

LHS students, parents continue holiday meal tradition



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Students from La Grande High School recently provided their fifth annual formal pre-Thanksgiving luncheon for their parents, community members and La Grande School District staff. The students, shown above with their teachers, are all in the Structured Learning Center programs at the school, which are for special education students.

TREE

Continued from Page 1A to hang up the tree but also to put on its lights and its 470 ornaments.

The Summerville family always waits until mid-December to put up their tree because it cannot be watered while hanging from the ceiling. Taking down these trees when the ornaments are removed after each holiday

season often is quite easy — they don't weigh much because they are dry.

Hudson said the old trees still have one gift left in them, though. They become food for the family's goats.

"They really like them. It is their treat," she said.

The practice of setting up Christmas trees this way is anything but new. According to [www.thespruce.com/upside-down-christmas-](http://www.thespruce.com/upside-down-christmas-trees)

trees, people have been hanging Christmas trees upside down at least since the Middle Ages.

Today, an upside-down Christmas tree fad, one which started about two years ago, is continuing. Those joining in include retailers who display Christmas trees upside down so customers can see more of the ornaments they are selling at eye level, according

to the website. Retailers also are doing this as a means of opening up floor space.

Hudson said her family plans to keep having topsy-turvy Christmas trees long after the fad has ended. She said it would be hard to imagine her living room in December without the Christmas tree hanging upside down.

"It is a family tradition," she said.

FIRE

Continued from Page 1A from the North Powder Rural, La Grande, La Grande Rural, Union and Haines fire departments. They stayed at the scene until late in the afternoon.

Tibbetts said a box alarm system, which has been in place for about

three years, aided in the quick containment of the fire. The system helps fire departments communicate in the event of a blaze so they can more easily join forces.

When there is a fire, the incident commander, the individual in charge of directing firefighting operations, calls the Union County Dispatch Center

with a code. The code indicates which fire departments and firefighters are to respond and what type of equipment they are to bring. A dispatch center worker instantly relays the code to the pagers of the appropriate firefighters.

The cause of Saturday's fire is under investigation. A deputy state fire marshal is assisting with the investigation.

CHEER

Continued from Page 1A said. "And it is a very rewarding experience."

Ruthie Becker, a parent of Central Elementary School students, organized the food and gift giving in 2018 as a way to get involved in sharing the holiday spirit. She worked with the accounting company to purchase the ingredients for the boxes. Meals include a turkey, stuffing, rolls, sparkling apple cider and canned vegetables.

Mayes said families were identified as low-income and in need by the school. They were then shopped for by the employees at Connected Professional Accountants.

Each child in a family also received a present. According to Becker, those who purchased the gifts do not know who they are for, but each accountant receives a note with how much to purchase and ideas of what to buy.

Around \$20-\$30 is spent on each food box, plus gifts. Becker said the 21 families have a total of 32 children who will enjoy a Christmas this year thanks in part to the generosity of the local company.

Becker came up with the idea to forego a company holiday party and instead use the time and money to give back to the community. She proposed the notion to members of the accounting firm. Employees talked it over and decided to go ahead with the plan.

"We realized that there are families in the area who



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Connected Professional Accountants, La Grande, put together this and other food boxes in partnership with students of Central Elementary School, La Grande.



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Central Elementary School second-grade teacher Jamie Stone helps load cars Friday with gifts and food boxes to donate to students.

need help," said Kim Justice, officer manager for Connected Professional Accountants.

"We wanted to help children and families have a great Christmas. We are fortunate

REVIEW

Continued from Page 1A Administration also are involved in trying to construct the 300-mile, 500-kilovolt transmission line that will run through five Oregon counties and one in Idaho.

To continue with the proposed project, Idaho Power must secure a site certification from the siting council, which oversees the development of large energy facilities throughout the state.

During the two-day meeting, the council met to review the draft proposed order, the public comments on the draft — of which there were more than 470 individual commenters — and Idaho Power's response to those comments. While changes and suggestions for the order have already been made by energy department staff, which is recommending the council approve the order, this month's meeting allowed for the council to clarify its own concerns to staff and provide other feedback.

Ultimately, the purpose of the council is to evaluate the application from Idaho Power within the context of more than a dozen standards all energy facilities in the state must meet.

"It's a standards-based review," said Kellen Tardaewether, a senior siting analyst, who has worked as one of the project's staff leaders for the DOE. "The applicant has the burden of proof of demonstrating whether or not they've met the standards. The council isn't discretionary. Everything is based in rules, statutes and ordinances, and there must

be legal authority for the decision-making process."

Though the other projects on the council's agenda pushed much of the review until next month, the council did get through discussions of general, organization, structural, land use and soil standards, which included public concerns, such as wildfire risks, erosion and blasting.

Other topics of public interest such as protected areas, noise, fish and wildlife habitats, and visual impact will continue to be reviewed at next month's meeting.

One of the problems with B2H, however, is the siting council can't adequately address many of the public's concerns with the project, even if it wanted to.

"For all of those folks that commented about land access, or having an easement on their property, or whether or not Idaho Power has contacted them to have conversation about any of that, the council doesn't have jurisdiction over that," Tardaewether said. "There's nothing the council can do to address that issue."

Irene Gilbert, co-chair for the Stop B2H Coalition in La Grande, attended the meeting both days and continues to be disappointed with the council's response to potential issues the public is raising.

"They do it with every standard, which they're supposedly evaluating in a black-and-white sort of way," she said. "They identify the problems with it, and then decide that none of the problems are substantial. So it isn't an objective process, it's very subjective."