

## LOCAL BRIEFING

From staff reports

### EOU trustees meet tomorrow

LA GRANDE — The Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees convenes May 23 for its final regular meeting of the 2018-19 academic year. The board will determine EOU's budget and tuition for next year and will hear presentations about new academic programs, including a proposed Sustainable Rural Systems degree and expanded opportunities for student research. The agenda also includes a report by EOU staff member Holly Chason on student completion rates as they relate to enrollment. Meeting materials and public comment sign-up are available at [www.eou.edu/governance/board-meeting-schedule](http://www.eou.edu/governance/board-meeting-schedule).

### Annual Avenue of Flags celebrates veterans

LA GRANDE — American Legion Post 43 of La Grande

will host the 33rd annual Avenue of Flags at Grandview Cemetery this weekend. Assembly of flags will begin at 3 p.m. Friday at the American Legion Post, 301 Fir St., La Grande. The community is welcome to help assemble the flags. The flags will go up at 6 a.m. Saturday and fly until 3 p.m. Monday for public viewing. The public is also invited to a Memorial Service at 11 a.m. Monday at the Veterans Circle at Grandview, officiated by Pastor Roger Cochran of Trinity Baptist Church. For more information, contact Bob Kennon at 541-910-7557.

### Bakery hosts Friday Friendship Tea

LA GRANDE — Le Bebe Cakes Bakery Coffee House, 1101 Washington Ave., La Grande, is hosting a Friday Friendship Tea at 10 a.m. May 24 and May 31. The intent is for people to enjoy the com-

pany of friends and make new ones. Organizers say, "Come as you are. No one is going to judge you or try to sell you something." There is no charge, but donations will be accepted for the tea.

### Garden Tour benefits Cove Library

COVE — The Cove Library's annual Garden Tour fundraising event will take place May 25. The tour features gardens of all types and sizes around the Cove community. Participants purchase tickets at the library beginning at 9 a.m., where they will receive a map to follow. Brochures and bottled water will also be available. The drive-walk event ends at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10. Those who purchase tickets in advance will be entered into a raffle drawing. Before Saturday, tickets are available at the Cove Public Library or Cheri's Main Street Salon.

Go to [www.coveoregon.org/annual-garden-tour](http://www.coveoregon.org/annual-garden-tour) for more information.

### Blue Mountaineers, Old Time Fiddlers perform Saturday

SUMPTER, LA GRANDE — The Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers will perform in the White School House in Sumpter May 25. The Saturday show begins at 1 p.m. and coincides with the Sumpter Flea Market. Admission to the concert is \$5.

That evening, the Blue Mountaineers will provide live music for a community dance at the Union County Senior Center, 1504 N. Albany St., La Grande. The dance begins at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$3, with age 12 and younger admitted free.

### Alumni events held this weekend

WALLOWA, UNION — The 99th annual Wallowa High School alumni ban-

quet is set for May 25. Registration begins at 5 p.m. in the Beth Johnson Room of the Wallowa Elementary School. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. For more information, call Carol Jean Conrad at 541-963-8725 or 541-910-2230.

Union school alumni will also gather this weekend. The annual alumni community breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. May 26 at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Clubhouse on Delta Street. Everyone is welcome.

### Nez Perce Visitor Center event complements 'Sharing Blankets' exhibit

WALLOWA — The Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland is hosting a "Grand (Re)Opening" of the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center from noon to 5 p.m. May 25. The visitor center is located at 209 East Second

St., Wallowa. The event is held in conjunction with the "Sharing Blankets" exhibit, held at the Wallowa Longhouse on Whiskey Creek Road from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. the same day.

### LHS Class of '64 meets for lunch

LA GRANDE — The members of the La Grande High School Class of 1964 will meet for lunch May 26 at the Flying J Restaurant outside La Grande. The Sunday gathering begins at noon.

### Cove Methodist Church serves free Memorial Day lunch

COVE — The Cove United Methodist Church will continue its tradition of serving a lunch for the community on Memorial Day. Sandwiches, salad and homemade pie will be served beginning at 11 a.m. on May 27 at the church on Jasper Street.

## OBITUARIES

### Marolyn A. Smith

La Grande  
1939-2019

Marolyn Ann Smith, 80, of La Grande, died May 12 at a local care facility. A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. May 25 at Valley Fellowship Church.



Marolyn was born April 2, 1939, in Elk Point, South Dakota, to Ralph and Evelyn Smith. She was the youngest of four children. She married Frank Rivers in 1955 and they

had two daughters: De and Jo.

Marolyn earned her GED in 1968 and worked as an office assistant for Archway Cookies for several years in California. In 1972, the family moved to Summerville, and she was employed at the Boise Cascade Particle Board Mill in La Grande. Marolyn and Frank later divorced.

In 1975, Marolyn married David Smith, who had three children of his own — Rusty, Deedee and Wendie — blending the two families into one. Marolyn considered Mikel and Lindi Voss her children

as well as her medical guardians.

Marolyn loved serving the Lord at Valley Fellowship Church where she and David were greeters. She was an excellent seamstress and enjoyed sewing clothes for her children. She loved square dancing and sewed matching outfits for her and David. She also enjoyed baking, crafting, fishing and hunting. Marolyn was an avid fan of the Seattle Seahawks and the Portland Trail Blazers.

Surviving relatives include her daughters, De Toombs and

husband Scott, Jo Ireland, Denise Lini and husband John, and Wendie Rogers; son, Rusty Smith; and 15 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph and Evelyn Smith; siblings, Connie Smith, LeRoy Smith and Leona Trudeau; and two grandsons, Logan Thomas and Kyle Cruz.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the La Grande Valley Fellowship Church, 507 Palmer, La Grande 97850.

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.loveandfuneralchapel.com](http://www.loveandfuneralchapel.com).

### Wanda O. Sorweide

Joseph

Wanda Oweta Sorweide, 93, of Joseph, died May 19 at her home. A public service is not planned. An obituary is forthcoming. Memorial contributions may be made to Wallowa County Charities in care of Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center, 1502 Seventh St., La Grande, or directly to the charity itself.

# Pension reform plan advances, kicker rebate not targeted

By Sarah Zimmerman  
The Associated Press

SALEM — A plan to rein in the growing costs of Oregon's public pension system was sent to the Senate floor Tuesday after passing two key committees.

But Democratic leaders face a stiffer battle before the full chamber, where some members of their own party are recoiling at the idea of dipping into employee benefits to help pay down the state's unfunded liability.

"The folks who are being asked to take on the role of solving this issue for the state are the very employees who have worked so hard to keep to try to keep the state afloat over the past few years," said Sen. Lew Frederick, a Democrat from Portland who intends to vote no. "It is an issue of fairness in my view."

Teachers, firefighters and social workers are just some of the employees covered by Oregon's Public Employee Retirement System, or PERS, which has racked up over \$25 billion in debt.

Lawmakers have zeroed in on pension reform following the passage of a \$1 billion school tax package, but they've struggled to come up with a plan that's politically palatable to both parties. House Speaker Tina Kotek confirmed that there aren't plans to redirect the kicker — a tax rebate unique to Oregon — to pay down pension debt, an idea that drew some support from the governor and other Democrats.

"The votes aren't there," she said, but added that she hasn't yet given up on her

plan to use half the kicker funds to pay for infrastructure upgrades to a heavily trafficked bridge in Portland.

To shield employers from impending rate hikes in 2021, Kotek and other leaders are suggesting paying down the debt by siphoning money from employees' secondary pension accounts. Employees currently pay 6% of their salary into a defined contribution plan, 401(k)-type account that's separate from PERS.

For employees hired before 2003, 2.5% of those future contributions would be redirected to PERS. Employees hired after that year, which is when the state switched to a less generous benefits package, will have .75% of their contributions mitigated.

The plan will ultimately cut 7 to 12.5% of retirement benefits from this secondary pension account, which unions and public employees say is a nonstarter.

"The cut to my Individual Account Program would be significant to me and my family," Matt Brozovich, a Salem firefighter, told a legislative panel last week. "It's time for lawmakers to stop playing political games with our retirements."

Lawmakers also plan to use some of the expected revenue from the burgeoning sports betting market to incentivize employers to pay more money into PERS.

States have been scrambling to implement legalized sports betting markets after the U.S. Supreme Court gave its approval last year. Oregon lottery officials wants

the state's legalized sports betting market ready to go in time for football season.

That future revenue, which is expected to be smaller than in other states, would be used to match voluntary pension contributions from employers.

Oregon currently incentivizes employers to pay down their debt by offering to match 25% of large, lump-sum contributions. But that program has yet to get off the ground, because the state has yet to put money into that incentive fund.

Under this proposal, revenue from sports betting will sustain the program, according to Kotek.

"We want to encourage local employers buy down their part of the debt," she said. "Because if they buy

down some of their side account debt, their contribution rates go down in the future."

Republicans have shoved pension reform into the political spotlight and walked out of the capitol in protest this month to protest what they said was lack of action on the Democrats' part to tame runaway pension costs.

But in the face of a proposed pension fix, they've largely remained silent. Sen. Fred Girod, a Republican from Stayton who worked on the negotiations, said it was a "really good first step."

Some Democrats indicated they were willing to

bite the political bullet. Rep. Paul Holvey, from Eugene, said lawmakers have to take action now if they want to counteract expected pension rate increases, which he said will eat into budgets and lead to reduced staff and services.

"It would be easy to vote no, but that would do nothing to fix the escalating cost," he said, adding that this solution is better than "continuing Oregon in a downward spiral by voting no with no viable solution to this problem." ■

### Harry Ernest White

October 21, 1939 - December 29, 2018

Harry Ernest White, 79, of Union, Oregon passed away December 29, 2018, at the home of his daughter in Pauma Valley, CA, after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Harry was born October 21, 1939, to David and Fay White in the old hospital on Main Street in Fallbrook, CA. He grew up with two sisters, Judith and Mary, on a lemon and avocado ranch. He attended Fallbrook Elementary and High Schools. In 1959 in San Diego he married Bridget Piper. They had one daughter, Micheale. They later divorced. In April 1977 he married Marie Sights in Vista, CA. She had two daughters, Anne and Dawn, which he helped raise. During his years in Fallbrook, Harry worked for the Fallbrook Citrus Association and Fallbrook Public Utility District. In 1990 Harry and Marie embarked on a new adventure, moving to Union in northeastern Oregon where they lived among abundant wildlife and beautiful scenery and enjoyed owning horses and living in a small community. Harry was employed by the La Grande Golf Course for a number of years.

Survivors include three daughters, Micheale and her husband Guy White, of Pauma Valley, CA, Anne Knickerbocker and her husband Kevin, of Phoenix, AZ, and Dawn Sights of Murrieta, CA; grandchildren David and Guy White, Jr., Paige and Lauren Knickerbocker, great grandsons Elijah and Noah White; sister Mary Oyler of Grants Pass, OR; brother-in-law Ralph Schober of Fallbrook, CA, nephews Charles (Carmen) Schober, and Kenneth (Pennie) Schober.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Marie, parents David and Fay White, sister Judith Schober, and former wife, Bridget.

A memorial celebration will be held at the Fox Cemetery in Fallbrook on Sunday, May 26.

### UPCOMING FUNERALS AND VISITATIONS

Sponsored by



May 25  
Marolyn Smith: 10 a.m., memorial service, La Grande Valley Fellowship Church.

### MENU

#### UNION COUNTY SENIOR CENTER 1504 N. ALBANY ST., LA GRANDE LUNCH MENU MAY 20-24

Served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

First-time visitors age 60 and older eat free

MONDAY: chicken quesadillas, Mexi-rice, salad greens, chips, dessert

TUESDAY: cheesburgers, steak fries, coleslaw, fruit, double-fudge cake

WEDNESDAY: chicken cordon bleu, rice pilaf, steamed vegetables, Jell-O, rolls, dessert

THURSDAY: hand-crafted pizza, salad greens, fresh fruit, cookies

FRIDAY: fish & chips, baked beans, coleslaw, fruit, dessert

## Insurance: The biggest risk is not having any.



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