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Marcum named GRH executive director of patient care

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

Grande Ronde Hospital has a new member of its team. Laurie Marcum is now serving as the executive director of Patient Care Services, replacing Doug Romer, who retired in January. Romer worked in the position for 40 years before leaving, and the hospital has



Marcum

only want the best for the community.”
As the Executive Director

had interim directors during its search.
“I am very passionate about community health care,” Marcum said. “Being a native of Eastern Oregon, I

Patient Care Services, Marcum is overseen directly by President and CEO Jeremy Davis. All clinical patient care departments and their supervisors within the hospital report to Marcum as she ensures safe and exceptional care for the community.
“I feel the community should be thankful for the wonderful orga-

nization they have here in GRH,” Marcum said. “The GRH team is an amazing group of people and I am proud to be part of the team again.”
Marcum worked as a house supervisor — whose primary responsibilities include dealing with patient care issues, staffing matters, supervision of the nurses

and staff and handling administrative responsibilities — at GRH from 2001 to 2008 before becoming chief nursing officer for Wallowa Memorial Hospital, where she was employed until 2012. Since then, Marcum has worked for B.E. Smith, a health care company, serving at the executive level for
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STOKED FOR SUPPLIES



Dick Mason/The Observer

A wide array of student school supplies have been donated by the Elgin community to Stella Mayfield Elementary School. The items were presented to the school this morning. Stella Mayfield students Kyria Graham, left, and Selah Schultze, are shown examining some of the supplies Sunday during a public picnic outside the Elgin Community Center.

Elgin students get supplies for first day from ministry association, Lions Club

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Teachers at Stella Mayfield Elementary School will be reaching into their pockets less frequently this year thanks to many Elgin residents with deep reservoirs of goodwill.
The charitable men and women are members of churches that are part of the Elgin Ministerial Association, which, with support from the Elgin Lions Club, donated large quantities of school supplies to Stella Mayfield this morning during the first day of classes.
Gerald Hopkins, pastor of the Elgin First Methodist Church and a leader of the school supply drive along with his wife, Mary, helped

conduct the drive because he does not want teachers to have to spend their own money to provide students with school supplies.
“Teachers should not have to do this,” said Hopkins, who is also a member of the Elgin Lions Club with his wife, Mary.
He knows from firsthand experience that teachers spend their own money to help students. He saw it happen during his career as an educator, which included stops in the Huntington School District where he was its superintendent and in the North Powder School District where he was its principal.
Hopkins is not the only one who has taken note of how much teachers spend
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Dick Mason/The Observer

Gerald Hopkins examines some of the new backpacks he and others donated to a back to school supply drive for Elgin students. Hopkins helped lead the drive, conducted by the Elgin Ministerial Association with help from the Elgin Lions Club.

Possible strike looms for universities’ classified staff

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Efforts to avert a strike by the classified staff of Oregon’s public universities, one which would impact Eastern Oregon University, will continue in two weeks when bargaining teams for the classified employees and the state will meet.
The bargaining sessions will be conducted Sept. 11-13, according to Di Saunders, a spokesperson for Oregon’s seven public universities. The sessions will start about three weeks after an impasse was declared and final offers were submitted by both bargaining teams Friday.
A 30-day cooling off period has since started. SEIU 503, the classified employees union, can give notice during the cooling off period that it intends to strike. However, it can’t strike until after the 30 days and must give the public universities 10 days notice before doing so, said Saunders. This means the earliest the classified employees could strike would be about Sept. 23.
SEIU 503 has not released its final offer, but Oregon’s public universities have. They are offering classified staff employees a 2.5% total cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2020-21 but no increases in 2019. Classified staff employees would receive a 1% COLA increase March 1, 2020, and 0.75% COLA boosts on Nov. 1, 2020, and March 1, 2021.
The state’s universities are also offering step increases in 2019-20 and 2020-21, for which 70% of the classified employees are eligible. These step increases would raise the base wages of eligible employees by 9.5% over two years. This combined with the 2.5% COLA would increase wages for most employees by 12% over two years, Saunders said.
The step increases Saunders refers to are pay raises provided for job performances rated satisfactory or better, but are not awards for “merit,” according to a state university fact sheet. The vast majority of classified staff receive step increases, unless their job performance is deemed not satisfactory.
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BR Office complex nearly ready for business

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

The City of La Grande’s Urban Renewal Agency awarded funds to BR Office Condominiums, owned by David Baum, to update its building at 1902 Fourth St. in June. The project revitalized the building’s interior and exterior.
Baum bought the office building in 1989 and though some construction had been done since then to improve the building, it was in need of a more

extensive upgrade, according to Baum. When one of his tenants came to him in 2018 asking for renovations to be done, Baum saw the opportunity to reach out to the Urban Renewal Agency for help, as it met the URA’s funding requirements.
According to the report given to the URA by Urban Renewal District Manager Robert Strope and Economic Development Director Christine Jarski — which lists all the findings by the city regarding

the application — the URA agreed that Baum’s proposal met three of the four goals of the Urban Renewal Plan: revitalizing downtown, creating family-wage jobs and retail development. With a new exterior, employees already hired and now updated empty suites, Baum has met those goals.
“The building is totally restored,” Baum said.
Currently the only tenant in the condominiums is Dr. James R. Kopp,

an orthopedic surgeon who has set up a weight loss clinic in one of the three suites. MetTrim MD provides a medical designed clinic using the principles of the American Medical Association, National Institute of Health and Obesity Medical Association. Kopp’s business uses one of the three suites in the building for his practice.
The work listed in Baum’s Urban Renewal funding request included
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