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Good day to our valued subscriber Tom Colton of Union

Should they stay or should they go?

Union mayor proposes having residents decide what to do about deer in town

By Dick Mason The Observer

UNION — Mayor Leonard Flint would like to know what Union residents want the city to do regarding its large deer population.

Nuisance deer can damage gardens and threaten people. During a city council work session Monday night, Flint proposed giving residents the chance to choose one of four options to deal with the deer:

- Take no action.
• Remove only deer causing problems.
• Remove all deer.
• Begin an education program to help residents learn how to best deal with deer so they are less of a hazard and a nuisance.

The mayor said there are a number of ways the city might survey residents regarding the options, such as including a survey with water bills or have surveyors directly ask residents which option they prefer.

Flint did not identify the method for removing deer and declined to elaborate further following the meeting.

The removal options the city has are trapping and moving the animals or using lethal means, said Bruce Eddy, the East Region manager for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Eddy said on Tuesday the ODFW does not like to trap and move deer because they often quickly return. He also said relocating deer only See Deer / Page 5A

Local family now has a place to call HOME



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Eliza, Meriel, Aileen and Noranna Fitzpatrick are happy to have beds of their own in a room of their own in their new home in La Grande.

Fitzpatrick family has a new home after living in a motel during the summer

By Sabrina Thompson, The Observer

LA GRANDE — Four months ago, a family of six lived in a single motel room, hoping the small space — crowded with clothes, food, toys and craft supplies, four little girls and their mother and father — was only temporary.

In September, the Fitzpatricks moved into a new home and found themselves with plenty to be thankful for as the holiday season nears.

"It feels so amazing not to be stuck in a tiny room," Kristina Fitzpatrick said.

Kristina and her husband, James, along with their daughters, Eliza, Meriel, Aileen and Noranna, were evicted from their rental in February after new landlords failed to get Housing and Urban Development approval before giving the keys to the family. Without the HUD subsidy, paying rent was difficult, and after falling too far behind, the family was kicked out. They stayed with friends and family for a short time, then moved into a room at La Grande's Orchard Motel.

James works in construction, and made just enough to pay for the \$320 weekly rent at the motel. The couple

attempted to find housing, but with an eviction on their record, they were denied.

It was the kindness of Kristina's aunt, Linda Hansen, that got them out of the motel room. Hansen, a real estate agent, found the three-bedroom house in La Grande on Fruitdale Lane for the family to live in. Now the family can spread out. The four girls still share a bedroom as the family continues to unpack, but Kristina and James have a space of their own.

"It is great to live in a house out here. It's so quiet," Kristina said. "And the girls are so excited to each have her own bed."

The family also is thankful for the new home because it allows them to be more financially stable, Kristina said. With a large refrigerator and kitchen, they don't have to worry about food spoiling or only



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Eliza, Meriel, Aileen and Noranna play in the living room of their new home in La Grande, happy to have the space to spread out after living in a motel.

buying what they can make in a motel room. James has an easier time getting to work because of the support they received from a family and friends for getting the girls to school, so he doesn't have to take off as much time at work.

The family again secured HUD approval, with Community Connection of Northeast Oregon covering the rent for the first six months. James and Kristina also took a class that provided financial advice to give them

a better chance of finding another rental, although Kristina said they have no plans of leaving anytime soon.

"It shows we are doing everything possible to help ourselves as renters," Kristina said.

There still are a few issues to overcome with the move.

The youngest girl, Noranna, attends La Grande Head Start preschool, a 10-minute drive from their home. However, because the family has

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A call for justice colored in red

By Sabrina Thompson The Observer

LA GRANDE — Red dresses hanging from trees flapped in the center of Eastern Oregon University's campus — each dress representing an indigenous woman who could have attended college, had she not been killed or gone missing.

This display is part of EOU's Native American Program's efforts to honor and raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women. The program works to assure American Indian, Alaskan Native and other indigenous students succeed at the college and creates a sense of community there for them as well.

The REDress Project began as an art installation in Canada by Jamie Black in 2014. After collecting See Red / Page 5A

Concert carries island flair

By Sabrina Thompson The Observer

ELGIN — The sounds of Trinidad and Tobago can be heard in the Elgin High School's music room as the Calypso band prepares for its winter concert. As special guests at the Observer's 28th Annual Holiday Music Festival the first weekend in December, the EHS students will show off their talents on the steel drums.

The band began two years ago when the music teacher for Elgin's third- through 12th-grade students, Tucker Murphey, founded a group of youth interested in that style of percussion. What started with grade school classroom instruments and a small xylophone is now a full steel drum ensemble with various sizes of steel pans and drums to create the sounds of the Caribbean. The school district

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

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Thursday 33/17 3/17 A.M. snow showers

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