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THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Art Boss of La Grande

SNAP program on solid ground despite shutdown

By Dick Mason
The Observer

The partial government shutdown will be not be derailing a federal program that helps thousands of Union and Wallowa county families put food on the tables.

At least not for the next seven weeks.

The federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides funding for food to low income individuals and families across the United States, will be able to keep operating through the end of February if the government shutdown continues, according to Dawn Myers, Oregon's SNAP director.

The state's SNAP director stated, though, that should the shutdown continue past February, it is not known if there will be enough funding available for SNAP to continue operating.

"We are hopeful that (the shutdown) will be resolved by then," Myers said.

Department of Human Services State statistics indicate that in November 2018, 4,855 people in 2,620 households in Union County received SNAP benefits. At total of 943 Wallowa County residents in 504 households received benefits over the same time period.

Union County residents received at total of \$555,445 in benefits and Wallowa County residents received \$105,588 in benefits during November.

Statewide, SNAP serves more than 600,000 residents in 350,000 households. It provides about \$75 million monthly to needy Oregonians.

Chris Evans, community development director for DHS in Northeast Oregon, said many SNAP recipients are people who are working paycheck to paycheck and do not have savings to draw upon if a source of income or benefits is lost.

"A lot are working families," Evans said. "They need a safety net for nutrition services."

He has empathy for these individuals and families as they face the possibility of losing their SNAP benefits in March.

"It adds uncertainty and stress to people who are working their way out of poverty," Evans said.

In at least one state, the deadline for signing up to receive SNAP benefits in February is being moved back due to technicalities caused by the shutdown. The Nashville Tennessean

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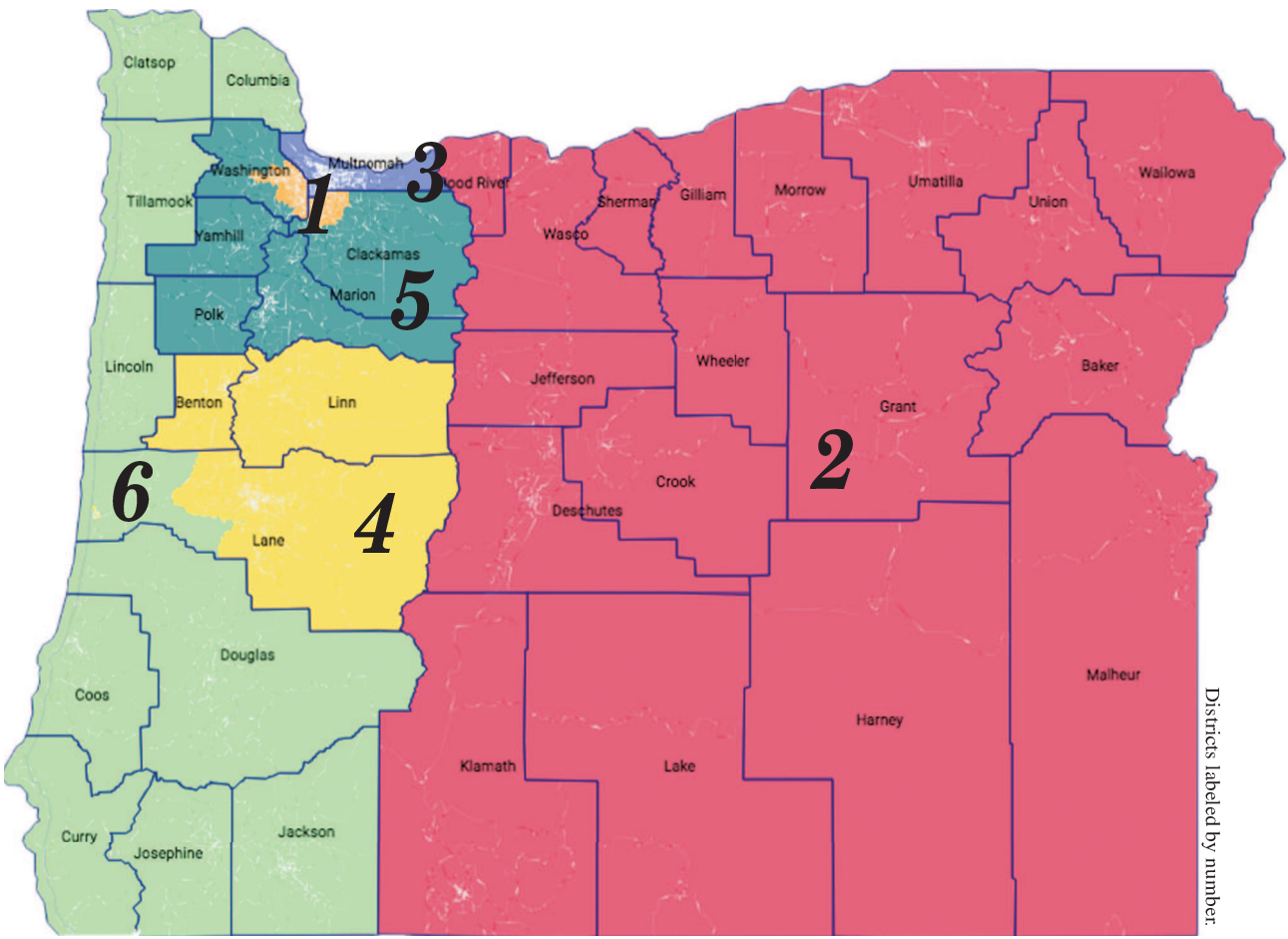


Illustration by Jim Moore

Jim Moore, professor of political science and director for political outreach at the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University, designed this map of where he thinks Oregon's sixth congressional district may go in 2022 if the state receives an additional district. His mock up has all of the state's coastal counties in the new district.

Congressional gain

■ Oregon stands to add a new district in 2022 — where it goes is up for debate

By Max Denning
The Observer

For the first time since 1982, Oregon is projected to receive an additional seat in the United States Congress.

After the 2020 census, if Oregon's population tops 4.8 million, the state will receive a sixth congressional district, and experts are predicting that will be the case. But, what is less predictable than Oregon's population is what part of the state would comprise this new district. For 20 years, Oregon's 2nd congressional district, which is comprised of every county in Eastern Oregon, has been the only one represented by a Republican — Rep. Greg Walden. Redistricting is unlikely to alter which district far Eastern Oregon counties are in, but it could change what cities are encompassed in the state's congressional district with the largest area.

The Observer asked Jim Moore, a political science professor and director of political outreach at Pacific University's Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation, to use a program — designed by computer scientist Dave Bradley — to draw a map of Oregon divided into six congressional districts in the way he believes the Legislature will do so in 2021. The Observer also enlisted Reagan Knopp, a conservative political consultant and chairman of the Jackson County Republicans, to do the same.

Moore, whom Oregon Business magazine called "the most quoted political pundit" in the state in 2016, originally told The Observer he thought the new district would include at least part of Washington County, giving the Portland metropolitan area a fourth district congressional district. But,

when he began to draw the district, he instead found a more plausible possibility: the Oregon coast becoming its own district.

"I saw it as a district (representing) the more natural resource dependent parts of the state," Moore said.

The new district Moore drew would include all of Oregon's coastal counties as well as northwestern Columbia County, the far western portion of Lane County and the Southern Oregon counties of Josephine and Jackson. This would give the district the necessary population of 800,000.

Moore would also significantly alter the lines of the 1st Congressional District — which currently includes almost all of Washington County, most of the west side of Portland and the entirety of Yamhill, Columbia and Clatsop counties — so it would solely be located in sections of Washington and Clackamas counties. The considerable growth in the population of Hillsboro, Beaverton and Oregon City would allow those three cities to constitute the majority of the population of the 1st District. In Moore's revision, the 5th District would lose part of Clackamas County but would retain the majority of the county.

"It would give the suburban areas their own district," Moore said, noting this is where much of Oregon's population growth has come over the last 10 years.

Moore's version of a six-district state would alter the partisan split. While Oregon's 5th Congressional District

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Reagan Knopp, a conservative political consultant and the chairman of the Jackson County Republican Party, believes this map is a possibility because it would allow the Democrats to take Rep. Greg Walden's residence out of his congressional district.

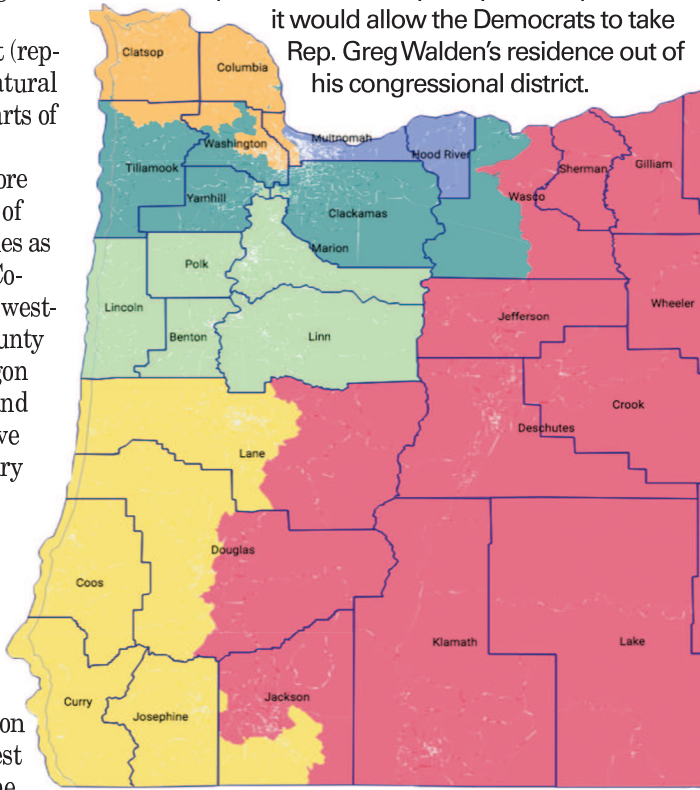
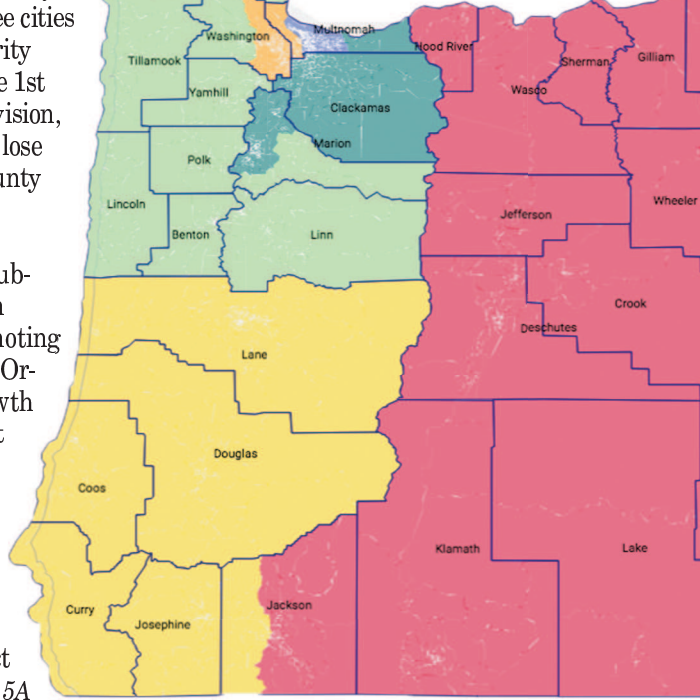


Illustration by Jacob Boenzi

Knopp believes this map designed by Jacob Boenzi, an Arizona high school senior, is "pretty close" to what a Democrat controlled legislature would do in 2021.



Pioneer Park vandals cited

■ Several playing fields damaged by tire ruts

By Amanda Weisbrod
The Observer

La Grande resident Elizabeth Ford, 36, was cited with second-degree criminal mischief for damaging the athletic fields in Pioneer Park on two separate occasions.

The first incident occurred on Dec. 25, 2018, but Lt. Gary Bell of the La Grande Police Department said officers had no leads as to who caused the damage. On Dec. 30, just after midnight, a few officers saw Ford spinning donuts in a 1999 Chevrolet Suburban on the fields. During this second incident the officers determined she was also responsible for the damage caused on the 25th.

La Grande resident Dustin Webb-Davies, 26, who was riding in the passenger seat

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EOU begins two-week honor of MLK Jr.

By Max Denning
The Observer

Even though it's a week until the nationwide day celebrating the life of Dr.



King

Martin Luther King Jr., Eastern Oregon University is beginning its two-week recognition of the leader of the

civil rights movement today. EOU's Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion is partnering with the EOU Diversity Committee, Student Council for Multicultural Affairs and Student Support Services to host an exhibition, a concert, and a presentation and discussion over the next two weeks. Bennie Moses-Mesubed, director of student diversity and inclusion, said she is looking forward to the celebration.

"It's a two-week event that honors and celebrates the life and legacy of MLK Jr.," Moses-Mesubed said. "It really recognizes his work with the civil rights movement and also the messages and themes he brought (that help us) to build a more inclusive community."

The events begin with the opening reception for an exhibition on loan from Humanities

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
27 Low
Freezing fog



Tuesday
39/33
Freezing fog

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WEDNESDAY

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