



IN GO!

# Riverfest hits Elgin

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# THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Lola Chapman of La Grande

## Courthouse evacuated after bomb threat

By Ronald Bond  
The Observer

A bomb threat cleared the Union County Courthouse just before 10 a.m. Tuesday morning according to the La Grande Police Department.

The threat was phoned into Union County dispatch by a male caller at 9:47 a.m. A LGPD press release said the caller stated there were bombs in the courthouse "that were set to detonate in 30 minutes."

Courthouse staff and citizens were immediately evacuated per protocol. LGPD, Union County Sheriff's Office and La Grande Fire Department all responded to the potential threat.

"We went in and had law enforcement and court security search the building," LGPD Police Chief Brian Harvey told The Observer. "They were able to conduct the vast

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## UCSO releases name of plane crash victim

Observer staff

The Union County Sheriff's Office has released the name of the man who died in a plane crash last week.

Casey William Kuiper, 29, of Summerville, was flying a Tican II airplane that crashed the evening of June 4 in Summerville.

The investigation into the crash is being led by the National Transportation Safety Board. UCSO, the Union County District Attorney's Office and the Federal Aviation Administration are also investigating.

NTSB spokesman Terry Williams told The Observer last week that the airplane was an "experimental aircraft."

UCSO, Imbler Fire Department, the Deputy Medical Examiner and Oregon State Police were the initial responders to the crash, the UCSO told The Observer. An FAA investigator arrived an hour or two later.

UCSO told The Observer that Kuiper died at the scene.

NTSB did not return a call for follow-up information by press time.

## New Elgin Museum opens during Riverfest

By Trish Yerges  
For The Observer

The Elgin Museum and Historical Society is gearing up for its Riverfest debut.

"The museum's collections represent the rich heritage of the communities of Imbler, Summerville, Elgin, Sammyville and Wallowa County," said Gerald Hopkins, EMHS president.

The arrangement of the museum's collections has been underway for the past three months. Charlie Horn has taken a prominent role in that work, clocking in countless hours organizing the artifacts into exhibits to fill the 1,920-square-foot building.

Horn has privately been collecting local history since he graduated from Elgin High School, and he has donated five of his personal history scrapbooks to the museum's research library. They are filled with news clippings, published photos, funeral service cards and obituaries.

The research library also has a collection of about 12 of Nels Rasmussen's blacksmith ledgers with names of customers from 1909 to 1960, a collection of Elgin National Bank cash books from 1890 to 1916, Elgin High School yearbooks and an old family Bible printed in German, among other materials and oral history videos that can be examined onsite by the museum's visitors.

"We're looking for more recent written histories like when Riverfest started, histories that will be old in a few more years," EMHS board member Maureen Smolkowski said.

The museum's exhibits are organized by categories, including Elgin schools, agriculture, a Stella



Trish Yerges/For The Observer

The business display is one of the most interesting and diverse sections of the museum. In the frame are examples of calendar advertisements for Elgin businesses.

Mayfield tribute, military, Elgin Stampeders, lumber/logging, local businesses and advertisements, home and household, saloons, fire department, ranching, and The Elgin Recorder exhibit.

The Elgin Recorder exhibit will be expanded in the future to include artifacts owned by the late Ethel May Smith (1921-2016), who started as a reporter for The Elgin Recorder in 1971 and eventually became its editor for six and a half years before retiring in 1980. She then reopened The Recorder and her first issue as editor/publisher was on May 19, 1993. Keenly interested in history, she was instrumental in the designation of the Elgin Opera House as a historic building on the National Historic Registry on Oct. 10, 1980. For her contributions, she was awarded "Woman of the Year" in 1984 by the Elgin Chamber. Her newspaper artifacts will be donated by her daughter Dr. Roselyn Smith of Miami, Florida.

"Of the displays, the business and advertisement display is my favorite," Horn said.

Some of the colored ads on display are from old calendars that promote businesses like Owl



Trish Yerges/For The Observer

Charlie Horn, right, shows Gerald Hopkins some of the news clippings he's saved in his personal scrapbook that he donated to the museum. They are standing at the military/veterans display with an early flag with 48 stars donated by the Clark family.

Drugstore, Johnson Clothier, Hotel Elgin, Sander's Texaco Service Station, Parks City Drugstore and L.J. Bibler General Merchant. There's also a souvenir plate for Goodnough Mercantile & Stock Company.

Also on display in this category are postcard advertisements.

"Some of these smaller ones are actually printed in Elgin," Smolkowski said.

In a display case are deep blue souvenir cups bearing

business names like Hug Brothers and artifacts from Roulet Pool Hall.

"The Hug Brothers Store was a grocery store, and they also had a clothing and shoe store and a cherry orchard," Horn said.

Another active museum organizer, board member Jacki Phillips, has been going through the large photo collections. She has prepared a box of loose photos that museum guests can look through to help identify

the people in them.

In the agriculture exhibit there are many framed photos, partially labeled, such as one with Harlan Yarrington sitting on numerous bags of grain. Elginites would recognize that surname as one of their county roads on Cricket Flat, though misspelled on the road sign as Yarrington Road.

Hopkins pointed out that the jail in the backyard near the Elgin Opera House

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## Island City budget solid

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

The City of Island City is on firm financial ground for 2019-20.

Island City's city council voted Monday to adopt a general fund budget of \$472,550 for 2019-20. The budget is down \$230 from the current year's budget.

Mayor Robb Rea said the budget leaves the city in a sound position.

"It will allow us to keep all of our staff and programs," he said.

The city's expenses are expected to be down about 9% in 2019-20, according to Rachel Brown, the City of Island City's budget officer. The reason is that the city has completed its \$2.9 million water improvement project. In 2018-19 the city spent money on upgrading

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### WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 60 LOW Patchy clouds  
Thursday 87/51 Clouds and sun

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