



THE OBSERVER

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TUESDAY • April 7, 2020 • \$1.50 Good day to our valued subscriber Gregory Jensen of La Grande

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Updates for Tuesday

Observer staff
These are the latest local and regional developments of the coronavirus outbreak. Look for more coverage of these and other COVID-19 stories on our website, www.lagrandeobserver.com, and in subsequent issues of The Observer.

LA GRANDE

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Friends of Ladd Marsh announced Monday there will not be a Ladd Marsh Bird Festival this year.

State fish and wildlife has canceled all outdoor education events through May 31, including hunter education classes, outdoor workshops, family fishing events and the local birder festival. ODFW said the step is to protect participants, volunteers, staff and others and in compliance with the Gov. Kate Brown's executive order regarding group gatherings and social distancing.

The state rescheduled the 15th Ladd Marsh Bird Festival for May 14-16, 2021.

More information can be found on the Friends of Ladd Marsh Facebook page.

ISLAND CITY

Walmart on Saturday began limiting the number of customers who can be in a store at one time. Stores will now allow no more than five customers for each 1,000 square feet at a given time, roughly 20% of a store's capacity.

Once a store reaches its capacity, customers will be admitted on a one-out, one-in basis. The company also announced it will institute one-way movement through store aisles in a number of stores, using floor markers and direction from associates.



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Travis Hansen, a co-owner of Side A Brewing, La Grande, works in his restaurant's kitchen early Monday afternoon. Side A is among the restaurants preparing dinners this month for children in Union County.

Program helps keep kids fed

Local restaurants help — and benefit from — Kids Immediate Dinner Solutions

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — The doors to their dining rooms may be closed, but this is not preventing Union County restaurant owners from opening their hearts to hundreds of local children during the COVID-19 crisis.

The restaurant owners are a key part of a new program run by Emergency Equipment Solutions, a non-profit emergency response organization that is providing free dinners to children this April throughout Union County while schools are closed due COVID-19. The program, Kids Immediate Dinner Solutions — KIDS — delivers a free dinner each week to any child in

the county age 12 or younger whose family requests one.

Those supporting KIDS include the La Grande McDonald's, which is donating 1,000 eight-ounce cartons of milk each week, and Spring Roberts, the owner of Le Bebe Cakes Bakery Coffee House of La Grande, who helped found the program and is one of its leaders.

"She is playing an integral role," said Valerie Odai of Elgin, a leader of Emergency Equipment Solutions.

Odai said the objective of KIDS is two-fold — to help children and local restaurants during the COVID-19 crisis.

She said children need help because although government programs are doing an excellent job of

providing free lunches and breakfasts for youths, they are not able to provide dinners.

"We want to fill this gap," Odai said.

KIDS also is providing dinners to the children of health care professionals and first responders. Children age 12 and under are also being provided one free dinner a week. This is being done to relieve their parents of some of the added stress they are experiencing during the COVID-19 crisis, Roberts said.

Certified teachers are volunteering to deliver all the KIDS meals weekdays between 3 and 7 p.m. Roberts said that makes sure

See, KIDS/Page 5A

Despite dire situation, some still hope for the best

People in other nations share observations of living life in a COVID-19 world

By Kathy Aney
EO Media Group

PENDLETON — We are not alone.

In almost every other country in the world, people are experiencing pandemic and the restrictions and terror that come with it. The EO Media Group reached out to individuals in Italy, France, Japan, Madagascar and Panama to get a snapshot of what people around the

world are experiencing in a time of COVID-19.

David Newport, Akashi, Japan

Former EO Media Group page designer David Newport now lives in Akashi, Japan. The home he shares with his wife and three young daughters is a 45-minute train ride from Osaka.

As a translator for the Ida Corporation, he spent

the first two weeks of the country's coronavirus outbreak translating closure announcements for hotels and restaurants. He said the prime minister quickly closed schools and asked residents to refrain from unnecessary outings. Japan, he said, has so far avoided the explosive outbreaks of Italy and the U.S.

Large attractions, such as Tokyo Disneyland and Universal Studios Japan, are shuttered. Sumo wrestling matches were held

See, Share/Page 5A



EO Media Group photo by Kathy Aney

Nick'ii Scott, of Madagascar, worked as a tour guide on the island nation until coronavirus brought tourism to a standstill.

Sewing masks to slow the coronavirus

La Grande Quilt Shop owner spurs mask-making initiative

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A local business is doing what it can to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The La Grande Quilt Shop, owned by Patti Anderson, recently began putting together kits and providing instructions to any individual who wants

to make reusable face masks.

"We had people asking us if we had stuff to make masks," such as elastic, fabric and interfacing, Anderson said.

The outreach sparked concern for Anderson and the staff at the quilt shop.

"We quickly realized people were going to start

making masks, and they might not be the best to make safe (masks)," she said. "We were concerned people would have this false sense of security with wearing masks (not made with the proper materials)."

Anderson, who is a friend of the owner of Washington quilt shop The Fabric Patch, learned of their crusade not only to provide the needed materials to make high-quality masks, but also patterns.

Anderson tracked down as much material as possible, from fabric to a non-woven interfacing to metal for nose pieces to elastic.

"We started cutting kits, and we're still cutting kits," Anderson said.

The interfacing material has fibers that keep coronavirus germs from passing through.

"They are better than just cloth alone," she

See, Masks/Page 5A

By the numbers*

Worldwide cases: 1,214,466
Worldwide deaths: 67,767
U.S. cases: 330,891
U.S. deaths: 8,910
Oregon cases: 1,132
Oregon deaths: 29
Union County cases: 3
Union County deaths: 0
Wallowa County cases: 1
Wallowa County deaths: 0

*As of 3 p.m. Monday, April 6. Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oregon

ACE will remain open

Fundraising efforts keep art center operating during virus outbreak

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Art Center East is staying open through April.

The La Grande arts center in March closed as a response to COVID-19 measures. Shutting the doors meant cutting off its main source of funding. The center reached out to the community to help raise money to pay for utilities, insurance and general operational costs.

People answered, with donations exceeding \$18,000.

More than \$10,000 came from a fundraiser initiated by Don Gray.

Gray is a former arts center board member, former resident of La Grande and a painter. He sold 30 paintings on his website and through a link on the ACE website, with 100% of the proceeds going toward helping the center.

"When I heard about ACE's struggles, it occurred to me that, while I don't have deep pockets for a large donation, I do have paintings available," Gray said.

Community donations brought in another \$8,700 directly to the center.

ACE is using all of the donations into pay for utilities and insurance to minimally maintain operations during the closure. To further save money, the center has furloughed all employees with hopes of bringing employees back in May.

"The reasoning for this decision is that currently ACE cannot earn income," the center stated in a news release.

The center had planned to rent out studios, but plumbing issues led the city to shut off water to the site, which means no one

See, ACE/Page 5A

INDEX

Table with 3 columns: Classified, Horoscope, Opinion, Comics, Letters, Sports, Crossword, Lottery, Sudoku, Dear Abby, Obituaries, Weather, Home.

WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
31 LOW
Clear and cold



Wednesday
61/32
Mostly sunny

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.