

Photo by Ben Lonergan/
EO Media Group

The La Grande
Tigers celebrate
following their win
in Saturday's title
game. The Tigers de-
feated Banks, 21-0,
for their first football
title since 1974.

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TIGERS CLAIM STATE TITLE

■ Former players, coaches, fans and parents celebrate as the Tigers blank Banks to win the school's first football title in 45 years

By Ronald Bond, The Observer

LA GRANDE — Neil Cooper said watching the La Grande Tigers in Saturday's Class 4A state championship game was much more intense than when he coached in a title game 45 years ago. That's because his grandson, Payton Cooper, was among the players on the field in Hermiston as the Tigers took on, and eventually defeated, Banks, 21-0, Saturday night for La Grande's first state football championship since that 1974 team the elder Cooper coached on.

See Title / Page 6A

Inside
Complete coverage of the La Grande Tigers' state football title game victory
PAGES 1C-4C

La Grande struggles to help the homeless

By Dick Mason and Phil Wright
The Observer

LA GRANDE — His chapped and reddened hands trembled as he grasped the soiled cans and bottles and stuffed them one by one into the recycling machine at the La Grande Safeway.

He is 27, he said, from La Grande, went to high school here but did not make it past his junior year. He is one of La Grande's homeless.

"Basically, I ended up making some bad financial choices when I was working, and I've been paying for it ever since," he said.

He talked Wednesday night on condition of anonymity. Even a photo of his hands would be too much, he said.

Last winter he holed up in a friend's garage, he said. Three walls and roof



Staff photo by Phil Wright

One of La Grande's homeless walks Saturday through downtown on Adams Avenue. The La Grande City Council meets Wednesday night to consider a land use appeal that prevented the opening of a local warming station, which would provide shelter for the homeless during winter months.

provided warmth and safety. But he no longer has that spot. This year he and many others, he said, were waiting for the Union County Warming Station to open.

"I was honestly planning on it," he said. "To hear it was delayed due to being appealed — I'm very disappointed."

COMMUNITY POURS OUT SUPPORT FOR STATION

The station's board on Oct. 8 received approval from the La Grande Planning Commission to operate at 2008 Third St. Ten days later, La Grande businessman Al

Adelsberger appealed the decision with the support of several locals. Thursday, he said the shelter comes with the highest of stakes.

"When you do something, you got to do it right," he said. "And human life is a very important issue."

The La Grande City Council takes up the appeal at a public hearing Wednesday at 6 p.m. at La Grande Middle School, 1108 Fourth St.

Cody Vela is hopeful the council denies the appeal. The chair of the warming station board, he said the need is evident and the

community agrees. The city received three letters asking the council to side with Adelsberger in the wake of his appeal. But approximately 60 letters and emails, primarily from locals, came in urging the council to deny the appeal and allow the shelter to open.

"We really felt a positive showing from the community," Vela said.

Bruce Rogers, owner of Local Harvest Eatery and



Vela

Pub, La Grande, in a Nov. 13 email to the city stated the shelter last year was 50 feet from his business and that prompted initial concerns about the safety of employees and clientele.

"We had absolutely zero incidents with this program," he wrote. "The staff and volunteers operated this facility with the utmost professionalism and concern."

Rachel Edvalson, owner of River Wynn Photography, La Grande, in a Nov. 14 email to the city stated, "A community that takes care of its vulnerable is a community that I would be proud to call my home for many years to come."

The permit application to operate the shelter, the appeal and the letters are available online here: www.cityoflagrande.org/muraProjects/muraLAG/lagcity/index.cfm/city-offices/community-development/planning-division/union-county-warming-station-appeal/.

PENDLETON SHELTER SERVES AS EXAMPLE

Some of what is playing out in La Grande has a precursor in Pendleton, where the nonprofit Neighbor 2 Neighbor has operated the Pendleton Warming Station since 2011. The station hit speed bumps, but it also helped kickstart the lives of the less fortunate, protected homeless from the cold and avoided major pitfalls, said

See Homeless / Page 5A

McNary Dam's new lasers

By Jessica Pollard
EO Media Group

UMATILLA — Birds trying to feast on juvenile salmon at the McNary Dam are facing a new deterrent — bright green lasers.

In the past, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District relied on a sprinkler system for bird abatement. Sprinklers would spray water near the juvenile bypass outfall pipe, but some waterfowl weren't deterred away from snacking on the young salmon. Last spring, the system was wiped out by high waters on the river, so the district invested in its first laser instead.

"The laser is still considered a trial effort," said USACE Biologist Christopher Peery. "Initial observations appear promising, but it is probably not going to be the solution to all our salmon predation worries."

The laser has a range of around 950 feet to a mile, weather depending. Its beam moves in random patterns, and is meant to trick birds into believing a solid object is chasing them. It fended off birds

See McNary / Page 5A

INDEX

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

WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

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