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Voters to decide fate of bond

Union School District offering tours to show need for improvements

By Dick Mason
The Observer

What does the future hold for the Union School District?

Union School District voters will determine this in a Nov. 5 mail election for a \$4 million bond that would pay for major upgrades to its buildings. Union voters began receiving ballots for the election late last week. The ballots must be returned by 8 p.m. Nov. 5.

Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells is encouraged by the show of support he has sensed in the community for the bond.

"There is lots of positivity," Wells said of the bond levy, titled Measure 31-98

The ballot title summary for Measure 31-98 states that the estimated average tax rate would be \$1.10 per \$1,000 of assessed property value if the levy is approved. This means that the owner of a \$100,000 house in the school district would pay \$110 more a year in property taxes. The bond would be paid for over a period not to exceed 21 years, according to the summary.

The bond levy, if approved, would provide the school district a two-for-the-price-of-one opportunity. The school district was awarded a grant from the Oregon School Capital Improvement matching program this summer that will provide a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$4 million for the Union School District bond, should voters approve it. This means if voters pass the \$4 million bond levy, the school district will receive \$8 million for construction. The catch is that the offer for the matching grant is good only through the November election. Should the bond

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UNION COUNTY

Young woodworkers promote reading



Dick Mason/The Observer

La Grande High School junior Colt Foltz, right, and Briana Tanaka, a community volunteer, build a Little Free Library structure Saturday.

Several Union County FFA students team-up to build Little Free Libraries

By Dick Mason, The Observer

Seven Union County teenagers put down their cellphones and picked up drills, tape measures and plywood Saturday morning to promote literacy.

The youths, members of FFA chapters at La Grande, Imbler and Union high schools, helped build structures at La Grande High School for about eight Little Free Libraries that will be installed in La Grande, Imbler and Union. They will be part of a growing number of such libraries in Union County. Each is a community bookcase, a site where anyone can pick up a book and bring another back to share.

Scott Carpenter, the La Grande School District's director of educational programs, said Little Free Libraries help boost literacy levels, especially in the homes of young families.

"They provide more access to literature for homes that may not have access to it," said Carpenter, who helped oversee the Little Free Library construction work.

Participating in the project Saturday were three LHS students, juniors Colt Foltz, McK-

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Dick Mason/The Observer

Union High School freshmen Jakob Graffunder, left, and Paul Reed were among seven students in FFA who helped build structures for Little Free Libraries.

WALLOWA COUNTY

Highway crash leaves 1 dead

Joseph man killed after vehicle collides with ODOT snowplow on Highway 3

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

One person has died and two others were injured in a two-vehicle crash on Highway 3 Saturday morning in Wallowa County. Oregon State Police troopers and emergency personnel responded to an 8:08 a.m. call reporting the collision of an Oregon Department of Transportation snowplow and a pickup on the Lewiston Highway near milepost 15.

A Dodge pickup was northbound on Highway 3 when it collided with the snowplow, operated by Monte Radford, 69, of Enterprise. Preliminary investigation of the crash showed that the pickup was navigating a curve when it lost control and crossed over into the southbound lane and into the path of the snowplow, according to a press release from OSP.

The pickup's driver, Dylan Denton, 24, of Joseph, died at the scene. The pickup's passenger, Triston Denning, 19, of Joseph, was injured, as was the driver of the snowplow.

Denning was taken to St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise via air ambulance to be treated for his injuries and Radford was driven via ambulance to Wallowa Memorial Hospital with serious injuries, according to the OSP press release.

The highway was closed for six hours Saturday during the investigation. OSP was assisted by the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office and Wallowa Rural Fire Department.

A public Facebook page updating Denning's condition has been made. According to this page, Denning is being treated for serious injuries at St. Alphonsus in Boise. Denning is still in the ICU under a medically induced coma, with a broken femur and numerous facial injuries, according to the GoFundMe page posted on the Facebook page. He had a brain bleed that was stopped and will continue to stay sedated until he is healthy enough for surgery.

According to the press release, the investigation is ongoing and no further information was available for release.

Real ID is coming, are you ready?

By Sam Stites
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — If you've flown from Portland International Airport within the past couple of weeks, you've probably received a warning from Transportation Security Administration agents while waiting to get through security: Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, they'll no longer accept state-issued identification that doesn't comply with "Real ID" standards.

The changes have been in the making since Congress passed the Real

ID Act of 2005. On the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, federal lawmakers created standards for the issuance of sources of identification like driver's licenses.

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 536, which balked at the Real ID Act, calling it out as an unfunded mandate. Oregon lawmakers were unhappy the federal government didn't outline how it would reimburse the state for updating driver information systems. Oregon lawmakers also felt a new system would pro-

vide few security protections, leaving identification systems open to insider fraud, counterfeit documentation and database failures.

The bill passed with little opposition, and the federal government pushed back the deadline as Oregon and nearly all other states refused to comply. During the next decade, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security began rolling out the law in phases, first at its own Washington, D.C., headquarters, then at nuclear

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

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Issue 125
2 sections, 18 pages
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