

## TOLAN

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his first 20 years at Island City Elementary. He next taught physical education at Central and Willow elementary schools for 1-1/2 years before taking the principal position. Tolan said Island City Elementary and its community have been a perfect fit because of the support he has received from his school's staff and community.

"It has been such a wonderful place for me that I have never wanted to go anywhere else," Tolan said. "It has been a home away from home."

Mark Mulvihill, superintendent of the InterMountain Education Service District, which serves the La Grande School District, said Tolan is deserving of the salute.

"John is the type of educator this award is meant for," Mulvihill said. "I'm thrilled for John and the La Grande School District."

Mendoza said Tolan's ability to connect positively with those around him has contributed to the excellent culture and school climate at Island City Elementary.

"His mentorship of staff and administration, as well as his sense of humor and positive demeanor, has helped our district build strong relationships with staff, students, families and our community," Mendoza said in a news release. "John Tolan is very deserving of this award and recognition for the many lives he has impacted."

Under Tolan's guidance and leadership, the scores of Island City students on state assessment tests have been strong, attendance rates have risen, and chronic absenteeism rates have declined, according to COSA. In the 2018-19 school year, Island City Elementary was rated on its state report card as "High" in academic progress.

The recent state award is far from the first salute Tolan has received. Honors he has received include the Union County Chamber of Commerce's 1997 Union County Educator of the Year award, Island City's 2008 citizen of the year award and the 2014 Apple Eyecare Fred Award for community service.

When Tolan retires at the end of June, Brett Smith will succeed him at Island City Elementary. Smith is completing his second year as the La Grande High School's assistant principal.

Tolan said he and his are looking forward to spending more time with their grandchildren and traveling after he retires.

## CASES

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the virus.

After someone contracts COVID-19, illness usually develops 2-14 days after exposure. The primary symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you have trouble breathing or feel very ill, consider con-

tacting your healthcare provider. Those considered "high risk" include adults 60 and older, or anyone with a serious health condition, including lung or heart problems, kidney disease, or diabetes, or anyone who has a suppressed immune system.

Many recover at home without seeing a health care provider. Individuals

who feel very ill should seek appropriate care as follows:

- If it is an emergency, call 911.

- If it is not an emergency but you feel sick enough to need a medical appointment, call your doctor's office. Let your health care provider know you are concerned about COVID-19 before you visit.

- If you do not have a doctor or need help finding a clinic call 211 for a list of clinics near you.

And every resident should take these basic steps to protect those most at risk:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with

unwashed hands.

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

- If you have to go into public, wear a cloth face cover.

- Stay home if you feel ill.

Additional information can be found by visiting [www.chdinc.org/covid19](http://www.chdinc.org/covid19) or calling 211 or 971-673-1111.

# Oregon Air National Guard ready to fly

By Dick Hughes

For the Oregon Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — In times of war, Oregon Air National Guard's citizen-airmen and airwomen may fly fighter missions abroad, infiltrate hostile territory to establish airfields or go behind enemy lines to rescue downed pilots and crews.

Within the U.S., they put those skills to use assisting with search-and-rescue missions in the Pacific Northwest, preparing for the Cascadia earthquake and responding to such disasters as hurricanes and the 2007 flood in Vernonia. They also have helped with Oregon's coronavirus response.

And 24 hours a day, they guard America's skies from Northern California to the Canadian border.

That wide-ranging mission is reflected in a new designation for about 1,400 members of the Oregon Air National Guard: 142nd Wing. However, the mis-



Photo courtesy of Oregon Military Department

Members of the Oregon Air National Guard 142nd Wing stand during a presentation. The 142nd counts 1,400 members in all.

sion remains the same.

The wing, based at Portland Air National Guard Base, has flown fighter missions since World War II and currently operates F-15 Eagle fighter jets.

"We are still fully committed to flying fighters, and we'll continue to excel in that mission area," said Col. Adam Sittler, wing commander.

The 142nd Wing also includes one of only two Air National Guard special tactics squadrons in the nation, which is why the old name of 142nd Fighter Wing was outdated.

Special tactics airmen and airwomen are "amazingly well-suited" for a range of complex tasks, Sittler said. They include air traffic controllers, weather

### HISTORY OF THE 142ND FIGHTER WING

- The 142nd Wing has been redesignated numerous times since the unit's founding:
- July 1943 — 371st Fighter Group
- May 1946 — 142nd Fighter Group
- April 1951 — 142nd Fighter-Interceptor Group
- August 1961 — 142nd Fighter Group
- October 1972 — 142d Fighter-Interceptor Group
- March 1992 — 142nd Fighter Group
- October 1995 — 142nd Fighter Wing
- March 2020 — 142nd Wing
- Retrospective video of 142nd Wing: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/746052/142nd-fighter-wing-re-designates-142nd-wing>

forecasters, communication specialists and pararescue experts. They are trained to operate in hostile territory and behind enemy lines.

The wing's members, which includes 450 who are full-time, come from Oregon and Southwest Washington.

"We're here. We're part of the community. A great majority of our members have grown up here. They've gone to high school here or college here," Sittler said.

Oregon National Guard units have been deployed

around the world for combat, peacekeeping or humanitarian missions. As with the rest of the National Guard, Oregon's air and army units serve both the state and the nation. "Not only do we report to President Trump but we also report to Gov. Brown," Master Sgt. Steven Conklin said.

The Oregon Air National Guard also includes the Klamath Falls-based 270th Air Traffic Control Squadron and 173rd Fighter Wing, which trains F-15 pilots.

# Grande Ronde Hospital opens second location for COVID-19 cases

By Sabrina Thompson

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital Pavilion is set to become a secondary care location for residents of Union County. Though not operational yet, equipment is on site in case the hospital were to receive an influx of patients due to the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"As we had begun to see the modeling and surge numbers coming from the state — we took action," said Elaine LaRochelle, director of facilities at Grande Ronde Hospital. "GRH initiated the Hospital Incident Command System per our Emergency Operations Plan. Rather than wait to pull it together if we need it, we have the site ready to go."

The site cannot provide treatment now. LaRochelle and Annette Powers from the Northeast



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Local officials selected Grande Ronde Hospital Pavilion, La Grande, as a secondary care site for residents of Union County during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Oregon Joint Information Center said there is not yet a need for it. When operating, the location

will separate employees and patients and allow for proper air flow exchange and any medical and com-

puter equipment needs on the ground floor.

Grande Ronde spokesperson Mardi Ford said

the hospital is set up to treat 60-75 patients during the crisis, and the GRH Pavilion adds space for another 60-75. The pavilion would provide a transitional space for patients who are no longer critical but not well enough to go home, Ford said. Those who need medical care at a higher level will remain at the hospital intensive care unit and medical surgical unit.

Powers said getting supplies and equipment took working with partners and making requests to state officials. Additional cots, blankets and medical supplies were brought to Union County by the National Guard, and Snake River Correctional Institution, the state's medium security prison in Ontario, provided a mobile kitchen and refrigerated trailer for food storage to be utilized at the secondary site.

## LIFELINES

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business owners has been quite positive.

"They are very appreciative of the outreach," he said.

He noted many had not been fully aware of all of the help available, something he hopes the phone call campaign can change.

"Our primary purpose has been to make sure they have links to the resources they need," Strobe said.

### Two key programs

The Payroll Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, both through the Small Business Association, are key programs for funding.

The PPP provides loans to businesses for keeping employees on their payroll. If they are able to keep the employees on their payroll for eight weeks the loan becomes forgivable if it was spent only on payroll, rent, a mortgage, interest or utilities. The program allocates up to 2.25 times the monthly payroll of a business. Smith said businesses that laid employees off prior to the availability of the PPP are eligible if they commit to bringing those employees back.



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

The city of La Grande, Union County Chamber of Commerce and Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center have been assisting businesses throughout La Grande and Union County in how they can attain funding during the coronavirus outbreak.

The loan has to be applied for through a bank.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program takes just 30 minutes to apply for. Smith said the EIDL "provides up to an immediate \$10,000 grant to businesses who are willing

to self verify immediate economic harm. Folks can go onto the SBA website and fill out an application."

He explained the economic harm businesses have to claim to receive the EIDL is essentially accepted on the appli-

cant's word, basically on an honors system. Businesses that apply are "eligible for this 10K grant, plus (will) be eligible to apply for up to \$2 million in short-term funding and financing to get through the coming months," Smith said.

### Local loan program

The city of La Grande also launched its own Emergency Loan Program in response to the measures to control the outbreak. Through the program, business can receive a loan of up to \$10,000 at 1% interest with deferred payments and interest for the first six months. Money for the loans will come from the city's general fund contingency.

The loans will have a 48-month payback term. To be eligible, businesses must be located within the La Grande city limits, have had 50 or fewer employees when operating at full scale, and were generally stable or strong prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

The city initially announced businesses could apply for the loans this week. Strobe said the city extended the deadline to April 16 to give more businesses an opportunity to apply and to allow those who submitted incomplete applications the chance to

turn in documents meeting the city's standards for consideration.

### Business owners feeling uncertain

Union County Chamber of Commerce executive director Suzannah Moore-Hemann said the chamber has reached out to more than 400 businesses in Union County to help them understand the application process for the federal loans and connect them with the appropriate resources.

"They do not know when they will have a revenue stream again," she said. "There is a lot of uneasiness, I guess, a lot of wanting to make sure they take care of their employees and families"

System backlogs, she added, also are causing additional stress.

"We heard from one business, they turned in theirs, and they were No. 6,000 to turn in a loan that day," Moore-Hemann said. "She obviously was pretty distraught over that."

Smith said business owners are expressing an uncertainty about what is coming, calling it "optimism that this is going to turnaround shortly," but added "with that anxiety is the concern of what if it doesn't."

Moore-Hemann said

there is anxiety among the business owners she's met with, who are unsure of the steps they want to — or can — take.

"We've heard some say 'I don't know if I can reopen. Bills are still coming, income is not coming,'" she said. "We've heard some say 'I don't want to take a loan out right now.'"

Some business owners, she said, expressed reservations about seeking loans because they have little money coming in and do not know when they will, because it is not known when COVID-19 restrictions will end. Business owners are leery of loans because they do not want to be saddled with payments before they have funds to pay them.

The overarching message, she said, is businesses "really need this to end, really need support (and are) really nervous."

Smith said the state government still is waiting to learn how much money Oregon will get from the CARES Act before determining it will be able to give struggling businesses.

"We're trying to figure that out, and then were trying to figure out what are the conditions that go with that money," Smith said.