

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Thursday, March 26, the 86th day of 2020. There are 280 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On March 26, 1945, during World War II, Iwo Jima was fully secured by U.S. forces following a final, desperate attack by Japanese soldiers.

ON THIS DATE

In 1812, an earthquake devastated Caracas, Venezuela, causing an estimated 26,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1827, composer Ludwig van Beethoven died in Vienna.

In 1911, American playwright Tennessee Williams ("The Glass Menagerie," "A Streetcar Named Desire," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof") was born in Columbus, Miss.

In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Baker v. Carr, gave federal courts the power to order reapportionment of states' legislative districts.

In 1964, the musical play "Funny Girl," starring Barbra Streisand as Fanny Brice, opened on Broadway.

In 1979, a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

In 1982, groundbreaking ceremonies took place in Washington, D.C., for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 1997, the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in California.

In 2013, Italy's top criminal court overturned the acquittal of American Amanda Knox in the grisly murder of British roommate Meredith Kercher and ordered Knox to stand trial again. (Knox was exonerated by the Italian Supreme Court in 2015.)

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$1.0 million

7-8-21-23-37-40

Mega Millions: \$107 million

2-8-16-18-31-14 x2

Powerball: \$150 million

2-23-40-59-69 — PB-13 x2

Win for Life: March 23

47-48-52-75

Pick 4: March 24

• 1 p.m.: 5-6-8-4

• 4 p.m.: 9-2-1-7

• 7 p.m.: 5-4-9-5

• 10 p.m.: 9-5-0-5

Pick 4: March 23

• 1 p.m.: 4-4-9-9

• 4 p.m.: 5-7-2-7

• 7 p.m.: 4-9-6-8

• 10 p.m.: 7-1-9-8

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Life's like a play; it's not the length but the excellence of the acting that matters."

— Seneca the Younger, Roman statesman and philosopher (3 B.C.-A.D. 65)

New channel to help keep locals informed

■ New BMTD channel may be on air in three weeks

By Dick Mason

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Union and Baker county residents who receive their television signals from the Blue Mountain Translator District soon will be closer to the pulse of the COVID-19 crisis.

The district is speeding up its effort to get a non-commercial, public access-type television channel on the air, one which will help residents of the two counties keep up with what their government is doing on the local level and receive emergency information much faster.

The district board voted Monday to begin working toward getting a public access channel operating.

District Executive Director Alex McHaddad said he and his board had planned to wait until July to get a



Submitted photo

This transmitter on Mount Fanny near Cove is part of the Blue Mountain Translator District's network, which broadcasts to Union and Baker counties. The district is moving forward to start a local channel to provide information during the coronavirus outbreak.

public access channel on the air but decided instead to do it as soon as possible due to the growing COVID-19 crisis.

"The time is right to do this," McHaddad said. "We should have it up in about three weeks. That is the goal."

The new channel will

provide live broadcasts of meetings of the county commissioners, city councils and school boards, information about emergency situations and more. Viewers will be able to watch broadcasts of these meetings on television and online via livestreaming.

McHaddad said an

increasing number of people are going to want to watch government board meetings because of COVID-19 and they will not be able to attend due to new state restrictions on prohibiting gatherings. The channel will help residents keep up with what their local government is doing. It also will help get the word out about new developments.

District board member Christina Wood said the channel would, for example, broadcast information about the local distribution of medicine for the treatment of COVID-19.

"We have to get information on the ground to everyone," Wood said. "We speeded up the pace because of this."

McHaddad said emergency service providers, including Union County and Grande Ronde Hospital, will be able to quickly share urgent messages via the public access channel.

The BMTD board will work with TelVue Corporation, a broadcast technology

firm, and Sinclair Broadcasting, in getting the new channel on the air at a cost of \$23,000. McHaddad said he hopes sponsorships will offset the cost of setting up the new channel.

He told his board Monday getting the new channel up and running will not stretch the district's budget too thin, noting its reserve fund will remain solid.

"If something blows up, the BMTD will still have the money it needs to make repairs," McHaddad said.

He said the new channel will operate at least through the COVID-19 crisis. If the channel is not self-supporting by that point, the district may shut it down until the board develops a sustainable plan.

The 2019 Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 394 makes the channel possible. The bill gives a public translator district the authority to use the technology necessary to create public access-type channels.

State extends tax deadline until July 15

■ Delaying tax income could impede fighting COVID-19

By Dick Hughes

For the Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregonians will have until July 15 to file their personal income taxes with the state, Gov. Kate Brown said Wednesday.

But any quarterly payments for 2020 still will be due on April 15.

The IRS has extended its deadline to July 15 for filing personal and corporate federal tax returns, making payments, contributing to an IRA for 2019 and making the first quarterly estimated tax payment for 2020. However, for those who making quarterly payments, the "second" payment for 2020 still is due on June 15.

Wednesday was the deadline for the Oregon Department of Revenue to announce whether it will extend the state deadline.

Brown said the Oregon Department of Revenue would provide more information later Wednesday on

the state's extension.

A full-fledged delay until July could create up to a \$1.5 billion cash-flow problem for the state budget, said Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, co-chair of the Legislature's Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response.

"That's a huge cash-flow problem, which probably takes many of the items we want to help with off the table, I'm afraid," he said during the committee meeting Tuesday.

His comments drew a strong response from Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend.

"Cash flow problems, really? The government just shut down about 90 percent of our businesses in the state of Oregon, who now have massive cash-flow problems. And the whole reason to delay the filing and payment is for them to be able to catch up," Knopp said.

"So for the government to, at this point, claim poverty or to claim cash-flow problems after what they've done to business, quite frankly just seems incredibly hypocritical."

Knopp said the deadline should be delayed so busi-

nesses could recover and have sufficient cash-flow to pay their taxes. Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, agreed and added, "I can tell you right now businesses across the state are laying off."

The committee also discussed whether to delay implementation of the new corporate activity tax as part of proposals to help businesses and individuals.

Rep. Janelle Bynum, D-Happy Valley, urged the state government to stay disciplined. "That means we find out who's in trouble and who's not. I don't want people who are doing just fine to hide behind those of us who really are struggling."

Bynum, who co-owns several fast food restaurants in the Portland area, added that she probably wouldn't have the cash to pay all her taxes.

"I'm one of those businesses that looks like it has a lot of money," she said, "but it goes out faster than I can keep it. But I'd rather be upfront about what is happening in my business, so that whatever help I need, I know what to ask for."

She suggested the Department of Revenue

offer payment plans and, if necessary, partial forgiveness instead of delaying the filing and payment deadlines.

State economists are scheduled to deliver their next economic and revenue forecasts on May 20. The projections for state tax and lottery revenues are expected to fall sharply due to coronavirus-related layoffs, reduced business operations and shutdown of video poker machines.

During a telephone press conference Tuesday, Gov. Kate Brown said already worried the state faces a huge shortfall. The Legislature likely will hold a special session next week to provide funding and make temporary changes in state law to deal with the pandemic.

Brown said she is seeking \$250 million to respond to COVID-19 along with policy changes to aid response. She also is asking for more reserves in case of a bad wildfire season.

The governor said she received information Monday about whether to change the state tax deadline and would announce a decision within the next 36-48 hours.

State issues grace period order for insurance deadlines

EO Media Group

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services issued a temporary emergency order Wednesday requiring all insurance companies to extend grace periods for premium payments, postpone policy cancellations and nonrenewals and extend deadlines for reporting claims, according to a news release from the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services.

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused widespread business closures, job losses and social distancing measures. The severe disruption to business in the state includes some Oregonians' ability to make insurance premium payments, report claims and communicate with insurance companies.

The order is effective immediately, and will be in force through at least April 23, the news release said.

Oregon governor says state may have trouble providing 'basic services'

■ Revenue woes could lead to reform for child welfare system

By Gilliam Flaccus

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Gov. Kate Brown said Tuesday that she is "gravely concerned" about Oregon's ability to deliver basic services over the next six months to a year because of the economic fallout from statewide closures, massive lay-offs by affected businesses and stay-at-home orders aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

"The bottom line ... is that we have far more needs than we have resources and the economy is tumbling down and we don't know what that will look like until we have the forecast in mid-May," she said in a conference with reporters.

"I am gravely concerned about our ability to deliver basic services over the next six months to a year given the drop in revenues and that's why I am encouraging the Legislature to be extremely fiscally prudent," Brown said.

Brown plans to call a special session of the Legislature as early as next week to earmark \$250 million for the COVID-19 response and to insure there is enough

money for the upcoming wildfire season, she said.

The full damage to Oregon's revenue won't be clear until mid-May, when the revenue forecast comes out. State lawmakers have also expressed concerns, saying a spike in unemployment means far less money coming into Oregon coffers through an income tax.

A decision on whether to push back the state's April 15 tax filing deadline for Oregon returns should come by the end of the week, she said.

Oregon's economy was booming before the arrival of COVID-19, with unemployment rates at record lows and a \$1.5 billion tax surplus. That triggered Oregon's unique "kicker" law which gave Oregonians a tax surplus credit that can be claimed on state income tax returns.

The state budget provides \$85.8 billion in total funds for the 2019-2021 biennium, an increase of \$7.8 billion — or nearly 10% — over the previous budget.

One casualty of the state's revenue woes will likely be an overhaul of the child welfare system, which came under fire for placing foster care children in out-of-state facilities where they were mistreated. Recommendations on how to reform the system that were

made in the wake of the scandal could be affected, Brown said.

Brown also said Tuesday the Oregon Medical Board had implemented emergency rules to make it easier for retired or inactive doctors and health care workers to return to the job and for volunteer-only doctors to resume working for pay.

Those who practice out-of-state can now practice in Oregon without previous restrictions.

The move could free up as many as 500 providers statewide, although it's up to individual practitioners to decide if they want to go back to work, she said.

"We've got retired folks who are willing to reactivate their licenses. You're literally putting your lives on the line to protect Oregonians and we are incredibly grateful," she said, speaking directly to health-care workers.

Brown has ordered all schools statewide to close until April 28. Restaurants and bars are also closed for dine-in service, but can offer carryout or delivery. And Brown's executive order on Monday means all Oregonians must stay at home if at all possible.

Grocery stores, pharmacies and other essential businesses will remain open during the shutdown.



WALLOWA COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

**THANKS
OUR COMMUNITY**

Your Generous Donations
are deeply appreciated !

In 2019, Wallowa County Humane Society
spent over \$21,000 in our community for animal care!

Thanks to Jennifer Cooney of the Wallowa County Chieftain for arranging for sponsors of "pet of the week" advertising, and those sponsors: Les Schwab Tires, Enterprise Animal Hospital, Carpet One, Double Arrow Veterinary Clinic, Susan Gilstrap CPA, Main Street Motors. Thanks Tim Parks of TW Bronze for donation of a bronze for a fundraising raffle which allowed WCHS to trap neuter/spay feral cats in the vicinity of Safeway, and find homes for them.

"WCHS is committed to the well-being of companion animals, working with the community for the betterment of all"

244 local pet owners received \$10 off coupons for spays/neuters at local vets. 71 fostered dogs and cats were adopted to new homes. 33 local pets found new homes though "private adoption" notices on our website. WCHS assisted two dozen lost dogs and cats to re-unite with their owners. WCHS provided financial assistance to spay/ neuter 330 pets. 336 feral cats were spayed/neutered. In 2019, WCHS received \$2,100 in grants, over \$18,000 in donations, took in \$3600 at fund-raising events.

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