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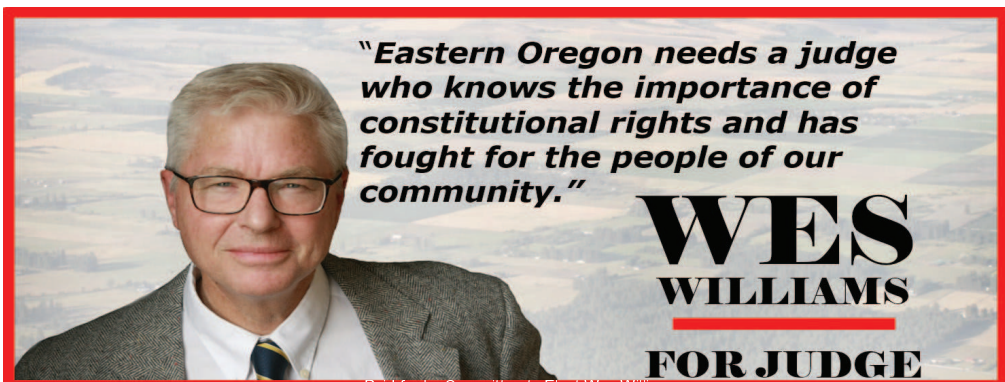
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# THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

MONDAY • November 5, 2018 • \$1.50

Good day to our valued subscriber Christine Saddler of Union



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## VA providing support for caregivers

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

Serving as a caregiver for a loved one can be a daunting and draining challenge, but caregivers must remember they do not have to bear all of the burden, especially if the person they are caring for is a veteran.

Peggi Spears, a social worker for the Walla Walla VA's Caregiver Support Program, emphasized this point during a visit to La Grande Friday to spotlight November as National Family Caregiver Month. Spears wants more people to be aware of the services offered by the VA to caregivers.

"The VA honors care givers," Spears said. "It honors all these people who honor others."

Services the VA provides to caregivers include access to Home Health Aides, Respite Care and Home Based Primary Care. Home Health Aides are trained individuals who can come to veterans' homes and help them take care of themselves and their daily activities. Respite Care providers come to homes specifically to allow caregivers to take breaks. Home Based Primary Care is a more comprehensive service provided to veterans in their homes. A VA physician supervises the health care team that provides the services.

In addition to these and many other services, the VA offers financial compensation to caregivers of veterans who have high needs, Spears said. In many cases the request for this compensation is made by the veteran on behalf of his or her caregiver, she said.

Spears has a firsthand appreciation of the services offered by the VA to caregivers. She took care of her husband, a veteran who needed extensive caregiving services until passing away last year.

"If it wasn't for the VA, I would have become very ill (because of stress and exhaustion)," Spears said.

Many of the veterans who need caregivers fall into two categories — geriatric and post-9/11. Those in the geriatric category are confronting issues brought on by aging and chronic disease while the post-9/11 veterans are primarily those who served

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Ronald Bond /The Observer

November 6 is the deadline in Union and Wallowa counties to mail in ballots for this year's general election. Ballots must be at the election official's office by the 8 p.m. deadline.

## LET THE COUNTING COMMENCE: BALLOTS ARE (ALMOST) IN

Ballots are due by 8 p.m. Nov. 6. Postmark time does not count. Ballots must be at the election official's office by the deadline.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, refer to the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet mailed out by the Oregon Secretary of State's office.

The guide is also available online at [www.oregonvotes.gov](http://www.oregonvotes.gov).

Contact Union County Clerk Robin Church at 541-963-1006 or 1001 4th St., Suite D, La Grande.

Contact Wallowa County Clerk Dana Roberts at 541-426-4543 ext 158 or 101 S. River St., Room 100, Enterprise.

### WALLOWA COUNTY BALLOT DROP SITES

- 211 E. Second, Wallowa
- 201 N. Main, Joseph
- 101 S. River, Enterprise

### UNION COUNTY BALLOT DROP SITES

- 504 Alder St., Cove
- 180 N Eight, Elgin
- 180 Ruckman, Imbler
- 10605 Island Ave., Island City
- 1000 Adams Ave., La Grande
- 635 Third St., Union
- 10001 Fourth St., Union

## Medical marijuana cardholders decline in Oregon

By Shaun Hill  
The Daily Courier

Medical marijuana patients and growers in Josephine County and across the state are abandoning the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program.

Long considered a source of Oregon's black market, medical marijuana is fast falling victim to a combination of red tape and a different kind of market force: the convenience of recreational retail sales.

"Medical could officially have a gravestone," said Kit Doyle, who formerly sold medical marijuana but switched to hemp products through his

business, the Murphy Hemp Company.

The number of patients registered with the OMMP is half of what it was a year ago. Statewide, it dropped 41 percent, from 59,137 to 34,892. In the county, it was almost 50 percent — from 7,027 to 3,540.

The number of registered growers also dropped precipitously. Statewide it went from 23,175 to 13,959 — 40 percent. In the county, it went from 2,957 to 1,668 — a 44 percent drop.

Doyle and several industry watchers think the numbers will continue to go down.

Medical marijuana has been legal in Oregon since 1998, when voters created a system that allowed registered persons to grow their own marijuana or obtain it from someone who grew it for them.

But even as the state Legislature took steps to allow dispensaries for medical marijuana, a sea change occurred in 2014, when voters legalized recreational marijuana, allowing retail sales to anyone older than 21 and setting up commercial production.

It also allows people to grow up to four recreational plants with no

registration requirements, except where prohibited by local statute.

To feed those outlets, the state issued licenses to approved growers and operators.

Currently, there have been 475 applications to grow, process, sell or test marijuana in Josephine County for the retail market. Reflecting the region's conducive-to-cannabis climate, the vast majority of applications, 399, were for recreational farms.

Medical marijuana patients who buy at retail dispensaries are able to avoid sale taxes that

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## Baker County Major Crime investigating death of 2-year-old boy

WesComm News Service

The Baker County Major Crime Team is continuing its investigation into the death of a 2-year-old boy who died Sunday at the Trauma Center in Boise of a gunshot wound, District Attorney Matt Shirlcliff stated in a press release.

Liam Mankins sustained the wound at about 11:15 a.m. at his home at 1905 Birch St.

His parents, Pete Mankins, 33, and Diana Goodman, 32, were at home at the time of the incident, Shirlcliff said.

The Oregon State Police crime lab is assisting the crime team in the investigation.

An ambulance, city police and county deputies were called to the Mankins' home Sunday morning. Liam was transported by ambulance to St. Alphonsus Medical Center and was immediately transferred to Boise by Life Flight.

The boy died of his injuries at 1:43 p.m. at the Boise Trauma Center, Shirlcliff said.

## Watch D.O.G.S. make impact in students' lives at Enterprise Elementary

By Max Denning  
The Observer

The Enterprise School District had struggled with low attendance for years, but in the 2017-18 school year, the percentage of chronically absent students decreased 8.2 percent, the equivalent of 39 students.

The reduction in chronic absenteeism isn't just happenstance. Enterprise School District Superintendent Erika Pinkerton, who is also the principal of the elementary school, said the school district has made concerted efforts to reduce absenteeism. At the elementary school, those efforts have included meetings with the parents of at-risk students, class competitions and establishing a brigade of volunteer fathers to help at the school.

Pinkerton said the first step in addressing the absenteeism issue was creating an "attendance team" consisting of members of the elementary school's staff. The next

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### WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



**Tonight**  
37° LOW  
Rather cloudy



**Tuesday**  
48/31  
A morning shower

### CONTACT US

541-963-3161

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### HAVE A STORY IDEA?

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



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ELECTION RESULTS FOR UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES

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