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THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

Rasmussen holds slim lead over Miller for second place

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Cody Bowen was the top vote-getter in the race for Union County sheriff in Tuesday's primary election. It looks like in November's general election the deputy and school resource officer will face his boss, Union County Sheriff Boyd



Rasmussen. The race received a total of 10,255 votes in the Tuesday night primary, according to the latest results from the county elections office. Bowen of La Grande won 4,263 votes or 41.6% of the total. He said results were exciting and humbling.

"I've put a ton of time and effort to be seen and available in the community," Bowen said. "I spoke from the heart and was honest and transparent."

Rasmussen is holding on to second place with 2,664 votes or 26% of the total. Bill Miller of Elgin is in third place with 2,525 — just 139 behind Rasmussen — or 24.6%.

Union County Clerk Robin Church said she has more than 200 ballots that require signature verification and more ballots are trickling in from outside

Union County. Miller's chance of gaining enough votes is slim, but Church said there still remains a possibility that he will bring in enough votes to run alongside Bowen on the November ballot.

Rasmussen said he appreciated the support he received from Union County residents.

"My family and I have endured much this past year, and it is gratifying to see the solid support to advance me to the fall election," he said in a written statement.

Rasmussen came under fire late in the campaign when the

Oregon Department of Justice released a report about its 2019 investigation of the sheriff for accusations of misconduct years before. The justice department concluded Rasmussen was beyond the statute of limitations to face any charges. Rasmussen touted that as the justice department clearing him of wrongdoing.

Miller said win or lose, he was proud of the race he ran, quoting his slogan "integrity, transparency and hard work" as what drove him

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Beverage wins in race for reelection

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — The Union County Board of Commissioners is set to begin 2021 with a cast of familiar faces, including

Donna Beverage, who Tuesday night won the race for reelection for Position 3, defeating challenger Michael Barry.

Beverage, a Union cattle rancher, is completing her first term as commissioner. She received 6,130 votes, or 64.1% of the total to Barry's 3,412, or 35.7%.

"I am humbled and honored that I will be able to serve Union County for another four years," said Beverage, the only Union County commissioner who was up for reelection this year.

The victor said she intends to keep doing what she been doing since taking office in early 2017.

"I will continue to be financially responsible and help businesses in Union County," she said.

Beverage said she wants the county to continue focusing on developing Baum Industrial Park, which the county operates adjacent to Highway 82 just north of Island City. Beverage counts the county board's actions to develop the park as one of her proudest accomplishments

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Jake Kurtz (right) applies a strip of colored glass that will make a silver hatband while Stirling Webb twirls the unfinished hat. Webb and Kurtz of Moonshine Glass, Enterprise, are creating glass mementos to honor graduating seniors and high school staff in Wallowa County.

Photos by Ellen Morris Bishop/EO Media Group

Mascots of glass

Enterprise artist crafts glass mementos for grads

By Ellen Morris Bishop
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Amid the gloom and uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic, glass artist Stirling Webb of Moonshine Glass, Enterprise, had an inspiration.

This graduation for high school seniors was going to be disappointing in scale and scope. So why not give these students something special to celebrate their persistence amid social distancing, vanished sports, an obliterated prom and a school year fraught with uncertainty?

His idea: to present each senior, and each faculty member of the three high schools in Wallowa County, with a tangible memento of their school and mascot. For

Joseph, an Eagle feather. For Wallowa, a Cougar paw. For Enterprise, an Outlaw cowboy hat. Webb presented the idea to school principals, who gave him a somewhat guarded thumbs-up to pursue the idea, he said.

For support, Webb turned first to the Enterprise Animal Hospital Inc., the veterinarians who've helped his wife, Emily Bright, with the Humane Society kittens she fosters.

"They said 'yes,' as long as I had some other sponsors," Webb said.

Armed with a positive response, he approached the Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness, the staff of Winding Waters Community

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Stirling Webb of Moonshine Glass, Enterprise, holds three of the Cougar paws that will go to Wallowa High School graduates and staff Saturday.

Imbler science teacher honored

JD Cant, who teaches ag sciences at Imbler High School, is regional teacher of the year

By Dick Mason
The Observer

IMBLER — An Imbler educator who makes sure students everywhere are remembered received an honor Tuesday that will not soon be forgotten.

JD Cant, an agricultural sciences instructor, was recognized as the Oregon Department of Education's teacher of the year for the InterMountain region.

Cant received a \$500 check from the education department and the Oregon Lottery Commission during a ceremony at Imbler High School via a video conference. Cant, speaking from the school's science room, accepted the award with a touch of humility.

"We are all in this together," Cant said. "I'm just a piece of the puzzle."

The educator now is in the running for the Oregon Department of Education's 2021 teacher of the

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State economists say Oregon budget has a \$3 billion gap

Gov. Brown says federal aid, spending cuts needed to save services and schools

By Peter Wong
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown says federal aid must go hand-in-hand with spending cuts to offset almost \$3 billion that state tax collections and other sources will be short.

Brown made her statement Wednesday after state economists told lawmakers

the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented economic downturn from shut-downs in business activity and public life.

Oregon's unemployment rate jumped from a modern low of 3.5% in March to a modern high of 14.2% in April. Oregon's state general fund budget

draws more than 90% of its money from personal and corporate income taxes.

The combined general fund and lottery budget for the 2019-21 cycle is \$23.7 billion, and virtually all of the potential spending cuts of \$2.7 billion will fall within the year starting July 1.

"The steepness of this decline is unprecedented," state economist Mark McMullen said during a video conference of the House and Senate revenue

committees.

While he and senior economist Josh Lehner said they expected a quick economic recovery when business activity resumes — as early as the second half of 2020, and an "all clear" by mid-2021 — "it takes a full year or more before pain is realized."

They also projected state coffers will get less than originally forecast in the following two budget cycles. Oregon did get \$1.4

billion as its share of \$150 billion in federal aid from the recent CARES Act, although \$415 million is tentatively earmarked for local and tribal governments other than Portland, Multnomah County and Washington County.

"Make no mistake, the budget gap created by this pandemic is too large to bridge without additional congressional action,"

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 37 LOW A shower early
Friday 53/33 A shower

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Email story ideas
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