

# ELGIN

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city's sewer renovation project. "We're waiting on a draft contract from Business Oregon, but in the meantime, we're scoping out the project and planning up front to get going on a design once the contract is signed," Talley said.

Elgin Public Works Director Dan Larman said while the city's wastewater treatment plant is "back to normal" after last month's flooding, there is work to be done on clearing fallen trees, repairing roads and addressing damage caused by the high waters. Brock Eckstein, Elgin city administrator and recorder, said the city is still technically in emergency status because of the risk of flooding, but that should be lifted by next month.

Larman also reported a successful Cleanup Day, which is one day a year Elgin citizens can make trips to the city dump at a reduced cost. While there was a \$5 minimum donation for each load, Mayor Allan Duffy said many generous people gave more than that to show their support for the city's beautification efforts.

"The annual Cleanup Day al-

ways makes a huge difference in town," Larman said. "I couldn't believe the amount of volunteers I saw up (at the dump) — must've been around 50."

Mayor Duffy was delighted to announce this year's winners of the "If I Were Mayor..." contest, which is hosted by the Oregon Mayors Association and held in cities across the state.

Elementary, middle and high school students who participate in the contest are encouraged to explore what they would do for their town if they were mayor by representing their ideas through either a poster, essay or multimedia project based on grade level.

Kasey Morehead won the elementary school level poster contest, her older sister, Charlee Morehead, won the middle school level essay contest, and Maddie Larman, daughter of Dan Larman, won the high school level digital media contest. Each of the three winners went home with a \$100 check and a commemorative plaque.

"We always get great posters, good essays and multimedia projects," said Duffy, who then thanked several of the city's sponsors for donating the prize funds.



Amanda Weisbrod/The Observer

From left, Charlee Morehead, Kasey Morehead and Maddie Larman pose with Elgin Mayor Allan Duffy after receiving their awards for winning the "If I Were Mayor..." contest.

Kasey Morehead's poster featured several mountains, an American flag blowing in the wind, and the iconic Elgin seal which reads "Jewel of the Blue Mountains." In the clouds above the mountains, Kasey wrote if she were mayor, she would "get better equipment for any sport... get better electronics for school education... do a service cleanup day every two months," and more.

In her essay, Charlee Morehead wrote she would bring back movie night to the Elgin Opera House so big families like hers would have an affordable option for entertainment, and she would focus on trimming trees in town to increase visibility at intersections.

Maddie Larman's video featured sweeping shots of the town and some of its most recognizable buildings, including the El-

gin Opera House. She narrated over the scenes with her personal account on why Elgin was such a great place to live, and what she would do if she were mayor.

Kasey, Charlee and Maddie's submissions will now go on to the statewide contest. Last year, Charles Monger of Elgin took second place in the high school digital media category for the statewide contest. Duffy said he is hopeful this year's winners will also rank among the finalists.

Also during the city council meeting, Student Councilor Dawson Larman announced the Elgin High School boys track team won the district tournament. Many team members, including two relay teams, two shot putters, and a javelin thrower, will travel to the state track meet this weekend in Monmouth.

Plans to add 10-12 spots at the Hu-Na-Ha RV Park in Elgin were also discussed at the meeting by Dan Larman and Parks & Recreation Director Bryan Jungling, but nothing was finalized.

The next Elgin City Council meeting has been moved to June 25, and its agenda will include setting the city's budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. ■

# MARKET

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she hopes to establish a more formal volunteer program to make things run more smoothly for both vendors and visitors. While the market currently has three to four regular volunteers, Bogard said she would like to raise that number to 10, even if some people can devote only a small amount of time.

"It's a fun place to be, but it is a commitment," she said.

New this year, The La Grande Farmers Market is also partnering with Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, an organization dedicated to advocating for and as-

sisting senior citizens, children, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities in attaining basic human needs and in becoming more self-sufficient, to boost food bank donations.

Visitors and vendors alike can bring food items, both perishable and non-perishable, to the market to donate to the food bank. Bogard said this is especially great for vendors who would normally throw out their crops that do not look 100% perfect but are still consumable.

"This way, a lot of fresh produce will stay here in Union County," she said, adding that Community Connection currently has fresh produce donations shipped in from Portland.

"Vendors can bring in their food and get a tax deduction."

Other activities visitors can expect to see at the market this season include live music, themed-event days and a kids corner, which is a new activity area where children can do crafts with Art Center East representatives and play make-believe at a mock vendor stand.

"I'm excited for this year's market," Bogard said. "It's grown, it's busy and I think everybody's excited to go there."

For more information, call 541-786-8999, email manager@lagrandefarmersmarket.org or visit the farmers market website at lagrandefarmersmarket.org. ■

# GAS

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out of state.

Self-service is also an option at the Short Stop gas station on Gekeler Lane. Between 5 and 15% of its customers choose to pump their own gas there, said Fred Bell Jr., co-owner of the Short Stop with his wife, Tara. Customers who want service do not have to request it, since attendants always will greet them, he said.

Self-service has been available during business hours at the Short Stop since January of 2018, but Bell said he will continue having attendants greet customers for years to come. He said it would not be right to expect those who are elderly or have mobility issues to have to pump their own gas.

"We are not going to change what we are doing," Bell said. "This is just the way it is always going to be." ■

# SENIORS

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is available to them," said Audrey Smith, manager of the Union County Senior Center.

Activities include a Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers concert at 6 p.m. May 18. All are welcome to attend. Admission is \$5 at the door (12 and younger get in free).

A pie and ice cream social celebrating Older Americans Month will be held from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. May 23 at the Union County Senior Center.

The Union County Senior Center will conclude its salute to Older Americans Month on May 29 with a Customer Appreciation Day. All of those age 60 and older will be provided with a free lunch. The menu will include roast pork and baked apples. The Union County Senior Center serves lunch every weekday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Also throughout this month, newcomers to the senior center will get a free lunch the first time they come.

Smith hopes the lunches will heighten seniors' awareness of what the senior center can add to their lives.

"We want to introduce them to a new place where they can meet new friends," Smith said.

Angie Peters, manager

of the Northeast Oregon Public Transit, which, like the Union County Senior Center, is part of Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, said that Older Americans Month is a good time to remember seniors.

"It is a demographic that is a little too easy to forget once we no longer see them on an everyday basis in the workplace," Peters said. "They are still such an important part of the community."

The Northeast Oregon Public Transit service Peters manages provided a total of 12,650 rides to seniors age 65 and older in Union County in 2018. The number of rides will likely go up in the next year thanks to a new NEOPT program Peters is promoting this month and throughout the year.

The program is CAT

(Connecting All Towns) Link. The program, which begins July 1, will give people free rides anywhere in Union County. Rides will be provided for shopping trips, doctor appointments, visits to friends and many other purposes. CAT Link drivers will come right to the homes of those who are being picked up, Peters said.

While CAT Link is open to people of all ages, Peters said seniors will likely be among those who use it the most because of the mobility issues many face.

The La Grande City Council and the Union County Board of Commissioners are among those

also recognizing Older Americans Month. The La Grande City Council passed a proclamation in late April declaring May Older Americans Month in La Grande. On May 3, the county commissioners passed a proclamation declaring Older Americans Month in Union County.

The national 2019 theme of Older Americans Month is Connect, Create and Contribute. The theme, according to www.acl.gov, is meant to encourage seniors to connect with friends, family, and services that support participation; create by engaging in activities that promote learning, health and personal enrichment;

and contribute time, talent and life experience to benefit others.

Older Americans Month was initially known as Senior Citizens Month, according to www.acl.gov. President Lyndon Johnson changed the name to Older Americans Month in 1965 after Congress passed the Older Americans Act of 1965. The Older Americans Act established the Administration on Aging, a federal agency designed to address the struggles of older Americans. The legislation also introduced nutrition programs, transportation assistance and other services for seniors.

Presidents have signed

proclamations declaring May Older Americans Month almost every year since 1963. The latest such proclamation was signed by President Donald Trump on April 30, according to www.whitehouse.gov.

A portion of Trump's proclamation reads: "This month, as we celebrate the central role that our elders play in vitalizing our families, neighborhoods, businesses, and lives, we also recommit to listening to their voices and meeting their needs. They deserve our honor, our sincere gratitude, and our respect for all that they have done to build and sustain our great nation." ■

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