

SPORTS

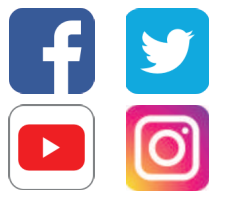
Tigers take second at home invite

The Pour Pony mobile bar to hold grand opening party this weekend, TB



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Good day to our valued subscriber Veronica Weems of La Grande

LG budget committee discusses projected budgets for next 5 years

City estimates to be nearly \$400,000 in the red by 2023

By Amanda Weisbrod The Observer

The La Grande City Council and Budget Committee met to discuss updated city budget projections for 2019-2023 at Monday evening's joint work session.

Robert Strope, City Manager, noted the difference from the city's previous 2013-2018 forecasts and what was actually appropriated during those years was only \$82,085, giving the city manager confidence in the accuracy of the 2019-2023 predicted budget.

Based on these updated projections, the city will see a decline in its ending cash balance for the general fund over the next few years, resulting in a failure to reach the cash-on-hand requirement of \$1.6-\$1.8 million after the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget, according to the projections outline packet.

Strope said while there is no reason to worry now, by 2023, the city will have a negative balance of nearly \$400,000 in net ending cash. "We're not at a point to panic. We just have to be cognizant of where we are," the city manager said.

A notable increase in expenditures is expected to occur after the 2020-2021 fiscal year, as the projected net ending cash for that year totals \$2.2 million, while the projected net ending cash total for 2021-2022 is listed at less than \$936,000, according to the estimated budget spreadsheets provided by the city.

This more than \$1 million drop in funds stands out against the backdrop of fiscal years prior to 2020-2021. From 2018-2020, the city's ending cash is estimated to

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Courtesy photo

An artistic rendering created by Gust Tsiatsos, co-owner of FTK Holding Group LLC, depicting what the tiny houses will look like when construction is completed.

A veteran village of 'tiny homes' in the works for La Grande

By Francisca Benitez The Observer

Local land developers hope to make a big impact with tiny homes by providing affordable housing for veterans in La Grande. The site — located at 1612 Russell Ave. — will include 10 tiny houses, each 480 square feet, plus two community facilities, a gazebo and a dog park.

The project is owned by Kevin Reed and Gust Tsiatsos' company, FTK Holding Group LLC. Tsiatsos, a La Grande native, has worked closely with Byron Whipple, Union County veterans service officer at the Center for Human Development, on the project.

"We are going to build 10 tiny houses to provide affordable housing that is much needed for veterans who are below the poverty standard," Whipple said. "Trying to find a one-bedroom house in Eastern Oregon is tough, especially one that is affordable. So when I have a community partner such as Mr. Tsiatsos stand forward and say he wants to do this, we jumped on it."

Rent for the houses is set to be between \$500 and \$600, and the price is all inclusive with no added utilities cost.

Tsiatsos said Whipple was instrumental in helping navigate the project in coordination with

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CHD promotes sexual health services with Easter egg hunt

By Francisca Benitez The Observer

CHD is hosting a unique Easter egg hunt for teens and young adults. The hunt is not only a fun way to score a couple of free Antlers Espresso coffees, but it's also a way for CHD to get the word out about its sexual health services.

Every day at 9 a.m. since April 12, CHD has posted a hint on its social media pages that leads to the location of a virtual Easter egg somewhere on the CHD website. When clicked, that image leads to the location of a physical Easter egg hidden in Union County. The finder of the plastic egg can redeem the voucher inside CHD for a \$10 dollar gift card to Antlers Espresso. Each Easter egg also contains a list of the services offered at the health center.

Avery Stanton, who created the hunt, said most of the eggs have been hidden in La Grande, but she hinted at least one will be hidden elsewhere in Union County before the event is over.

The hunt was created as a way to get information about CHD's sexual health services to young people in the commu-



Courtesy photo

An Easter egg containing a prize from CHD sits outside the La Grande CHD office on April 15. It was found within an hour of the photo being posted on social media.

nity. CBS news reported STDs have been on the rise in the U.S. for years and are now at crisis levels. The Observer previously reported known cases of STDs in Union County have been increasing for

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School board approves plans for a new Cove SD cafeteria building

By Dick Mason The Observer

The Cove School District is one step closer to beginning construction of a new food service building.

The Cove School Board voted Tuesday to approve design plans for a 5,120 square-foot cafeteria building. The board also voted to begin accepting bids for the building project pending approval of the plans by Union County.

Should Union County approve the plans, the school district will likely accept bids for construction for a 21-day period. If a bid is then awarded by the school district to a contractor, construction would likely start in July, said Cove School District Superintendent Earl Pettit.

"It is not likely, but the building could be finished by Christmas," Pettit said.

The superintendent stressed, though, there are many variables which could slow or prevent the building work from ever starting. Pettit said if no acceptable bids are received, the school board could decide to halt the project completely.

The building, which would be about 30 feet east of Cove Elementary School, would cost between \$1.5 and \$1.8 million, Pettit said.

Contractors will be expected to submit two bids — one with higher cost materials for the roof and siding and one with lower cost materials for both. The higher-cost

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15th annual Impact 100 strengthens community

By Dick Mason The Observer

About 20 Grande Ronde Valley women met in the La Grande High School library Saturday afternoon not to discuss the latest best-seller by David Baldacci, but to help the less fortunate move on from painful pages of their lives to ones filled with hope.

The women, many of whom are familiar faces on the community service front, are members of Impact 100. One of Union County's leading

philanthropic organizations, the group marked a milestone under the skylights of the LHS library on Saturday afternoon. The meeting was Impact 100's 15th annual gathering, during which the \$12,750 raised over the past 12 months was distributed to families and individuals in Union County.

"It is always so inspiring (to see how generous people are)," said Impact 100 member Susie Harris, one of the group's founders.

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Dick Mason/The Observer

Maxine Hines, a member of Impact of 100, speaks at the organization's annual meeting Saturday at the La Grande High School library.

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 39 LOW Partly cloudy Thursday 73/47 Partly sunny

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