

LGPD

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day shift activity and work volume on Halloween is usually consistent with any other day of the week, while night shift activity is “rather variable about how busy it will or won’t be,” Harvey said.

“There are times where it’s pretty uneventful and like any other night of the week,” Bell added. “And there are other times where it’s extraordinarily busy and the shift (on duty) is doing all the work they can handle, sometimes more.”

Of the calls received on Halloween night, most typically relate to “criminal mischief” — incidents dealing with pranks such as “TP-ing,” or toilet papering, someone’s home or smashing pumpkins in the street — though more serious incidents such as assault have been dealt with in the past.

“We’re very conscious and discerning about what we prioritize with our resource levels, and we look at days like Halloween (as a time to) put out some resources,” said Harvey. “We want to be preventative and proactive (and) we’ve had a lot of success with proactive safety efforts.”

To bolster public safety surrounding the holiday, LGPD has a long-standing partnership with the La Grande School District in putting together and distributing Halloween bags for students.

“It’s an aspect of public safety we’re trying to generate and it has worked well,” Bell said. “Staff within the (police) department put a glow stick and flyer that has safety information in the bag, and staff at the police department deliver the bags to each of the schools.”

Funding for the items is provided locally by OTEC, Commercial Tire and Pepsi-Cola. LGPD then purchases and bags the items and hand-delivers them to La Grande schools on Oct. 29 — ensuring enough bags for each child to receive one.

“The school district is an incredible partner in helping us facilitate this program,” Bell said. “If it weren’t for them helping us get these bags out to the kids, we wouldn’t be able to thoroughly make sure all the kids have one.”

ELGIN

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storage site. The second Elgin jail is also austere but far more modern. The two-cell facility is on the bottom floor of the Opera House and currently is filled with theater costumes.

Hopkins said the Elgin Opera House hopes to construct a separate storage space to house its costumes. Once this is done the organization will move its costumes out of the old jail, which will later be opened for public visits.

It is not known when the jail in the Opera House building opened, but it was in use through the 1970s. Ronnie Allen of La Grande, who served as a Oregon State Certified Police Officer for the old Elgin Police Department for nine months between 1970 to early 1971, remembers the jail well.

Allen said there was a desk used for fingerprinting those who had been arrested at the entrance to the jail, which had two cells.

Individuals charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants were not lodged at the jail but instead transported to the La Grande Police Department’s old jail on Washington Avenue just north of the post office.

“We took them to the La Grande Police Department office because it had a breathalyzer,” said Allen, who was certified to conduct breathalyzer tests.

Allen said that in the early 1970s the legal limit for blood alcohol was at least twice what it is today.

If the person charged with DUII was determined to have a blood alcohol content over the legal limit for driving, Allen said, the individual would be left at the La Grande jail.

Allen said people lodged at the Elgin Opera House building jail were always kept there for less than a day.

The La Grande jail on Washington Avenue operated for a number of decades. It was a two-cell facility, according to Becky Lester of La Grande, whose father, David Lester, was a La Grande Police Department officer in the 1960s and 1970s. The old jail is still there but is filled with items being stored by the city.

The old La Grande jail operated until about 1979 when the present Union County Correctional Facility jail, which houses inmates arrested by the La Grande Police Department and the Union County Sheriff’s Office, opened.

Prior to 1979, those arrested by the Union County Sheriff’s Office were

placed in a jail at the old courthouse on L Avenue, which was located less than 100 feet from where today’s courthouse is and was torn down in the late 1990s. Retired Union-Wal-lowa County Circuit Judge Eric Valentine said the jail at the courthouse was far from impressive.

“It had one large cell and no air conditioning,” Valentine said.

The retired judge was elated when the current jail was built, with many modern amenities including a sally port for bringing in inmates safely.

“We all breathed a sigh of relief (when) we finally had a jail that was up to date,” Valentine said.

Unfortunately, Valentine said, the Union County Correctional Facility today is again outdated.

“We have come full circle. What was once new has become very old by contemporary standards,” he said.

North Powder, like La Grande, Elgin and Union (whose old jail is featured in an Observer story today), also has a former jail building. It is a brown concrete structure with a small window located in North Powder’s city park. It is now used to store city items, said North Powder City Recorder Beth Wendt. A notation on the jail reads “City Jail, 1903.”

ARTS

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more than \$100 million to the region — these numbers reflect the enormous economic impact of the world-famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, which was included in the study.

In total, the estimated spending by the non-profit arts and culture industry was more than \$687 million in Oregon in 2016, according to the study. The industry also supported 22,299 full-time equivalent jobs and generated \$29.3 million in local government revenue.

One organization not included in the study that has an economic impact in Northeast Oregon is La Grande’s Eastern Oregon Film Festival. Christopher Jennings, EOFF co-founder, said the film festival brought \$1.25 million to La Grande in the first eight years of its existence. This year, Jennings said, a survey of 42 festival-goers reported each spent on average \$101.78 each day while attending the film festival.

According to the study, nonprofit arts attendees who live outside the region spend significantly more than attendees who are residents.

“Nonresident attendees spent an average of 486 percent more per person than local attendees (\$102.17 vs. \$17.44) as a result of their attendance to cultural events,” the study stated.

However, estimates from the study state 86.2 percent of nonprofit arts attendees were residents.

Jennings said he thinks the film festival encourages people to return to La Grande.

Dolge and Morton agreed they would like to see more tourism for the arts.

“If the arts were drawing in more tourism it would help each community as a whole,” Dolge said.

In addition to increasing arts-related tourism, Morton said she hopes to increase the reach of Art Center East.

“Part of the support we’re also looking for is to make sure that people who don’t normally access the arts feel welcome at any arts events,” Morton said.

UNION

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Porter’s clemency, according to a story in the Jan. 8, 1993, Observer, which quoted Evans.

“Union County Sheriff J.F. Phy said afterward it was the worst miscarriage of justice he had seen,” Evans told The Observer.

Historians who echo this sentiment include the late Lee Johnson, author of “A Brief History of Union County,” who wrote, “Certainly if injustice was ever done to any man on trial for his life it was in the case of Kelsay Porter.”

Evans, who read the transcript of the trial, agreed with Johnson. He said evidence supporting Porter was not allowed to be presented to the jury.

“It would have shown that Porter had acted in self-defense,” Evans said in the 1993 Observer article.

Porter, 46, was a bachelor who came to Pine Valley in the 1880s from the Willamette Valley after growing up in the Midwest.

The three people Porter shot were Ben Mache, his wife, Mary, and their teenage son, Ben Jr. They lived next to Porter and regularly harassed him. A man who lived with them, convicted horse thief “Sixshooter Bill” Rockwood, helped them intimidate Porter.

If the Maches and Rockwood crossed Porter’s land on their way to Pine, a nearby hamlet, they would leave Porter’s gate open so his animals could escape. They also cut his fence and once forced him to dance by firing a pistol at his feet, according to Evans.

Author and historian Carmelita Holland, in a column published in a winter 2001 edition of the old Record Courier newspaper of Baker City, wrote the Maches told Porter to leave his homestead in Pine Valley.

They said, “If you are still here on New Year’s Day (1896), we are going to kill you,” Holland wrote.

The author said Porter was sure the Maches would kill him, so he tried to prevent it.

The morning of Jan. 1, 1896,

the Maches began to trek over Porter’s property. According to Evans, they planned to get Porter to shoot at them and then kill him claiming self-defense. However, Porter was waiting for the them with a rifle in hand, and he killed all three.

The Pine Valley community did not lament the death of the Maches, who were disliked by many and “were buried unceremoniously,” Evans said.

Porter turned himself in that afternoon and was tried for first-degree murder. In February, the trial was conducted in Union because the town was then the county seat and Pine Valley was then part of Union County.

How interested were Northeast Oregonians in the trial?

Holland wrote that a newspaper reported “the courtroom (during the trial) was packed to suffocation from morning until midnight.”

A jury found Porter guilty and he was sentenced to death. Porter was hanged at a gallows built

outside the jail building.

“He probably watched the gallows being built from his cell window,” Evans said .

Porter did not speak to reporters prior to his execution and declined the opportunity to say any last words while standing of the scaffold of the gallows, but he did leave a note, which he wrote minutes after his last hope for life, a communication from then governor William Lord, was dashed, according to Evans.

In his last letter, Porter wrote: “Dear Friends, Please bury my body with respect in a graveyard and respect me as an unfortunate, defenseless man here on earth, taken off in the prime of life. I have repented all of my sins...”

Porter’s body, unclaimed by relatives, was buried in an unmarked grave at Union Cemetery. Eighty-two years later Porter got his wish for respect when a headstone was installed at his grave by the Union County Museum Society, under the leadership of Evans.

SAFETY

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members of the church and Thomas plans to talk to the parishioners to see what they would like to do.

In Island City, Faith Center’s acting lead pastor, Jeffry Forbes, said the idea of a shooting in the church weighs heavy on his mind.

“We have to recognize the world we live in,” he said. “We live in a broken world.”

He said the problem is not a political issue, but a heart issue. Violence stems from hate. Someone doesn’t decide overnight that they’re going to kill people, he said.

While no one can predict what is going to happen, he said he has to trust God is in control. The church’s

leaders have a moral obligation to protect those who worship at Faith Center, though, and they have talked to law enforcement — including officers who attend the church — on how best to keep the church safe.

“Do we need to get armed guards? Metal detectors?” Forbes asked, adding those measures are unlikely to happen. “There should be safety measures taken, but what’s the answer?”

Forbes said one challenge is finding a balance between taking necessary precautions without responding out of fear.

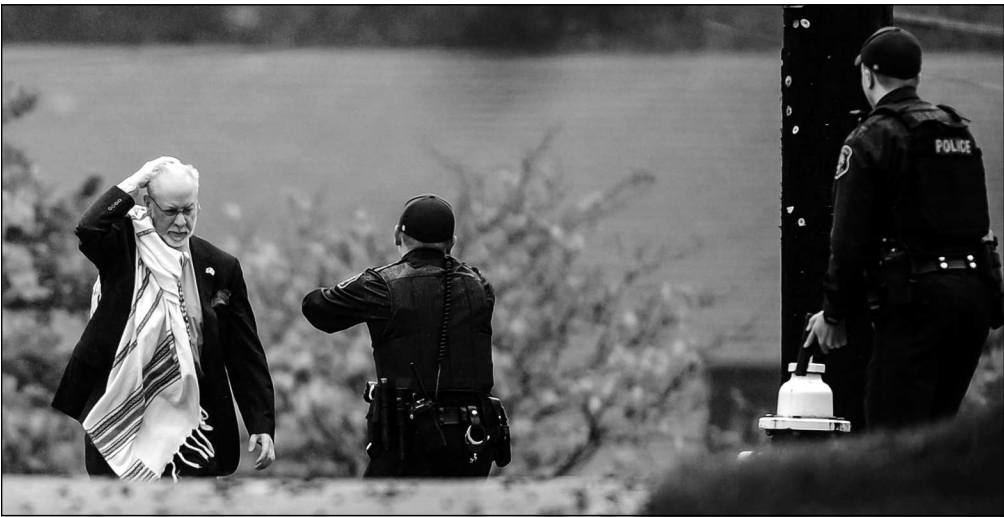
He said he doesn’t have the answer but he knows he doesn’t want to operate out of fear

“We should be asking our-

selves, in our community, how do we love people?” he said.

As local faith communities grapple with these questions, Tree of Life has received some hope and support from other religious organizations. A Muslim-focused crowdfunding site raised more than \$50,000 to help the victims of the shooting and their families. It surpassed the \$25,000 goal within six hours of posting, and in less than 24 hours reached \$50,000.

“We recognize that the money can’t bring back loved ones that (families) have lost so tragically, nor can it physically heal any of the wounds,” said Tarek El-Messidi, the founding director of CelebrateMercy,



Alexandra Wimley / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette via AP

A man holds his head as he’s escorted by police out of the Tree of Life Congregation synagogue where multiple people were killed Oct. 27 in the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh.

one of the two nonprofit organizations that organized the fundraiser, according to a TIME magazine article. “But we do hope the money

can in some way lift their spirits, lift the burdens of funeral expenses and medical costs.”

Forbes said in times of

tragedy and adversity, the faithful must “rise up and be driven by love and not fear — to stand firm. It’ll give people hope.”



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