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Good day to our valued subscriber Elizabeth Winkelman of Union

SB 501 to ban clips holding more than 5 bullets

SB 501 is one of more than a dozen gun control bills introduced so far in the 2019 Oregon legislative session

By Max Denning
The Observer

When Ken Wisdom was collecting signatures to get the Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance on the ballot in Union County in the summer of 2018, he told the signees about the potential for Democrats to introduce a bill with wide-reaching gun control measures in the state Legislature. Oregon Senate Bill 501 is the kind of bill he warned gun rights supporters about.

SB 501 is the most far-reaching of the 14 bills regarding gun control already introduced in the 2019 legislative session. The bill would limit magazines to a maximum of five rounds, require permits to purchase guns, and limit the amount of ammunition an individual can buy in a 30-day period to 20 rounds. The bill's chief sponsors are Sen. Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego) and Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-Lake Oswego). The bill was written with input from a group of Lake Oswego High School students known as "Students for Change."

Second Amendment activists and Union County law enforcement are concerned about the bill.

Wisdom, a gun rights advocate, said



he owns approximately 30 firearms. He said he believes three of them would still be legal if SB 501 passed. Of the 10 best-selling firearms in 2017 according to Sportsman Outdoors Superstore, only one would remain legal in Oregon in its standard manufacturing state.

Laura Eckstein, an attorney with law offices in La Grande and current Elgin Municipal Court Judge, said the laws the bill would create are illegal and "ridiculous."

"I believe there's a legitimate Second Amendment challenge," Eckstein said, citing a federal circuit court's ruling of a seven-round ban as unconstitutional. "There are a lot of problems right out of the gate. Like what about a six-shot revolver? What about all of my guns that have a minimum of 10 (rounds)?"

Eckstein also said the bill is not

intended to be passed, but just introduced so Democrats can pass a substantial gun control bill that will seem less extreme compared to SB 501.

"It's classic shock and awe, like a bait and switch," Eckstein said. "It's a classic legislative strategy to put a crazy bill forward that they know isn't going to pass, get everybody whipped up, when they really want (another) bill. So by then you're like 'Well, at least it's not that crazy thing.'"

Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen echoed Eckstein.

"We too have concerns over some of the gun control bills being proposed presently," Rasmussen told The

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LG City Council approves top priorities for 2019

Council plans to continue discussion on Call for Projects Monday

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

The La Grande City Council and the Urban Renewal Agency, which is made up of the council members, passed their 2019 goals on Wednesday night.

The council and URA had previously held work sessions to discuss what their priorities are for the upcoming year.

Among the city council priorities is a meeting with the Union County Commissioners to discuss multiple big topic items — such as creating a special district for the library as well as a parks and recreation district, economic development and the need for a new law enforcement building. There has not been a lot of discussion about any of these topics. However, with new commissioners Matt Scarfo and Paul Anderes now in

place, the city council can schedule meetings it had put off during the transition.

At the January city council meeting, the council learned through its annual audit that the city had an unanticipated \$500,000. The council expressed interest in putting 50 to 75 percent of the increased funds into the general reserve with the rest of the money going toward capital improvement funding. The projects needing financial assistance include a new roof for Cook Memorial Library and the construction of a new police station.

During its priorities work session the URA was focused on modifying the Call for Projects program, which annually invests in local business projects. The agency has acknowledged the program's flaws and discussed how it

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Road Runners spark Walk for Warmth

Annual fundraiser makes a difference in the lives of many local families

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Walk for Warmth, an annual fundraiser in La Grande conducted to help the less fortunate with heating costs, has generated slightly more than \$103,000 in contributions since it started in 2009, according to Community Connection of Northeast Oregon.

A portion of this money has been raised by an organization whose members have helped Walk for Warmth since year one without ever donning walking shoes — the Grande Ronde Road Runners.

The club, which has a major community service orientation, conducts a "Run for Warmth" consisting of a 5-kilometer and a 10-kilometer run during the Walk for Warmth, events which many club members participate in. The club will be at it again Saturday at the 11th annual edition of the Community Connection fundraiser.

The runs complement the walking portion of the morning fundraiser. Walkers gener-



Observer file photo

The 11th annual Walk for Warmth will be conducted Saturday.

ate donations by collecting pledges before the event. According to the Road Runners' Facebook page, runners don't need a pledge sheet and can simply show up with a donation to help those with heating challenges.

"It is a great event and we help support it for people who want to run," said Jeff Crews, co-director of the Grande Ronde Road Runners with Armando Garcia.

Crews said he is excited about the chance to assist the community.

"There are always people in need. It is easy to help other people," he said.

The running club will record the times of all finishers of both runs and post them on the Grande Ronde Road Runners' Facebook page.

Walk for Warmth is one of three community service events the Grande Ronde Road Runners are involved in each year. The club also conducts a Turkey Trot run in November to raise money for United Way, and in December's Reindeer Run, club members dress in red and green clothing and run a

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Anthony Lakes hosts ski day for veterans and their families



Courtesy photo

Veterans pose at the top of the hill at Anthony Lakes during last year's Veterans Benefit and Winter Ski Festival.

By Amanda Weisbrod
The Observer

Veterans will "own the mountain" on Monday, according to Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, which is hosting an event just for veterans.



Whipple

On Feb. 11, veterans and their family members can ski for free and meet representatives from local veterans assistance programs at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The resort will be closed to the public during this timeframe.

The fourth annual Veterans Benefit and Winter Ski Festival, sponsored by the Center for Human Development and Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, offers complimentary ski lessons, equipment rental, lift tickets and lunch to veterans and their families who come from all over Northeast Oregon to hit the slopes and learn about available resources.

Byron Whipple, veterans service officer at CHD, said he established the event with two goals in mind.

"The first goal is Anthony Lakes showing its appreciation to its veterans community," said Whipple,

who served 22 years in the Navy before retiring. "The other goal is to have veterans interact and get to know the local community resources that are available to them."

Representatives from WorkSource Oregon, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in La Grande, and the National Guard Family Program will be in attendance. There will be no speakers or Q&A sections, however. Whipple said he wants the event to be as organic and low-stress as possible.

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Friday
27 LOW
Snow, 1-3"



Saturday
37/20
Snow, 1-3"



Sunday
26/14
A little snow

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Issue 17
2 sections, 16 pages
La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.



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