



SPORTS

Happy to be healthy

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

Inside

Be aware of fake gold, 5A
Experience autumn aboard
a steam train, in Go!



Follow us on the web

WEDNESDAY • October 9, 2019 • \$1.50

Good day to our valued subscriber Craig Nightingale of La Grande

Steele steps into new position

■ Grande Ronde Watershed hires executive director

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed team will see a familiar face filling the role of executive director. Previously a project coordinator and fish biologist with GRMW, starting at the program in July of 2010, Jesse Steele will now lead his team in the restoration of wildlife habitats for fish. An announcement made at the annual planning meeting for the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Tuesday morning kicked off his new role.

“I am excited to continue the good work already taking place,” Steele said. “I like the role here at the Grande Ronde Watershed. We are actually implementing and funding restoration projects.”



Steele

Steele grew up in Wallowa and graduated from Eastern Oregon University with a degree in liberal studies with minors in biology and geology. He said originally he had planned to be a science teacher, but rather than continuing his post-graduate studies, he chose to apply at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Northeast Fish Research Program where he worked until joining GRMW.

“I knew I wanted to be involved in the science/biology field,” Steele said. “Science is just interesting. It is the way we answer questions. If anyone has a question on why something works the way it does, we rely on science for the answer.”

As the executive director, Steele will oversee a team of five, with the possible addition of a sixth employee in the future. He will be in charge of administrative work, in addition to budgeting and fiscal responsibilities. His main goal is to continue

See Steele / Page 5A

Restoring the PAST

■ Steel frame for La Grande’s Liberty Theater canopy installed last week as part of reconstruction project

By Dick Mason, The Observer

The Liberty Theatre, an iconic movie house with a history that dates back to the silent film era, is a quiet but major step closer to being fully restored.

A steel frame for the La Grande theater’s canopy was installed Friday as part of a reconstruction project being conducted by the Liberty Theatre Foundation. The 2,000-pound frame was put in by Quiet Life Construction of Union, which used a forklift and did welding work to install the frame. Quiet Life Construction is the prime contractor for the Liberty Theatre project.

The installation of the frame, made by La Grande metal fabricator Wyatt Williams, means that a foundation is now in place for a future canopy that will look almost identical to the one the Adams Avenue theater building had about a century ago.

“I’m excited. (The completed

“When it is finished and it is all lit up, it will look incredible.”

— Ashley O’Toole, Liberty Theatre Foundation member

canopy) will boost visibility,” said Liberty Theatre Foundation member Ashley O’Toole.

The next step will be the addition of a 38-foot-by-6.5-foot roof, which will be put over the steel frame. Later, globe lights, ornate wood trim, glass skirting and other decorative elements will be added.

“When it is finished and it is all lit up, it will look incredible,” O’Toole said.

He said the canopy is being

re-created based on a photo of the Liberty Theatre building taken between 1910 and 1919. This was when the theater was named The Arcade. It became known as the Liberty Theatre in 1920.

The canopy will be below the theater’s large sign, which was put up in late 2015 and is a replica of a Liberty sign installed many decades ago.

The installation of the steel frame for the canopy comes about three months after 1,500 old bricks were installed on the facade of the theater’s main entrance. The bricks are from the old Central Elementary School on K Avenue, which was torn down

See Liberty / Page 5A



Photo courtesy of Liberty Theatre Foundation

Known then as the Arcade, the theater and its canopy is shown here circa 1910-1919.

Cove law set to take effect

■ Ordinance will allow ATVs to be ridden in town

By Dick Mason
The Observer

The day is fast approaching when people will be legally riding all-terrain vehicles to pick up groceries or visit the post office in Cove.

An ATV ordinance in Cove is set to take effect on Oct. 31 that will make it legal for people to ride ATVs on almost all roads in the City of Cove. The ordinance was adopted by the Cove City Council by a 4-0 vote on Oct. 1.

The only roadway in Cove where ATVs will not be allowed once the ordinance is in place will be Antles Lane, which is on the border of the city limits.

Cove is now one of four towns in Union County that have ordinances allowing for the operation of ATVs within their city limits. The others with ATV ordinances are Imbler, Elgin and Union. In addition, ATVs can now also be operated on roadways under the jurisdiction of Union County. The Union County Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance allowing this on Aug. 8. The Union County ordinance took effect the same day it was passed.

Cove City Councilor Matt McCowan said that many people in his community already ride ATVs in town. Part of the reason he wanted an ATV ordinance passed was so the city could put rules in place for ATV riders that would promote safety.

“(The ordinance) will maintain our quality of life in Cove,” he said.

He also said ATVs are a useful part of the lives of many Cove residents.

He said the people already riding ATVs in Cove use them not only for recreation but also for essential tasks like getting gasoline for their lawn mowers and plowing snow.

Scott Franks, a retired La Grande Police Officer, is

See Cove / Page 5A



Dick Mason/The Observer

Dan Davenport, owner of Quiet Life Construction, checks the support system for a steel frame his company installed for the Liberty Theatre. The finished canopy will resemble the one the Liberty Theatre building had a century ago.

Oregon’s vape ban targets kids’ access

By Adam Duvenay
Eugene Register-Guard

EUGENE — The toll of Oregonians sickened by vaping-related lung damage is rising as the governor directed state agencies last week to prepare for a temporary ban on items not strongly linked to the national crisis, focusing her first action on cutting how many kids use vapes.

By the end of the week, any vapes that don’t taste like tobacco, menthol or marijuana might be illegal to sell in Oregon for the next six months. If the

Oregon Liquor Control Commission approves the ban, it will be in force immediately under still unwritten state guidelines, according to OLCC spokesman Mark Pettinger.

Compliance checks at stores where flavored e-cigarette liquid is sold could start this weekend if it’s approved, Pettinger said. Many of those stores will be forced to take from their shelves the largest and most valuable part of their inventories.

The ban targets flavored items that

See Vape / Page 5A



The Associated Press file photo

Gov. Kate Brown issued an executive order Friday temporarily banning the sale of flavored vaping products.

INDEX

Business 1B Dear Abby..... 8B Opinion..... 4A
Classified 4B Horoscope..... 5B Sports 6A
Comics..... 7B Lottery..... 2A Sudoku 7B
Crossword... 5B Obituaries..... 3A

WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
17 Low
Clear; very cold



Thursday
47/21
Sunny, but cold

CONTACT US

541-963-3161

Issue 120
3 sections, 24 pages
La Grande, Oregon

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Call The Observer newsroom at 541-963-3161 or send an email to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.

FRIDAY

THIRD PERSON FILES FOR SHERIFF

Online at lagrandeobserver.com



8 51153 00100 6

