



SPORTS

EOU opens track season

Inside
Environmental groups withdraw from work pack talks, 2A

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

Weekend

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Good day to our valued subscriber Dennis Waterson of La Grande

New Year's Resolutions

OFFICIALS LIST 2019 GOALS

■ City, county government, Chamber and EOU discuss upcoming projects



Observer file photos

The city of Elgin hopes to add dressing rooms to the Opera House in 2019.
The Union County Chamber wants to improve technology in the Blue Mountain Conference Center in order to increase revenue.



The city of La Grande will be focusing on how to solve the housing crisis in 2019.



Photo provided by Eastern Oregon University
Eastern Oregon University hopes to establish its Center for Rural Engagement and Vitality in 2019.

By Max Denning, Cherise Kaechele, Dick Mason and Amanda Weisbrod,
The Observer

The Observer asked public officials in Union and Wallowa counties what their goals were for the upcoming year. At the end of 2019, The Observer will follow up with the officials to see if the goals they set were accomplished and what challenges they faced along the way.

Cove

Cove will be led by a new mayor and three new city council members in 2019. Mayor Del Little has brought a bevy of goals with him. Even though much of the discussion around Little's proposed new ordinances at his first meeting in January was negative, Little said he would like to update the city's charter and pass additional ordinances in 2019.

Little will also be encouraging community participation in the council. He hopes to have more attendance at the monthly council meetings and would like to recruit community members to join the city budget committee.



Little

The city will also be implementing a geographic information system program to help locate water and sewer lines.

Lastly, Little said he will be looking for any training opportunities for himself and city councilors.

"The more informed individuals on the council are, the better decision making we can do — with the help of the citizens' input," Little said.

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Snow removal process explained to city council

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

The La Grande City Council questioned La Grande Public Works Director Kyle Carpenter on the snow removal process at Wednesday night's city council meeting.

The meeting began with saying goodbye to Councilor Troy Pointer, who did not run for re-election in November, and swearing in Councilor Jim Whitbeck, who replaced Pointer, as well as incumbents Mayor Steve Clements, Justin Rock and Gary Lillard — then the conversation turned to complaints of inadequate snow removal in La Grande.

Mayor Clements and Councilor MaryAnn Miesner said they've had residents complain their driveways were blocked, or had to help people who were stuck in the snow. Carpenter said there are 87 miles of roadway in La Grande for the public works department to keep up with, and they do the best they can, as fast as they can.

Referring to the city's snow response plan, which is available on the city's website, Carpenter said public works begins snowplowing efforts when there is six inches of snow on the ground and more is forecasted. The plan states when "snowfall is between four and six inches, it will be necessary to remove slush during periods of rapid melting."

The snow removal plan prioritizes the roadways in the city, Carpenter said. The hospital's emergency routes are the first priority listed in the plan, followed by the "arterial, Central Business District and major roads and intersections." Those major roads and intersections include Spruce Street, Jefferson Avenue, Adams Avenue, Second Street and Fourth Street. The first and second priorities for the department covers 25 miles, he said.

The third and last priority are residential streets and alleys. Carpenter said residential roadways can be hard to get to, and in the event of a major snowfall, it is unlikely the public works department would have the time or resources to plow them.

Carpenter told the city council Wednesday night the plan does not say the department will get to the entire city. He said if the public works department were to plow every street in La Grande, which does not include picking up the snow, it would cost \$25,000 and take approximately 20 to 24 hours to do. If the employees were to pick up the snow in the downtown area to free up parking spaces that would be an additional \$6,000.

The plan states complaints about snow removal should be submitted to the public works department. The list of complaints will be prioritized and then investigated and corrected, if necessary, when an employee is

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Elgin City Council discusses museum grant troubles

■ New councilor elected, ATV ordinance passed

By Amanda Weisbrod
The Observer

Elgin City Council held its first regular meeting of the year Tuesday evening at their new city hall building.

The Elgin museum was denied a grant by Cycle Oregon, a non-profit dedicated to "transforming individuals and communities through bicycling," according to its mission statement. Because the museum was unable to complete the renovations on the

old jail in time, they may have to return a \$3,500 grant to the Kinsmen Foundation, which supports historic preservation and wildlife rehabilitation in Oregon.

"If we have to send the \$3,500 back, we're going to be in big trouble because we only have \$3,100 in our budget for the museum right now," said Gerald Hopkins of Elgin's museum society. "I don't know what's going to happen. I really made a plea to that committee to give us another year to complete that project, but we'll see what happens."

Elgin Mayor Allan Duffy, however, believes a letter to the Kinsman Foundation explaining the

museum's move to the old city hall building will suffice as a reason to extend the timeline for restoring the old jail. If not, he said they can always apply for more grants.

"I think once they're operating they're going to be fine, but you hit some bumps in the road," he said. "When you have been trying for so long, sometimes you get a little bit discouraged, but I'm not discouraged at all. I have faith in the community that this is going to work out, and it'll be good."

The city council unanimously passed a new ordinance allowing all-terrain vehicles with permits to be driven on certain streets in Elgin. A one-year permit is \$10,

a replacement permit is \$5 and a three-day permit is also \$5. The city ordinance office is holding an ATV Permitting Day on Jan. 23 at the Elgin Community Center. After this day, permits will be issued by appointment only.

Public works will be completely moved into its new shop next to new city hall at N 8th Avenue. by the end of next week, according to Public Works Supervisor Dan Larman. Construction of a new kennel in the public works shop is underway for the Animal Control department. Five rooms are fit for 30-day holds, while one room is prepared for extended stay with an exit to a fenced area

in the yard. Alex Duffy, Elgin ordinance officer, said while the kennel is fully operational, it will not be completely finished until the next fiscal budget year.

The council also recognized Councilor Teresa Shaffer for her service and dedication to the city council as she reached her term limit last year.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to serve on this council," she said. "I'll probably run again someday."

Although she is no longer a councilor, Shaffer took on a new role as the council appointed her to a

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Friday 30 LOW Partly cloudy
Saturday 42/22 Mostly sunny
Sunday 41/22 Partly sunny

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
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MONDAY

OREGON MAY RECEIVE NEW CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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