

Elgin Stampede canceled

In Sports



RE-ELECT BOYD RASMUSSEN
for
SHERIFF



Russel & Patty Bingaman, Dave & Zee Koza, Brent & Donna Huntsman

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

THE OBSERVER



Follow us on the web

THURSDAY • May 14, 2020 • \$1.50 Good day to our valued subscriber Sara Williamson of La Grande

Cemetery upgrades almost finished in La Grande

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A La Grande Cemetery District project half a decade in the making is less than six weeks from becoming a striking reality.

The cemetery district is completing significant additions to Hillcrest and Grandview cemeteries. Two columbariums for ash niches have been installed at Hillcrest Cemetery and the district is in the process of creating a columbarium center at Grandview Cemetery, which should be finished in June, said Sue Anderson, manager of the

La Grande Cemetery District.

"This is very exciting," said Anderson, who said she has been working on the project for five years.

The new center at Grandview will have two columbariums and a gazebo on the south side of the cemetery. One columbarium was installed Monday and the second will be put in next month. Each is made of granite, weighs 10,300 pounds and has 72 niches for cremains. The center has concrete pads for both columbariums, which are being installed by Memorial Monuments, based in Meridian,

Idaho, and with a La Grande office.

The gazebo, which will have a roof and be 12 feet by 18 feet, is being built by M.L. Construction of Sherwood and should be completed in a week. The gazebo will provide a place for small services and a site for people to sit and reflect, Anderson said.

The columbariums at Hillcrest are on the western edge of the cemetery. Each has 48 niches, weigh 7,800 pounds and both are accompanied by new metal benches on concrete pads.

Anderson said the columbariums fill an important need at Hill-

crest because no cemetery plots are available there. This is a concern to many people who want to be buried with their families.

The new columbariums make it possible for people to reserve space and ensure their cremains will be interred in the same cemetery as their family members.

The columbarium center at Grandview will complement a mausoleum about 300 feet to the east. The mausoleum has niches for ashes and crypt chambers. The mausoleum, built in the 1970s, has

See, Cemetery/Page 5A

COVID-19 by the numbers*

Worldwide cases: 4,179,479
Worldwide deaths: 287,525
U.S. cases: 1,364,061
U.S. deaths: 82,246
Oregon cases: 3,416
Oregon deaths: 134
Total Oregon tests: 83,909
Union County cases: 4
Union County active cases: 1
Union County deaths: 0
Total Union County negative tests: 180
Wallowa County cases: 1
Wallowa County active cases: 0
Wallowa County deaths: 0
Total Wallowa County negative tests: 55

*As of 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 13. Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Military Department



Staff photo by Dick Mason

La Grande Drive-in manager Patty Johnson works Wednesday morning to prepare the venue for its opening this weekend. The drive-in will adhere to strict social distancing rules, including prohibiting viewing the movie from lawn chairs or the beds of pickups.

Coming soon — real soon

■ La Grande Drive-in opens Friday with social distancing rules and vehicle limit at 125 per show

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A time-less symbol of a bygone era will have a starring role on the La Grande entertainment scene this weekend.

The La Grande Drive-in theater will provide movie fans their first opportunity in two months to see a film in a social venue when it opens for its 2020 season Friday. There have been no public

showings of movies in Union County since Gov. Kate Brown's stay-home order in March in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Patty Johnson, manager of the La Grande Drive-in, said interest in the venue's opening has been higher than in recent years.

"People have been calling us since mid-April asking us when are we going to open," said Johnson, noting that such calls don't usually start until a number

of weeks later.

The La Grande Drive-in will be open at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday for one showing each evening of "Onward," a computer-animated urban fantasy adventure film produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios. The film was released in late February and was popular nation-

ally, grossing about \$100 million before theaters were shut down due to the COVID-19 crisis. Johnson described "Onward" as a family friendly movie.

"We always try to start with a kids' film to get families to come," said Johnson, who said all showings will begin at dusk.

See, Drive-in/Page 5A

"People have been calling us since mid-April asking us when are we going to open."

Patty Johnson, manager of the La Grande Drive-in

Virtual sports gain traction at EOU

■ New esports team has 27 members and is under the oversight of student organizations

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — They don't use a bat, a glove or a hoop. They don't kick balls into goals, throw them into endzones, or sprint to a finish line.

But members of the Eastern Oregon University esports team, which officially formed over the last year, are able to have some of the same experiences — victory, defeat and learning to overcome — that traditional athletics provides, according to esports assistant coach Ethan Melville.

"More than winning, it's these moments that make sports as beneficial to personal development as they are," Melville said in an email. "And though they

See, Esports/Page 5A

Stay-home order means more time for hobbies

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Gov. Kate Brown's executive order to stay home to curb the spread of the COVID-19 is giving folks the opportunity to pick up new hobbies.

Joyce Hoke, owner of Joyful Sounds Studio, La Grande, was doing online classes before the isolation orders began, so it hasn't been as difficult of a transition. However, Hoke said there are challenges to teaching music online.

"We have to listen to each other even more," Hoke said. "I can't point to the notes, but I can still play the piano for them and help them find it that way."

Several new students have joined her in virtual music lessons, and

those who were already taking classes told her having music continue to be a part of their life has helped them during this time of isolation.

See, Hobbies/Page 5A

INDEX

Business..... 1B Dear Abby..... 8B Opinion..... 4A
Classified..... 3B Horoscope... 5B Sports..... 7A
Comics..... 7B Lottery..... 2A Sudoku..... 7B
Crossword... 5B Obituaries... 3A Weather..... 8B

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 40 LOW A thundershower
Friday 62/36 Partly sunny

CONTACT US

541-963-3161
Issue 58
3 sections, 20 pages
La Grande, Oregon
Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.

SATURDAY REOPENING DEVELOPMENTS

Online at lagrandeobserver.com

CODY BOWEN



FOR SHERIFF

"Better Relationships for Safer Communities"

Please remember to check your registration status and vote



Paid for by committee to elect Cody Bowen.



8 51153 00100 6