

Sports

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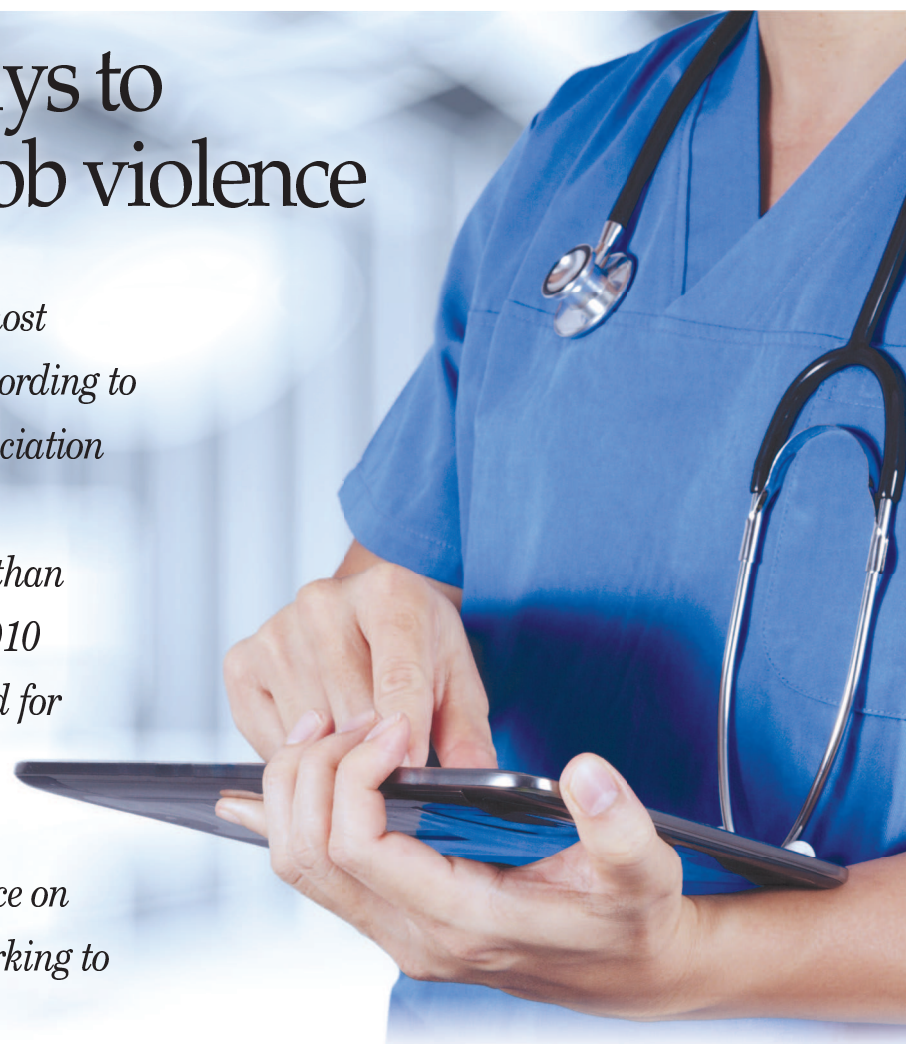
Good day to our valued subscriber Edwyn Wilson of La Grande

Violence in the workplace

GRH seeking ways to mitigate on-the-job violence

By Cherise Kaechele, The Observer

Hospitals are now among the most dangerous places to work. According to a report from the Oregon Association of Hospitals Research and Education Foundation, hospitals recorded more than 24,000 workplace assaults between 2010 and 2013. In fact, in studies conducted for Emergency Department nurses, 50 to 100 percent of respondents reported experiencing verbal or physical violence on the job. Grande Ronde Hospital is working to mitigate that.



WesCom News Archive photo

The hospital participated in a three-year pilot program with other Oregon hospitals of varying sizes to figure out how to decrease the frequency of violence against hospital staff while increasing the staffs' feeling of being safe at work.

It's helped, according to Elaine LaRochelle, who is the director of facilities at the hospital and who was instrumental in GRH being involved in the program that started in 2014.

LaRochelle is the safety and security officer for the hospital and oversees the other security staff. She said 18 years ago, the hospital didn't even lock its doors.

"We were as safe with the building as we could be," LaRochelle said. "But the (culture) in society shifted. Nurses were running into strangers in the hallways in the middle of the night."

The majority of nurses are female, and LaRochelle said nurses at GRH reported feeling unsafe when walking to their cars at night.

"They were scared," she said. LaRochelle said she looked for some kind of training that was proven to make hospital staff feel more safe, but there wasn't anything available.

Then she found out about the pilot program the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems started up. Five hospitals in Oregon — Burns, La Grande, The Dalles, Coos Bay and Portland — focused on workplace violence prevention. The goal was to create a toolkit for hospitals to use that would decrease workplace violence.

LaRochelle wanted to participate to protect the staff at GRH, but also help other Oregon hospitals.

"Security was vital," LaRochelle learned through the program of making staff more safe.

The study determined that having a trained security force on site to protect the staff was essential.

GRH now has a security team working at nights, on the weekend and during holidays when

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Grande Ronde Hospital recently completed a three-year program that studied how to keep the hospital safe from violent incidents. The profession is becoming one of the most dangerous, according to statistics.

Definition of violence

Harassment – any behavior (verbal or physical) that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms, or verbally abuses a person, and that is known or would be expected to be unwelcome. This includes use of offensive language, sexual innuendos, name calling, swearing, insults, use of condescending language etc., arguments, gestures, pranks, rumors, intimidation, bullying, or other inappropriate activities. Verbal or written threats – any expression of an intent to inflict personal pain, harm, damage, and/or psychological harm, either through spoken word or in writing. Threatening behavior – such as shaking fists, intentionally

slamming doors, punching walls, destroying property, vandalism, sabotage, theft, or throwing objects. Physical attacks or assaults – hitting, shoving, biting, pushing or kicking. Extremes include rape, arson, and murder. Note: ORS 654.412 to 654.423 defines assault as 'intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing physical injury'. Aggravated Assault - An unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. —OAHHS Study

UCSO arrest man on theft charges

By Observer staff

A Union man has been arrested for allegedly stealing approximately \$20,000 from a local business.



Fitzpatrick

Joshua Ray Fitzpatrick, 39, was arrested Wednesday on charges of fraudulent use of a credit card, identity theft, theft of services, first-degree theft and theft of mislaid property from incidents that spanned more than a two-month period, according to a press release from the Union County Sheriff's Office.

According to the release, the business became aware of the thefts and a Union County Sheriff's deputy took the initial report. UCSO detectives identified the suspect and were able to arrest him the same day.

Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen declined to name the business or what Fitzpatrick allegedly stole due to the open case.

According to Fitzpatrick's court records, he has a history of arrests that spans 20 years and mostly involves drug charges.

In August 2017, he was arrested for unlawful possession of meth, felon in possession of a restricted weapon, resisting arrest and carrying a concealed weapon.

Fitzpatrick is being held at the Union County Jail. His bail was set at \$40,000.

La Grande School District enrollment picture picks up

By Dick Mason
The Observer

The La Grande School District's enrollment picture has brightened over the past month.

Enrollment has jumped 10 students to 2,348, Chris Panike, the school district's business manager, told the school board Wednesday night. The increase will give a boost to the school district's budget since it receives about \$7,780 from the state per student.

"(The enrollment total) is a critical number," Panike said.

Enrollment has been up and down since the start of the school year, when it was at 2,370 students.

"It has fluctuated more than usual this year," said Panike, noting the reason for this is not known.

The business manager said enrollment is now stabilizing and it appears the school district has 20 to 30 fewer students than it did a year ago.

Presently, as of Friday morning, the school district has 2,353 students. Central Elementary has 498 students, Greenwood Elementary has 317, Island City Elementary has 311, La Grande Middle School has 545 and La Grande High School has 644. The La Grande Learning Academy, an alternative online program has 34.

Panike said it will be important that enrollment remain stable or increase over the next month because school districts must give a forecast of their 2019-20 enrollment to the state by Dec. 17. The state uses these estimates to determine how much money school districts will receive from July 2019 through February 2020. Should the estimate be higher or lower than the actual 2019-20 enrollment, the state will adjust what a school district will receive from March through May of 2020 to address inaccurate payments.

The La Grande School District's 2019-20 budget, Panike said, will be built based upon the enrollment forecast he makes in December.

Another number Panike will be watching closely is Gov. Kate Brown's

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EOU holds fall board of trustees meeting

Board discusses enrollment, recruitment strategies

By Max Denning
The Observer

The Eastern Oregon University of Board of Trustees held its fall meeting on Thursday and discussed ongoing efforts to increase enrollment on campus and in EOU's distance learning courses.

With overall enrollment at EOU decreasing for the past several years, the university has spearheaded a concerted effort to increase enroll-

ment. Reflecting what could be the effort's first sign of progress, Lacy Karpilo, vice president of student affairs at EOU, told the trustees the number of full-time equivalent students at the college has increased by 0.9 percent. While the total headcount of students at the college is still decreasing, Karpilo said the FTE count is what the university is more focused on.

"We focus on FTE because taking a full credit load indicates students are more likely to complete their degrees on time, which is important to us," she told The Observer. "Plus, that number shapes the financial support

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Long-time city councilor appointed mayor of Joseph

Former Mayor Dennis Sands stepped down for health reasons

By Max Denning

The Observer

Joseph Mayor Dennis Sands submitted his letter of resignation on Nov. 1 at Joseph City Council meeting, citing health concerns.

At the same meeting, long-time city council member, who was also serving as mayor pro-tem, Teresa Sajonia was appointed to the position after council member Tanya Collier nominated her.

Sajonia has been a council member for 12 years and is also the owner of Embers Brewhouse in Joseph. She was born and raised in Wallowa County and graduated

from Enterprise High School in 1983.

Just days after her appointment to the mayor position, Sajonia was up for reelection. Three positions were up for election, but only two candidates filed, so Sajonia won back her seat, which will now be vacant. The council will appoint someone to fill the seat in either January or February, she said.

There will be no special election for the mayoral position or the open city council seat. Both positions will be filled by appointment and the appointed individual will finish the term of the position.

For Sajonia, that means two more years as mayor. She said she believes councilors wanted to fill the mayor position quickly to

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Friday 28 Low Partly cloudy
Saturday 43/22 Mostly sunny
Sunday 46/24 Mostly sunny

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
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