elgin's mayor.

"When I started four years ago, I told citizens my view was to have more transparency through city hall with city councilors and the news media. We've accomplished that," he said. "I think I've done some great things with the city staff and the rest of the city council. We've made some great

progress."

This progress includes re-establishing Elgin's municipal court system and ordinance officer position, the construction and grand opening of a health clinic, various infrastructure projects such as recent sidewalk construction and a \$3.5 million sewer project, establishing a new subdivision — the largest housing growth in the city in more than 30 years — and an upcoming move into a larger city hall building.

"I believe we've just touched the tip of the iceberg in Elgin. There are a lot of other things (to be done), things we can build on

to improve our city," Duffy said. "I know with the council we have, the (city) staff and the citizens, we can make these things happen."

Concerning new projects, Duffy said the possibilities are ripe, beginning with the relocation and establishment of the Elgin Museum in the soon-to-be former city hall building and possible remodeling and upgrades to the Elgin Opera House, which is owned by the city.

"I just have a passion for Elgin," he said. "It's my home. I have a desire to make sure we're moving forward (and not) backward,

See **Elgin** / Page 2A

INDEX

Calendar.....7A Horoscope.....5B Record.....3A
Classified.....4B Lottery.....2A Sports.....1C
Comics.....3B Obituaries.....3A Sudoku.....3B
Crossword.....5B Opinion.....4A
Dear Abby...10B Outdoors.....1B

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section



Friday
48 LOW
Increasing clouds



Saturday
68/42
A shower or two



Sunday
63/35
Partly sunny

CONTACT US

541-963-3161

Issue 111
3 sections, 24 pages
La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas
to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

More contact info
on Page 4A.



8 51153 00100 6

MONDAY

EOU PREPS FOR FALL SEMESTER WITH MOVE-IN DAY

Online at lagrandeobserver.com