

LOCAL BRIEFING

From staff reports

Wednesday's power outage caused by car accident

SUMMERVILLE — At 2 p.m. Dec. 12, a power outage in the Summerville area was reported affecting approximately 369 members. Crews were dispatched and power was restored by 4:45 p.m. The outage was caused by a car hitting a pole.

To report an outage or the cause of any outage, call OTEC at 1-866-430-4265.

GRH Auxiliary Christmas luncheon features food and friends

ISLAND CITY — The GRH Auxiliary's annual Christmas luncheon will begin at noon Dec. 17 at Island City City Hall, 10605 Island Ave. Members are asked to bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share. The meat will be provided by the Auxiliary. Come and enjoy food and friends.

OTEC Board meets Tuesday

BAKER CITY — A meeting of the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative Board of Directors is scheduled for Dec. 18. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. at OTEC Headquarters, 4005 23rd St., Baker City.

Imbler School Board to discuss 2019-20 calendar

IMBLER — The Imbler School District Board of Directors will meet for a regular session at 7 p.m. Dec. 19 in Room 1 of the high school. The 2019-20 calendar will be discussed. The public is welcome to attend all open sessions of the Imbler School Board.

VFW announces successful fundraising and community service

UNION — The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4060 in Union recently conducted

its yearly rifle raffle, which raises funds for scholarships for the children of Union County. Essential sponsorship was given by Bi-Mart, D&B Supply and Oregon Trail Trader. In November, Post 4060 distributed 52 Thanksgiving baskets with the help of myriad community members who donated time and money.

Tickets go on sale next week for Citizens Awards Banquet

ENTERPRISE — Tickets will go on sale Dec. 18 for the Wallowa County Citizen Awards Banquet that will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Jan. 27 at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise. Those who purchase tickets before Jan. 5 will receive four free raffle tickets for great prizes. Dinner will be catered by Heirloom Catering, and Jessie Cunningham, president of the Wallowa County Chamber, will emcee. There will be dinner music, raffle

baskets, games, table prizes, center piece drawings and trade show tables. Tickets for the banquet are \$38 and are available at the Wallowa County Chamber office, 309 S. River St., Enterprise, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, or by calling 541-426-4622 on or after Dec. 18.

LG District reminds family of inclement weather procedures

LA GRANDE — When weather conditions make travel unsafe, schools in the La Grande School District may either close for the day, open two hours late with regular bus routes or open with snow bus routes. Changes to the school schedule are usually announced by 6 a.m. The La Grande School District reminds families that inclement weather information is available at www.lagrandesd.org/inclement-weather-school-delayclosure-information.



Courtesy Photo

Two children meet with a sensory-friendly Santa and Mrs. Claus in Salem in 2017. This year the Autism Society of Oregon will host a sensory-friendly Santa visit in La Grande for the first time.

SANTA

Continued from Page 1A waiting for them. We let the kids dictate when they are ready, so there's no pressure for them."

As for Santa and Mrs. Claus (parents, don't let your children read past here) they will be portrayed by individuals who have experience working with special needs children. If problems do arise, Dudley will be there the entire four hours.

"I will be there to direct them if there are any special issues," she said. "I've been dealing with autism as a therapist, social worker and parent for 30 years, so I've kind of got this."

As of Friday morning, eight families had reserved time blocks to see Santa, Dudley said. She said parents and siblings are encour-

aged to attend the event. "We want this to be a fun thing that families can do with their special needs family member," she said. Dudley said each family will receive a complimentary professional family photo. Picture packages will be available for purchase, but Dudley said families are also welcome to take their own photos. All in all, Dudley is hoping to provide families with "a positive Santa visit experience." Visits with Santa are "often fraught with screaming and yelling," Dudley said, noting that this is stressful also for the family of a special needs child. "(We want this to be) a fun family time so that the families can enjoy something having to do with their special needs family member."

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

LA GRANDE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Arrested: Kyle Andrew Waldron, 33, unknown address, was arrested on two warrants. One was a Umatilla County Felony Warrant on a charge of failure to appear in court on a charge of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. A second warrant was a Malheur County Statewide Warrant charging failure to appear in court on a charge of possession of a Schedule III controlled substance.

Cited: Nicholas Jefferson Sperber, 18, unknown address, was cited on a charge of hit and run, misdemeanor.

Arrested: Nathan Schlaht, 24, unknown address, was arrested on a Deaf Smith County Texas warrant charging a probation violation. The alleged probation violation was connected to an original charge of aggravated assault with a weapon.

Arrested: Shiloh Kane Dickenson, 34, unknown address, was arrested on a Wallowa County warrant charging a probation violation. The warrant was connected to an original charge of sex abuse.

UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Accident: At least one person was injured Wednesday in a traffic accident on Highway 82 in the Elgin area. The accident was reported at 8:31 a.m.

Accident: At least one person was injured Wednesday in a traffic accident at Brooks Road and Courtney Lane in the Imbler

area. The accident was reported at 2:02 p.m.

Arrested: Skye James Pfingsten, 25, was arrested on a Umatilla County warrant charging a probation violation connected to an original charge of second-degree criminal mischief and interfering with law enforcement.

LA GRANDE FIRE DEPARTMENT

La Grande Fire Department responded to nine calls for medical on Wednesday and eight calls for medical, one gas check and a possible flue fire on Thursday.

Public Safety Report

The Public Safety Report is compiled from police blotter information supplied by local law enforcement agencies and fire department reports.

An invitation to enjoy an evening of Music

Händel's Oratorio "THE MESSIAH"

Free Admission
La Grande High School Auditorium
2nd Street & J Avenue
Sun, Dec. 16th, 2018
@ 6:30 pm

Nativity Collections on Display:
open at 5:30 PM



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OBITUARIES

Loretta 'Retta' A. Williams

Cove
1956-2018

Loretta "Retta" Ann Williams, 62, of Cove, died Nov. 17 at her residence. A family service has already been held.

Known as Retta, she was born Jan. 27, 1956, in Lynwood, California, to C.E. and Barbara (Lamkin) Williams. She was a member of the Union High School class of 1974.

Retta was a beautician and a cosmetologist. She loved all animals, especially her dogs and her horses. In her younger years, Ret-

ta helped her parents with their racehorses. She also belonged to the Blue Sage Tack Team horse club.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, Jason and Heidi Baker of Livingston, Montana; mother, Barbara Allenbaugh of Union; sisters and brothers-in-law, Cathy and Scott Schroeder, Peggy and Wade Titus and Karen and Joe Waliser, all of Union; two grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father, C.E. Williams.

Online condolences may be made to the family at

www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.

Roselynn M. Davis

La Grande

Roselynn M. Davis, 78, of La Grande, died Dec. 13 at her residence. An obituary is forthcoming. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

Sandra M. Leavitt

La Grande

Sandra M. Leavitt, 57, of La Grande, died Dec. 11 at OHSU in Portland after an extended illness. An obituary is forthcoming.

Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

Local funerals and visitations

The Observer publishes obituaries that conform to its obituary policy at no cost. Obituaries must be under 450 words and are edited for newspaper style. Paid advertising space is also available for those who want additional information included. For more information, call The Observer at 541-963-3161.

With OK from Congress, U.S. hemp market set to boom

By Gillian Flacus

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Hemp is about to get the nod from the federal government that marijuana, its cannabis plant cousin, craves.

A provision of the farm bill that received final approval in Congress on Wednesday removes hemp from the list of federally controlled substances and treats the low-THC version of the cannabis plant like any other agricultural crop. THC is the cannabis compound that gives pot its high.

President Trump is expected to sign the bill into law next week.

The change sets the stage for greater expansion in an industry already seeing explosive growth because of growing demand for cannabidiol, or CBD, a non-psychoactive compound found in hemp that many see as a way to better health.

Federal legalization could triple the overall hemp market to \$2.5 billion by 2022, with \$1.3 billion of those sales from hemp-derived CBD products, according to New Frontier Data, a cannabis market research firm.

"It's a huge deal because it's a domino effect. Banks can get involved now and if banks get involved, then credit card processors get involved — and if that happens, then big box stores like

Target and Wal-Mart get into it," said Sean Murphy, a New Frontier data analyst who's tracked the industry since its infancy in 2015. "All these big players are going to come in."

Hemp, like marijuana, already is legal in some states. Approval at the national level brings a host of benefits that the pot industry has yet to see.

Hemp farmers will be able to buy crop insurance, apply for loans and grants, and write off their business expenses on their taxes like any other farmer.

And those who sell dried flower or CBD-infused products made from hemp can now ship across state lines without fear of prosecution as long as they are careful not to run afoul of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Many did so before, but always looked over their shoulder because the law was unclear.

Michelle and Scott Fields, who run an organic hemp farm outside Grants Pass, include a detailed letter to law enforcement in each package they ship that explains the dried flowers inside may look a lot like pot, but actually can't get anyone high.

"Probably the best part of this is that everybody can take a sigh of relief and not worry about that gray area anymore," said Michelle

Fields, who worked in real estate until three years ago, when she and her husband started Fields of Hemp LLC.

Hemp looks like marijuana to the untrained eye, but it contains less than 0.3 percent THC. Federal legislation passed four years ago cracked open the door for some farming by allowing states to create hemp pilot programs or to conduct research on hemp cultivation.

Twenty-three states issued 3,544 licenses in 2018, said Eric Steenstra, president of Vote Hemp, a nonprofit hemp advocacy group. At the same time, the total market for hemp — from textiles to seeds to CBD oil — has grown from a few million dollars in 2015 to \$820 million today and about a third of that is from hemp-derived CBD, Murphy said.

Large companies already experimenting in the hemp space anticipated the policy change and are poised to cash in.

Vitality, based in Eureka, Montana, is a large U.S. hemp producer and grew 20,000 acres this year. The company last week announced a merger with the Canadian CBD extractor and marketer LiveWell.

The new company aspires to become one of the largest hemp production and CBD extraction companies in North America, producing

more than 6,600 pounds of CBD isolate a day by mid-2019, according to a company statement on the deal.

Isolate is a crystalline powder form of CBD and is the purest product possible. The odorless, tasteless powder is commonly sold in one gram jars that retail for \$35 to \$60 each.

"We were at the right place at the right time," David Rendimonti, president and CEO for LiveWell, said. "You're in a high-value, high-growth market. It's an amazing opportunity and now you have something that's really going to explode."

Proponents say CBD offers a plethora of health benefits, from relieving pain to taming anxiety. Scientists caution, however, there have been few comprehensive clinical studies on how CBD affects humans.

It's unclear if, or how, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will react to hemp legalization. The agency said it does not comment on pending legislation.

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb has said in the past that CBD products will be treated like any other products that make unproven claims to shrink cancer tumors or other statements. The FDA has sent warning letters to some companies marketing CBD.

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