

## COMMUNITY

## Meetings

• **LA GRANDE** — The Blue Mountain Translator District Board of Directors will stream its meeting Tuesday on the district's Facebook page, and the public may participate via phone (conference number: 669-900-6833; meeting ID: 923089732). The meeting begins at 10 a.m. The board packet is available at [www.bmtd.org/public-notice](http://www.bmtd.org/public-notice).

## Briefs

**Senior center lowers cost of takeout lunches**

**LA GRANDE** — The cost for takeout lunches at the Union County Senior Center has been reduced to \$5 for people younger than 60. The cost for seniors remains \$3. For the time being, lunches are available for pickup 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. weekdays at the center, 1504 N. Albany St., La Grande. To make arrangements for delivery call 541-963-7532 before 10 a.m.

**City fire hydrant testing underway**

**LA GRANDE** — The city of La Grande began a semi-annual fire hydrant testing and maintenance program April 1. Testing is expected to take place Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Public Works conducts these tests to identify the quantity of water available for firefighting purposes and to rid the city's water distribution system of accumulations of sedimentation deposits.

Residents who experience any unusual water clarity problems after the hydrants are flushed are advised to turn on a cold-water outside faucet and let it run 10-15 minutes. This will normally clear up the agitated water from the service line to the home. You can call the La Grande Public Works Department at 541-962-1325 if you have further problems.

**Online libraries available for free**

**LA GRANDE** — TumbleBooks has made its family of online libraries available for free until at least Aug. 31, according to a news release from the La Grande library. The flagship product, TumbleBookLibrary ([www.tumblebooklibrary.com](http://www.tumblebooklibrary.com)), is a collection of animated talking picture books, read-alongs, ebooks, quizzes, lesson plans and educational games. Other collections include TumbleMath, Teen-BookCloud, AudioBookCloud and RomanceBookCloud.

To access the TumbleBooks collections, and for a growing list of other free offerings, go to [www.cookmemoriallibrary.org](http://www.cookmemoriallibrary.org) and follow the "Things To Do When Bored" link on the homepage. For more information about this and other library services, contact the library at 541-962-1339.

**Strengthen your health with free four-week challenge**

**LA GRANDE** — Nature's Pantry and Mountain Valley Fitness and Health are sponsoring a free four-week "Vibrant You" health challenge. Learn how to put into practice the building-block habits of health and to strengthening your overall health. The entire challenge can be done on your own and all meetings and classes will be streamed live.

The challenge will run April 19-May 16. Registration must be completed by April 13. To sign up, call Nature's Pantry at 541-963-7955 or stop by the store, 1907 Fourth St., La Grande. The livestreamed launch meeting is planned for April 16 at 6 p.m.

The program will feature instruction by health and fitness professionals, meal plans, virtual cooking and exercise classes and more.



**Upcoming local services are pending due to efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus.**

# Work begins to add third lane in Ladd Canyon

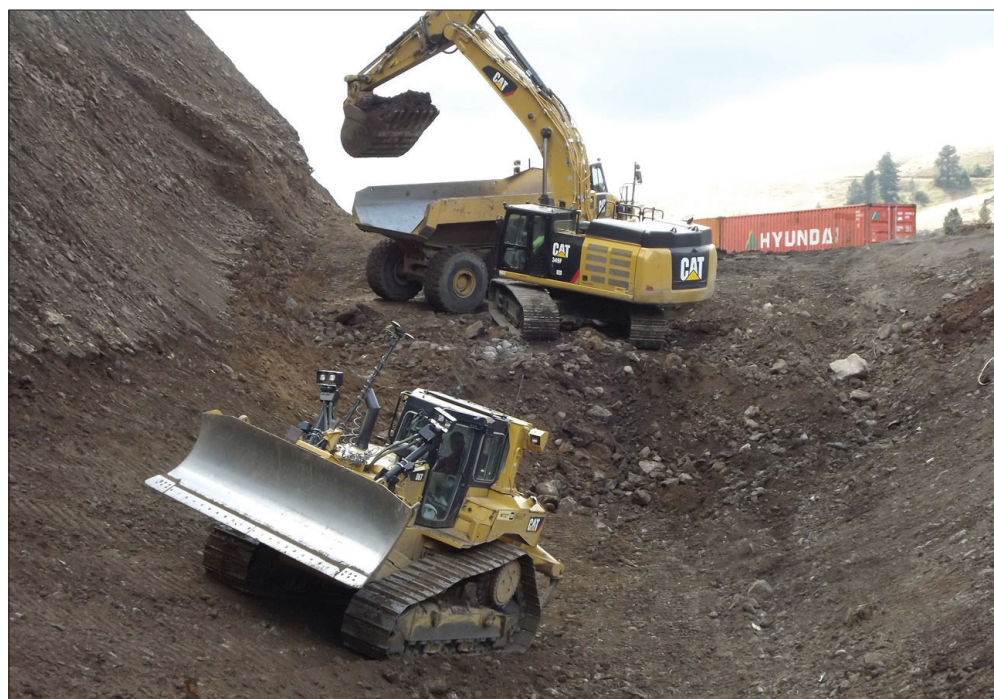
## ■ Crews adhere to COVID-19 protections

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — Oregon Department of Transportation crews and contractors are beginning work on a project that will significantly dull the troubles caused by jackknifed trucks in Ladd Canyon.

ODOT is starting work on the final phase of the \$30 million Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project. It calls for the installation of a 1.5-mile-long eastbound lane starting from the west entrance of Ladd Canyon. It will run from milepost 269.5 to 271.

The expanded space should reduce the number of times the state road agency has to close the freeway through Ladd Canyon for trucks blocking lanes after jackknifing or stalling, said ODOT spokesman Tom Strandberg. He said if a truck crashes in the future on the three-lane road, traffic will be able to move around while crews clear the



Observer file photo

The Oregon Department of Transportation's excavation work in September 2019 creates a new channel for Brush Creek as part of the Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project. The work now moves into adding a third lane through that stretch of Interstate 84 near La Grande.

wreck. Now when this happens, the freeway often must be closed.

Preliminary work on the installation of the third lane will be conducted over the next two weeks. There will be some lane closures during this time in the work zone.

"There will be a lot of activity through the canyon during this week, so please do drive with caution," said ODOT's Mike Remily, manager of Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project. He said the work this spring will involve blasting and earthwork.

"They will be building up the base for the third lane," he said.

A 50 mph speed limit will be in place from now until the project wraps this fall.

Strandberg said ODOT employees and contractors will be adhering to

COVID-19 prevention guidelines, including social distancing.

"They understand how critical these requirements are," Strandberg said.

He said a number of precautions will be relatively easy for workers to adhere to because much of the work involves driving inside the cabs of equipment.

The project is resuming after starting in April 2019, when crews widened the shoulders of the east- and westbound lanes of Interstate 84 for 10 miles between La Grande and Ladd Canyon, removed a bridge and installed a concrete box-like culvert large enough to accommodate semitrailers. Eliminating the bridge was beneficial because it tended to get icy.

Strandberg explained bridges usually freeze first because they are sandwiched between cold air.

The adjacent road freezes later because only its top surface is exposed to frigid air while the bottom remains insulated in soil.

Strandberg said ODOT later will collect data to determine the effects the new culvert is having on road closures.

## Schools launch distance learning effort

### ■ Website aims to serve as one-stop-shop for La Grande students in all grades

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — The La Grande School District is launching a website to help its students go the distance this spring.

The website lays the framework for the district's new distance education program. La Grande, like all public school districts in Oregon, must start a distance education program by April 13 under a directive from the Oregon Department of Education. It came two weeks after Gov. Kate Brown ordered all school districts closed due to COVID-19.

The new website at [www.lagrandesd.org/distancelearning](http://www.lagrandesd.org/distancelearning) provides students with class assignments, information on turning them in and other resources. Scott Carpenter, the district's director of educational programs, said the website aims to provide students with all they need to learn at a distance.

While students can submit their work remotely, they also have the option of turning in work at their schools, which are open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays during the closure. The district also encouraged stu-

dents to submit their work weekly rather than at the end of the closure. Carpenter said this will help the learning process because subject matter builds on earlier lessons.

"Learning happens in sequence," Carpenter said.

Teachers will be required to acknowledge receipt of coursework via phone calls, emails or other means.

La Grande High School teachers are to enter all graded classwork into the Synergy software system. This will provide students with a clear picture of how they are progressing toward course completion and where they stand in terms of earning education credits. Teachers also will be available to answer student questions each weekday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. via phone, email or media platforms.

"They have multiple formats for communicating with teachers," Carpenter said.

District educators are reviewing curriculum tools and online resources. Those resources would not be part of the curriculum but could provide families and students with additional opportunities to learn.

Teachers will share

packets electronically with families via a number of sources depending on their students' grade level. Hard copies of curriculum packets will be available for pickup on Tuesdays between 7:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the schools students are attending. Parents also will be able to pick up the packets.

Students in kindergarten through sixth grade will work 30 minutes per school day in reading, writing and math each. Seventh through 12th graders will have about 30 minutes of homework per course. The homework some La Grande High School social studies students received over the past week including reviewing the definition and purpose of an executive order.

Writing assignments fifth graders were given included editing sentences like this: "hans christian anderson a writer for young children was born on April 2 1805."

The website states families can expect communication by phone or mail from teachers twice a week to discuss homework and answer questions. Elementary school students will be contacted by their classroom teachers. Middle school and high school teachers will be contacted by their homeroom teachers.

## — PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT —

## FRIDAY

9:14 a.m. — An Elgin caller on the 73500 block of Gordon Creek Road asked for a Union County sheriff's deputy regarding ongoing trespassing. The deputy made contact and will do follow up.

10:45 a.m. — La Grande police and a Union County sheriff's deputy responded to the 1400 block of Balm Street for a domestic disturbance. Officers separated the parties.

The Union County Sheriff's Office arrested Jace Darrell Clark, 28, of La Grande, for violating probation, nine counts of fraudulent use of a credit card and 18 counts of identity theft.

7:44 p.m. — La Grande police responded to a report of a fight on the 2300 block of Island Avenue. Officers separated the parties.

## SATURDAY

3:13 a.m. — A La Grande caller complained about noise on the 1100 block of Benton Avenue. Police responded and resolved the problem.

3:24 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of a vehicle theft on the 700 block of N Avenue.

12:35 p.m. — La Grande police received a complaint about a dog bite. The animal enforcement officer responded and took a report.

3:40 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1300 block of X Avenue for a domestic disturbance. Officers resolved the situation.

3:39 p.m. — A caller on the 1900 block of Z Avenue, La Grande, reported vandalism to a vehicle. A Union County sheriff's deputy took a report.

7:37 p.m. — An Elgin caller on the 300 block of North 10th Avenue reported a theft. A Union County sheriff's deputy took a report.

10:03 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 3200 block of Umatilla Street for an assault. The subject did not want to go forward with a case.

## SUNDAY

12:16 a.m. — La Grande police cited a 15- and a 17-year-old for unauthorized entry into a vehicle, unauthorized use of a vehicle, conspiracy to commit vehicle theft and interfering with making a report.

Oregon State Police arrested Simon Peter Gross, 33, of Marlin, Washington, on accusations of driving under the influence of intoxicants..

1:47 p.m. — A La Grande resident on the 1600 block of Washington Avenue asked to speak to an officer regarding harassment. An officer responded, found out the situation involved a landlord and tenant and advised the person to go through the civil deputy with the Union County Sheriff's Office.

2:59 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a report of possible animal abuse at Courtney Lane and Highway 82, Summer-ville. The animal enforcement officer will follow up.

4:20 p.m. — A La Grande caller on the 1600 block of Washington Avenue reported receiving harassing phone calls.

7:56 p.m. — A La Grande resident on the 3200 block of Alder Street reported harassment. An officer responded and will follow up.

## OBITUARIES

### Robert P. Clemens

Formerly of Union and La Grande • 1936-2020

Robert Peter Clemens, 83, formerly of Union and La Grande, died March 19 at his home in Meridian, Idaho.



Known as Bob, he was born Aug. 9, 1936, in Loma Linda, California, to Elton Clarence Sr. and Francica Adelina (Espinoza) Clemens. He spent his early years in Burns, where he learned much about horses, cattle and ranching from his uncle Buck Clemens.

Bob's family moved to Union, where he attended Union High School, graduating in 1964. At UHS he was very active in sports, and it was there he met his future wife, Virginia Ann

Westenskow. Bob and Ann were married in the Logan LDS Temple on April 14, 1955, and Bob remained an active member throughout his life.

Bob and Ann raised three sons, David, Lyle and Dean, and one daughter, Shelley. They established their home in La Grande in 1959. Bob loved his children dearly.

In 1957, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Army and served his country honorably. Following his military service, he developed Clemens Contracting and had much success building homes throughout Eastern Oregon.

After retiring, Bob and Ann served a mission for the LDS Church in Galveston, Texas, where Bob's outgoing nature made him a beloved missionary. They also commuted to Boise to serve faithfully as ordinance workers in the Boise Idaho Temple.

Bob developed a love of flying, and after obtaining his personal pilot's license, he enjoyed flying his Cessna over the Blue Mountains. He had a talent for working with his hands and was often fixing or building something in his shop. Bob had an amazing work ethic and taught his children the value of hard work. A gifted storyteller, he mesmerized his children and grandchildren with detailed memories from his past.

Bob loved the outdoors and was an avid hunter and fisherman. He enjoyed having a small ranch of cattle and horses. For several summers, he organized and led his family on pack trips into the Eagle Cap Wilderness. He also took several of the local Scouts on high adventure trips into North Minam Meadows.

Surviving relatives include his wife of 64 years, Ann, of Meridian,

Idaho; sister, Shirley Brinkhoff of Vancouver, Washington; daughter-in-law, Sheri Clemens; sons and daughters-in-law, Lyle and Rhonda of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Dean and Michelle of Star, Idaho; daughter and son-in-law, Shelley and Erich Sontag of Eden, Utah; and 13 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; siblings, Elton Jr. and Theda; and eldest son, David.

### Dorothy Robertson

La Grande

Dorothy Robertson, 90, of La Grande, died April 3 at her residence. Arrangements by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

### Penelope Paul

La Grande

Penelope Paul, 77, of La Grande, died April 5 at her residence. Arrangements by

Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

### Terrence Huffman

La Grande

Terrence Huffman, 81, of La Grande, died April 6 at Grande Ronde Hospital. Arrangements by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

### Wilfred 'Willie' Hamann

La Grande

Wilfred "Willie" Hamann, 96, of La Grande, died April 2 at his home. Arrangements by Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.

### Anita Daffer

La Grande

Anita Daffer, 87, of La Grande, died April 5 at Grande Ronde Hospital. Arrangements by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.



Nicole Cathey

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