

OTEC

Continued from Page 1A

The team will install a total of 5 miles of electrical line to Aldea Montanita de la Virgen. Much of the line will run over steep terrain. Higgins anticipates that he will have to hike up much of it.

Jeff Pillow, superintendent of Oregon Trail Electric's northern line division, said the power poles for the line will be installed by the time the volunteer crew arrives. He expects the volunteers will work well together.

"It is a brotherhood," Pillow said of employees of rural electrical cooperatives.

The village has 60 homes. The homes have two or three rooms and consist of cement, cinder blocks, adobe bricks or a combination of the materials. The center of the village has three structures: a church, a building that serves as a health and a community center and a three-room schoolhouse. The project will deliver power to these 63 buildings, Pillow said.

The village's buildings also lack running water. The community now gets water from two springs: one for washing laundry and the other for drinking. Both springs are downhill, with the drinking water spring about a half mile down a steep hill. All the water must be hauled by hand, Pillow said.

Aldea Montanita de la Virgen will be in a position to add running water once it receives electricity.

"The electricity will give them the capability to get water pumped to it," Higgins said.

Aldea Montanita de la Virgen is a subsistence community. Its residents, Pillow said, live on what they grow, including corn, fruit and game hens. They



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Tom Higgins of La Grande works on a utility pole Wednesday in La Grande. The lineman for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is heading to Guatemala with a team of other utility volunteers to bring power to a remote village.

also grow coffee, which provides income.

The people of Aldea Montanita de la Virgen do much of the cooking in their homes. This is not a healthy situation because of exposure to smoke. That, too, could be a thing of the past if they use electricity for ovens, Pillow said.

Oregon's electric cooperatives raised the money for the Oregon Empowers Guatemala project, and Roger Meader, a retired general manager from Coos Curry Electric Cooperative, led that effort.

In some ways Guatemala is like the United States was a century ago, when its cities had power but not its rural areas. Many such areas did not receive power until the 1940s, when rural cooperatives of the same mold as OTEC stepped forward. Oregon Trail Electric CEO Les Penning made reference to

this in a news release.

"Bringing electricity to regions that have none takes us back to our roots of rural electrification," he said. "Electric cooperatives are well positioned to help overcome the challenge of providing power to over 900 million people living without electricity worldwide. Over the past 50 years, cooperatives have helped bring electricity to over 160 million people in 45 countries."

Higgins will have to leave Guatemala right after the juice flows, so he will not get to see all of the ways it will improve the lives of the villagers. He said he hopes someday he can return with his wife, Jaime, and their son and daughter to see how the full extent of electricity has touched their lives.

"That," Higgins said, "would be so wonderful."

DREAM

Continued from Page 1A

passion developed into a desire to show and breed dogs when she moved to Colorado after graduating from Eastern Oregon University.

"I typically lose money when breeding," Locke said. "I am not doing it for the love of money, but for the love of dogs."

Locke said she shows dogs because she wants to help in the preservation of the Belgian Tervuren, a sheep-herding dog that often is adaptable to training for specific tasks. All but one of the five litters Locke has bred have been Belgian Tervurens, and three dogs from these litters have gone on to be service dogs.

"My goal in showing is to get my dog seen and see other dogs that will help preserve this breed of dog," Locke said.

Jack, who lives with Locke,



Contributed photo by Fritz Clark

Jack, a 5-year-old Belgian Tervuren, won an "Award of Merit" at this year's Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. Jack lives in Union with his breeder Donna Locke. Jack's litter mate, Teller, also competed Feb. 9 at the big show in New York City.

won a merit award at Westminster.

"It brought tears to my eyes," she said. "I was just so proud of him."

The merit award is the kind of recognition dog breeders dreams of, she said, and puts Locke on a list of trusted breeders with the American Kennel Club.

"It's just such a great honor," she said. "It was just as exciting to see him win,

even though I couldn't be there. It is a huge compliment and such an accomplishment that Jack was able to compete with a larger group of top dogs."

Putting dogs in a show can be beneficial and rewarding to the dog and the breeder, Locke said, because it helps develop a strong bond between the two.

"With a dog you are training and showing, you establish a close relationship with them," Locke said. "You work so closely with them you form a partnership."

Having a kennel club in the area would be of benefit according to Locke. Not only would it provide more opportunities for shows, but it can help develop stronger relationships with owners and breeders in the area. And having a Kennel Club could also mean additional training classes for dogs, which can increase bonding opportunities between owners and their pets.

HARVEY

Continued from Page 1A

Harvey said he likens the position of police chief to the CEO of a company.

"This role is in charge of taking care of everything from community concerns about the need for an additional patrol officer to balancing the budget to keeping lights on at the office," Harvey said.

He said one of his favorite things about his job is the opportunity he has to hire people and get them started in their career and following their dreams. He said his greatest joy is watching his fellow officers grow and achieve their goals.

During his time as chief, Harvey led the department into implementing new programs and opportunities. He helped in getting a drug take-back day and box established, and worked to apply and receive grant funding for a domestic violence detective. Harvey also helped establish the multi-jurisdictional regional SWAT team, which brings together special weapons and tactics teams and hostage negotiators in Baker and Union counties. He also volunteered throughout the community on various committees, including the Union County Safe Communities Coalition.



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Harvey oversees 31 employees within the police department, from officers to investigators to dispatchers. He has been eligible and preparing for retirement for a few years and said he felt now is the best time to retire for him and his family.

Once he steps down from the position in La Grande, he will work as a resident deputy for Baker City. He said the job will be less stressful than his current position, but a way to still help the community. He also said his retirement is an opportunity for the department to gain new perspective on the changes

La Grande Police Department Chief Brian Harvey announced his retirement. His last day will be May 4. He is retiring after 34 years in law enforcement.

that are occurring.

"The changes I have seen in law enforcement, particularly in the last five to 10 years, it is a very different world than it used to be, and it takes an enormous amount of energy to navigate that," Harvey said. "As someone who has done this for as long as I have, I think it is time for someone who has a fresh set of eyes and fresh energy to continue doing it."

La Grande's city manager, Robert Strope, is working with the department regarding Harvey's successor.

VIRUS

Continued from Page 1A

students or staff have tested positive for the virus."

The remaining school districts in Union and Wallowa counties reported they have no plans to close but have increased sanitation efforts.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in a letter Tuesday to Vice President Mike Pence stated Oregon needs 400,000 respirator masks, gowns and gloves, disposable protective suits and up to 100 ventilators in case the coronavirus spreads more widely in the state.

Pence, whom President Donald Trump appointed to lead the U.S. government's response to the outbreak, spoke via video conference Monday with the nation's governors. Following up on that, Brown wrote to Pence, describing what the state is doing to combat the spread amid three confirmed cases and what its needs are. She asked for increased flexibility on criteria for testing for the COVID-19 virus "to better assess the burden of the disease in Oregon resulting from community spread within the state."

She expressed worry that rural hospitals and health centers could be overwhelmed if the cases spread around the state. One of the three known cases emerged Monday in Umatilla County. Public health authorities have not determined how the patient caught the virus.

"We have heard significant concerns from our small rural hospital and health practices about potential workforce shortages and their ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels should this virus spread further," Brown advised Pence.

Oregon may now have 300-500 Oregonians who are or were unknowingly carrying the coronavirus, Dean Sidelinger, a health officer and epidemiologist with the Oregon Health Authority, told reporters Monday.

Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek said the Oregon state Capitol in Salem would remain "as open and accessible as possible to the general public" and that its restrooms, door handles, railings and other high-touch areas were being thoroughly cleaned.

The Oregon Health Authority's website said test results for eight people are pending. Brown said 86 people are being monitored.

A total of 226 people completed being monitored without developing symptoms or were determined to have no risk, the health department website said.

The Center for Human Development has created a page on its website to provide the most recent information regarding the virus,

What to know about the new Coronavirus

The new coronavirus is spreading across the Pacific Northwest. Here are some basic things to know:

- Coronavirus is more severe and more contagious than the flu. Take it seriously but don't panic.
- The elderly and immune-compromised are most at risk, but everyone can get sick.
- If you are sick stay home, self-quarantine and call your doctor.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is a backup option.
- Cough into a sleeve. Wash hands after coughing. Avoid touching your face.
- Sterilize things you touch often, like computers, phones, keys and tablets.
- If you have prescriptions, call your doctor and ask for a 3 month supply in case of drug shortages.

Source: Oregon Health Authority

including a space where any confirmed cases will be recorded and announced.

"We want to make sure people know where to go to get good fact-based information about the virus," Brogiotti said. "If a Union County case is identified we will update the page with county-specific information."

She said if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed, a communicable disease nurse will conduct an investigation into whether anyone has come into contact with the person who has the virus.

COVID-19 is thought by the Centers for Disease Control to be spread through person-to-person contact. CDC stated, for most of the American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. Those who have an elevated risk of exposure include health care providers, close contacts with COVID-19 cases, such as family, and those who have traveled to international locations where widespread transmission has occurred. These countries include China, Iran, Italy and South Korea.

According to the CDC, there is no vaccine for COVID-19, and there is no medication specifically to treat it. The United States has 80 cases reported, with nine resulting in death.

— The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Call today to connect with a

SENIOR LIVING ADVISOR

INDEPENDENT LIVING • ASSISTED LIVING • MEMORY CARE

A Place for Mom has helped over a million families find senior living solutions that meet their unique needs.

There's no cost to you!

(888) 651-5669

! We're paid by our partner communities

One solution for oxygen at home, away, and for travel

Introducing the INOGEN ONE – It's oxygen therapy on your terms

No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go virtually anywhere — even on most airlines. Inogen accepts Medicare and many private insurers!

Call Inogen Today To Request Your FREE Info Kit

1-855-839-0752

Reclaim Your Freedom And Independence NOW!

inogen

© 2020 Inogen, Inc. All rights reserved. MKT-P0108

FAMILY OWNED

NORTHWEST FURNITURE & MATTRESS

215 Elm Street La Grande (541) 963-5440

northwestfurnitureandmattress.com

Like Us On Facebook