

DAILY  
PLANNER

## TODAY

Today is Wednesday, May 22, the 142nd day of 2019. There are 223 days left in the year.



## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On May 22, 1992, after a reign lasting nearly 30 years, Johnny Carson hosted NBC's "Tonight Show" for the final time (Jay Leno took over as host three days later).

## ON THIS DATE

In 1868, a major train robbery took place near Marshfield, Indiana, as members of the Reno gang made off with \$96,000 in loot.

In 1939, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, signed a "Pact of Steel" committing the two countries to a military alliance.

In 1960, an earthquake of magnitude 9.5, the strongest ever measured, struck southern Chile, claiming some 1,655 lives.

In 1962, Continental Airlines Flight 11, en route from Chicago to Kansas City, Missouri, crashed after a bomb apparently brought on board by a passenger exploded, killing all 45 occupants of the Boeing 707.

## LOTTERY

**Megabucks:** \$2.2 million  
6-7-8-9-11-35

**Mega Millions:** \$393 million  
10-50-55-56-58-15-x5

**Powerball:** \$288 million  
2-10-25-66-67-PB 26-x4

**Win for Life:** May 20  
13-36-40-54

**Pick 4:** May 21

• 1 p.m.: 8-0-2-6  
• 4 p.m.: 2-9-3-4  
• 7 p.m.: 8-9-6-3  
• 10 p.m.: 4-7-3-9

**Pick 4:** May 20

• 1 p.m.: 1-1-4-2  
• 4 p.m.: 9-0-9-7  
• 7 p.m.: 2-2-6-9  
• 10 p.m.: 0-5-1-8

## ROAD REPORT

Numbers to call:

• Inside Oregon: 800-977-6368.  
• Outside Oregon: 503-588-2941.

## NEWSPAPER LATE?

Every effort is made to deliver your Observer in a timely manner. Occasionally conditions exist that make delivery more difficult.

If you are not on a motor route, delivery should be before 5:30 p.m. If you do not receive your paper please call 541-963-3161.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We have all, at one time or another, been performers, and many of us still are — politicians, playboys, cardinals and kings"

— Laurence Olivier, British actor (born this date in 1907, died in 1989).

# Union Pacific announces layoff of up to 195 employees at Hermiston

By Jade McDowell and Phil Wright  
East Oregonian

The railroad looms large in Hermiston's past, but it will likely play a much smaller role in the city's future.

Union Pacific Railroad filed notice with the state on Tuesday that it will lay off up to 195 employees at the Hinkle Rail Yard in Hermiston and close the yard's supply warehouse and mechanical shop. It stated the 195 layoffs would be completed by July 19 and are expected to be permanent. The bulk layoff is an escalation of the scores of layoffs that have happened incrementally at the rail yard since October 2018.

Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann said his conversation on Tuesday with UP spokesman Aaron Hunt was a difficult one. The city of Hermiston's June 2018 financial report listed Union Pacific as one of the city's largest employers at the time, estimating the company employed about 500 people at Hinkle. Drotzmann said it was his understanding the latest layoffs will leave between 40 and 45 employees.

"It was both a conversation of frustration and sadness to realize an organization that has made such an impact on the community over the last 25 years is reducing to one-eighth of what it was," he said.

He said the loss of so many jobs in the community will have an economic impact as families move away or cut back their spending significantly while facing unemployment. But he said he was more concerned about the effects on the individuals who lost their jobs.

"Those were good-paying jobs with great benefits," he said.

After Union Pacific laid off more than 80 employees during the fall of 2018 and winter 2019, UP spokesman Tim McMahan declined to share how many employees Hinkle had, but said UP had 1,506 employees throughout Oregon. On Tuesday, he again declined to answer most questions submitted by the East Oregonian about the number of employees who will remain at Hinkle or what operations will continue there,

but stated the company would move some of Hinkle's operations to yards in Portland; Spokane; Ogden, Utah; Pocatello, Idaho; and Nampa, Idaho.

"The workforce reduction is the result of accelerating (Union Pacific's) continuous improvement plan and implementing Precision Scheduled Railroading principles," he wrote in an email.

Union Pacific announced its Unified Plan 2020 last year to improve efficiency. It announced record earnings in 2018 of more than \$6 billion, and during a first quarter earnings call with shareholders on April 18 announced record 2019 first quarter net income and a 15% increase in earnings per share compared with 2018, despite the fact that total volume decreased by 2% compared with the previous year.

During the call, Chief Operating Officer Jim Vena said UP increased train length by 7% and was focused on reducing "touch points" where trains are handled. He said the company had "stopped humping cars at Hinkle and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and curtailed yard operations in Salt Lake City, the Kansas City complex and Butler Yard in Wisconsin, to name a few."

State Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, called the cuts at Hinkle "devastating" for the area.

"These are good family wage jobs with benefits," Smith said. "That job loss is going to have a significant economic effect throughout the region."

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, said he found out about the job cuts on Tuesday afternoon.

Hansell questioned whether legislation, such as the recent gross receipts tax, is making neighboring states more attractive to business. That's been the talk in some circles at the Capitol, he said, and perhaps Union Pacific relocating

operations from Hinkle to Idaho and Washington signals that is happening. However, Hansell cautioned, he does not know if that's the case here.

George Murdock, chair of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, said Union Pacific has long been a "major employer" in the county.

"These are the kind of jobs people occupy for an entire career, so their loss is particularly acute," he said. "I had heard rumors that it was a possibility, but had hoped it was only a rumor."

Murdock said his understanding was Union Pacific would continue to have a presence at Hinkle and the county will remain a major freight route. He said it will be important to work with the unions and affected employees in the coming months.

While the jobs represent a significant loss for the area, Hermiston's increasingly diversified economy helps absorb the blow. Drotzmann pointed to the closure of the Simplot plant in 2004 and the closure of Hermiston Foods in 2017 as an example of times that Hermiston lost one of its largest employers but continued to grow.

"This community is really resilient," he said.

That might be small comfort to the employees whose jobs have been cut in recent months. Locals took to community Facebook forums on Tuesday to share that family members had been laid off or to share condolences with friends who had lost jobs.

Oregon has designated CAPECO in Pendleton as the lead organization for when major job losses occur in Hermiston, and CAPECO will conduct trainings and job fairs for former Hinkle employees in June. In the meantime, some employees will be eligible to apply for transfer to one of Union Pacific's other rail yards. ■

## OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

## Oregon Senate passes election-security bill on election day

SALEM — County clerks in Oregon would be required to audit results after each election under a bill that overwhelmingly passed the Senate on election day.

The bill requires county clerks to conduct hand-count or risk-limiting audits after every primary, general and special election. Risk-limiting audits are based on counts of statistical samples of paper ballots.

Ballots were due Tuesday in Oregon's special elections. Candidates ran for school boards, fire districts and other offices, and local tax levies were decided. In Oregon, voters mail in ballots or leave them in official drop boxes.

Sen. Lew Frederick, a Portland Democrat, said the bill ensures more audits happen to make sure election results are correct.

The bill requires audits after every election, instead of just general elections. It goes next to the House.

## \$15M verdict reduced to \$683K for woman in light rail crash

PORTLAND — A judge has ruled that a woman who lost her leg when she dashed in front of a MAX light rail train is lawfully entitled to only \$682,800 of the \$15 million in damages awarded by a jury.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Andrea "Amy" Laing and her attorneys contended that she should receive 58% of the verdict, or \$8.7 million, because the jury in February found TriMet and its driver 58% at fault.

But TriMet argued that an Oregon law limiting the tort claim liability of government agencies entitled Laing to no more than \$682,800.

On Monday, Multnomah County Circuit Judge Christopher Ramras agreed with TriMet.

Laing was struck by a train at a Beaverton station in November 2015.

TriMet declined comment.

Laing's attorney Sonia Montalbano said Tuesday they haven't yet decided whether to appeal.

Community Connection invites you to Celebrate Older Americans Month

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Union County Senior Center • La Grande

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**SALE \$19.99** Roundup Extended Control Weed & Grass Killer Plus Weed Preventer, 1.1 Gal. 730219. Limit 2 at this price. Kills and prevents for up to 4 months.

SALE ENDS MAY 31<sup>st</sup> 2019

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