



# Sweet Sourdough

# THE OBSERVER


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TUESDAY • May 19, 2020 • \$1.50 Good day to our valued subscriber Sherry Sherman of La Grande

**RE-ELECT BOYD RASMUSSEN**  
 for  
**SHERIFF**  
 Paid for by committee to Re-elect Boyd Rasmussen.  
**Ralph Patterson, Glenn & Anita McIntosh, Pam Glenn**



## Union County reaches six cases of COVID-19

The Observer  
 UNION COUNTY — Union County has another case of COVID-19. The Center for Human Development Inc. in a press release Monday morning confirmed the county's sixth case of the coronavirus.

"This case was a contact to a confirmed case," according to the press release. The nonprofit that serves as the county's public health agency also reported it is conducting a contact investigation and will reach out to anyone this new case may have

come into contact with. The center reported the county's fifth case on Friday, the same day local businesses had approval to enter Gov. Kate Brown's first phase of reopening after almost two months of restrictions to curb the spread of the virus. Union

County Public Health Administrator Carrie Brogetti said it is likely we will see more cases as the county enters Phase 1 and more people leave their homes and come into contact with one another. She said it is important to continue following social dis-

tancing guidelines and proper hygiene to minimize the spread. Union County has no deaths due to COVID-19. Three of the six confirmed cases are considered active. As usual, health officials did not identify the individual with the virus.

## Religious group wins round 1 in legal fight

■ Judge finds Oregon governor's coronavirus restrictions on religious gatherings 'null and void'

By Maxine Bernstein  
 The Oregonian/OregonLive  
 BAKER CITY — A Baker County circuit judge on Monday granted 10 churches who sued the governor a preliminary injunction, finding Gov. Kate Brown's restrictions on religious gatherings "null and void" because her emergency order due to the coronavirus pandemic had exceeded its 28-day limit. Circuit Judge Matthew Shirliff found the plaintiffs had shown "irreparable harm" from the deprivation of the right to exercise their religions.

"The governor's orders are not required for public safety when plaintiffs can continue to utilize social distancing and safety protocols at larger gatherings involving spiritual worship," he ruled. He found the churches can take necessary social distancing precautions, just as grocery stores and other essential businesses have done. He also ruled the injunction was in the public's interest, allowing people the right to freely worship and the ability to restore economic viability. "This court understands that the current pandemic creates an unprecedented crisis in the state as well as in our country," Shirliff said, speaking from the bench in a videoconference hearing. He said he must protect public health

## Avenue of Flags scaled back due to COVID-19

■ Pared-down tradition continues to honor veterans on Memorial Day Weekend

By Dick Mason  
 The Observer  
 LA GRANDE — The 37th annual Avenue of Flags at Grandview Cemetery, one of La Grande's longest-running Memorial Day Weekend events, is scaling back due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event traditionally has featured a Memorial Day ceremony and the display of more than 170 United States flags on staffs along the road at Grandview Cemetery. All are burial flags for American veterans that were donated by their families. The local Memorial Day ceremony traditionally displayed more than 170 United States flags on poles along the road at Grandview Cemetery. All are burial flags for American veterans that were donated by their families. The event regularly drew more than 100 people and featured a keynote address by a local pastor, the raising of the colors by National Guardsmen and a rendition of the National Anthem.

According to John Craig, commander of American Legion Post 43, which annually helps put on the Avenue of Flags, the Memorial Day ceremony has been canceled due to Gov. Kate Brown's implementation of social distancing rules, including restrictions she issued last

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Staff of Dianne's Kitchen follow public health protections due to the COVID-19 virus Saturday morning at the opening day of this year's La Grande Farmers Market.

## La Grande Farmers Market opens

■ Changes in place due to COVID-19 concerns don't delay opening day of seasonal marketplace

By Sabrina Thompson  
 The Observer

LA GRANDE — Booths selling vegetables, plants and homemade treats lined Fourth Street between Adams and Jefferson avenues as the annual La Grande Farmers Market made its seasonal debut Saturday morning.

However, a rope perimeter surrounded the market, allowing a single entry way, and workers wore gloves and masks.

"As much as we want people to come support the market, we want to stay safe," said Jessica Bogard, the market's manager.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the market implemented several other safeguards. Booths were 10 feet apart, and chalk lines on the concrete surface of Max Square measured out the recommended 6-foot social distance between customers. Only food producers and makers could sell goods at Saturday's market. Customers were not allowed to pick up items until they were ready to buy them, and hand sanitizer was available at every table.

Most sellers came prepared, Bogard said, but the market had a supply of gloves, masks and sanitizer ready.

The steps to curtail the spread of the coronavirus did not seem to bother market shoppers and some, such as La Grande resident Alicia McConnell, appreciated the extra precautions.

"I like how they are trying to keep everyone safe and I want to support local growers," McConnell said. "It helps they told everyone what to expect on Facebook and took the time to plan it out."

The La Grande Farmers Market worked with sellers to manage their expectations and gain the understanding of the new protocols. Sarah Fisher from Evergreen Family Farms, La Grande, said she is doing everything possible to ensure

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## Liberty Theatre group seeks \$100K grant for restoration

By Dick Mason  
 The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Liberty Theatre Foundation is seeking a hand of assistance from the state, a boost that would help restore a former main street icon to its previous glory.

The foundation has applied for a \$100,000 Oregon Historic Theater grant from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to assist in the completion of the restoration of

the Liberty Theatre at 1008 Adams Ave., La Grande.

The grant would help the foundation complete the third portion of its four-phase restoration project. Once the third phase is finished, the Liberty Theatre will be able to open for the first time since closing 61 years ago.

Ashley O'Toole, chairman of the Liberty Theatre Board of Directors, said receiving the grant would expedite the process of completing the

third phase. "It would greatly help our chances of having a soft opening before the end of the year," O'Toole said.

The terms of the Liberty Theatre Foundation's grant application call for it to provide a \$20,000 match for the \$100,000 grant. Of this \$120,000 total, \$100,000 would be spent for construction, \$5,000 would go toward administrative costs, and \$15,000

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Restoration work continues on the Liberty Theatre in downtown La Grande in this May 7 photo. The foundation behind the restoration effort is seeking a \$100,000 state grant for the next phase.

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### WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight  
 43 LOW  
 Rain and drizzle



Wednesday  
 55/40  
 Downpours

### CONTACT US

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 More contact info on Page 4A.

THURSDAY PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS

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