



Homelessness

Training sessions set for volunteers

■ Six trainings in all remain in March, April

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Union County Warming Station seeks volunteers and is providing training for individuals who want to extend a helping hand.

The nonprofit that operates the shelter to provide homeless people a place to get out of the cold is holding training sessions at the La Grande United Methodist Church, 1612 Fourth St. Remaining sessions for the month include Saturday, 3-6 p.m. and another Wednesday, March 25, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The organization will conduct six more training sessions in April, all at the Union County Warming Station's new location, Suite B of the building at 2208 Third St. The trainings will be April 3, 7-10 p.m.; April 9, 6-9 p.m.; April 15, 5:30-8:30 p.m.; April 18, 9 a.m. to noon; April 21, noon to 3 p.m.; and April 26, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There is no charge to attend, but the nonprofit asked volunteers to make a \$15 donation to cover the cost of background checks.

"Donations are not necessary, but they are very much appreciated," said Cami Miller, a volunteer for the Union County Warming Station.

The training sessions are open to anyone who is at least 18 years old. Everyone who wants to serve as a volunteer this year must attend one training. This includes those who served as a warming station volunteer during the winters of 2017-18 and 2018-19 after attending training sessions. Miller said there are a number of new rules in place because of the warming station's new location.

The training covers rules and regulations, food safety and techniques for calming guests who may be upset.

Miller said she hopes to have about 200 volunteers

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Legislative Emergency Board

Board OK's emergency funding

■ Legislative Emergency Board approves emergency allocations, including \$11.5 million for flood relief

By Sam Stites
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Following a feeble end to Oregon's 2020 Legislative Session, members of the legislative emergency board convened on Monday morning to allocate funding for emergencies throughout the state.

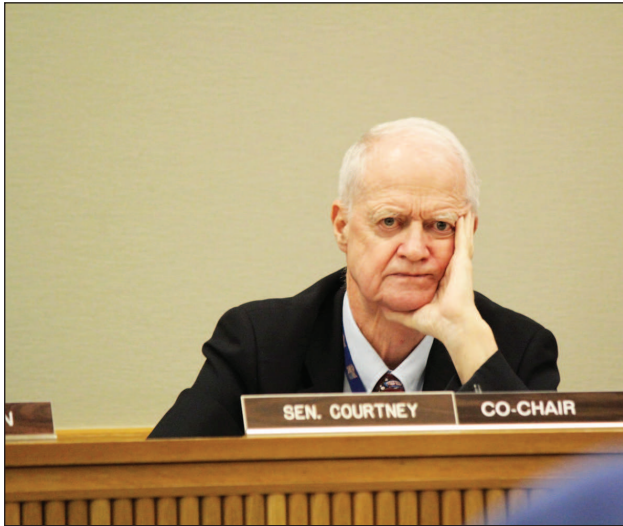
With Republicans away from the Oregon Capitol in a boycott over a bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lawmakers were unable to pass critical spending bills to address situations dealing with the

flooding in the Umatilla Basin, as well as the state's response to the continued outbreak of COVID-19.

The board, which has about \$75 million at its discretion, discussed briefly and unanimously.

The legislative Emergency Board approved emergency allocations, including \$11.5 million for flood relief in the Pendleton area, \$5 million for COVID-19 efforts, and \$2.7 million for the Office of Emergency Management to implement new

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Sam Stites/Oregon Capital Bureau

Senate President Peter Courtney listens as Legislative Fiscal Office Ken Rocco explains the breakdown of \$11.5 million in funding for Umatilla Basin flood relief.

Union United Methodist Church

HISTORIC CHURCH SOLD?

■ Potential buyer for 114-year-old Union United Methodist Church

By Sabrina Thompson, The Observer

UNION — The Union United Methodist Church went up for sale in November 2019. As of Feb. 26, there is a potential buyer for the 114-year-old building.

The nonprofit Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall has made an agreement with the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to purchase the building and turn it into a community center, pending funding.



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

The nonprofit Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall has agreed to purchase the United Methodist Church in Union. If the nonprofit organization can come up with the \$275,000 for the property, the church chapel will remain a place of worship or for weddings and funerals.

When the Union United Methodist Church disbanded in June 2019, the building fell under the control of the Conference. Former members of the church came together in February with the idea to turn the building into a non-denominational worship center and recreational hall. The group wanted to see the building remain intact and return to the community as a place for everyone to enjoy.

"It has been the backbone of our community for so long," said Terra Richter, board president of Friends of the Historic Union Community Hall. "We want to see it stay that way."

Richter and four other board members, including the church's former director Geneva Williams and Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage, went to the Conference on Feb. 26 with the idea of turning the church into a community center. The Conference agreed to give the group six months to come up with the funding to purchase the property, with the stipulation it could not become home to another denomination. The group also had to obtain 175 signatures of support, which they did within a week.

"The Conference, as a whole, is excited

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National Register of Historic Places

Historical preservation requires a balancing act

■ Modern requirements don't have to destroy a building's historical details

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande's downtown shopping district includes 82 buildings constructed prior to 1948, and Union County has 19 sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

Nearly five dozen people attended a workshop Friday at Art Center East in La Grande to learn

more about the preservation of old local buildings, which includes the home of the arts center and downtown's Liberty Theatre.

"Part of this workshop was to understand how to manage our historic buildings and keep them up so they will be around for a few hundred more years," said Cassie Hibbert, chair of the La Grande Landmarks Commission. "I think a lot of our older buildings speak to the community that we have built here. They reflect our priorities and how our community has grown."

The Northeast Oregon Preservation Workshop ran most of the day

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Charitable Giving

Eastern Oregon boosts governor's food drive

■ Students, staff of the La Grande college donate 1,019 pounds of food, \$1,435 in funding to drive

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University again made a major contribution to the annual Governor's State Employees Food Drive.

Students and staff of the La Grande college donated 1,019 pounds of food and \$1,435 in funding to the drive, which started Feb. 1 and ran through early March. The drive's money was contributed via payroll deductions and checks.

EOU sociology professor Bill

Grigsby, who helped lead the drive, said using a formula equating \$1 to a pound of food, the total donations of food and money amounted to 6,759 pounds.

"Using the state's Food Drive Committee formula, that translates into 4,732 meals," Grigsby said in an email.

The top five EOU buildings in terms of donations were: Inlow Hall, 1,863 pounds; Ackerman Hall, 1,330; Zabel Hall, 1,025; Badgley

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight
32 Low
Partly cloudy

Wednesday
54/28
Mostly sunny

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