

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, May 23, the 144th day of 2020. There are 222 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On May 23, 1984, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued a report saying there was "very solid" evidence linking cigarette smoke to lung disease in non-smokers.

ON THIS DATE

In 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary during World War I.

In 1945, Nazi official Heinrich Himmler committed suicide by biting into a cyanide capsule while in British custody in Luneburg, Germany.

In 1984, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," starring Harrison Ford, was released by Paramount Pictures.

In 2001, The Senate passed an 11-year, \$135 trillion-dollar tax cut bill.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$1.7 million
5-10-21-31-46-47

Mega Millions: \$298 million
8-19-25-36-66-9 x2

Powerball: \$104 million
18-34-40-42-50—PB-9 x2

Win for Life: May 20
19-48-52-68

Pick 4: May 21

• **1 p.m.:** 8-5-1-8

• **4 p.m.:** 9-5-8-1

• **7 p.m.:** 4-7-2-3

• **10 p.m.:** 8-5-6-8

Pick 4: May 20

• **1 p.m.:** 1-2-6-4

• **4 p.m.:** 5-5-2-1

• **7 p.m.:** 8-4-1-4

• **10 p.m.:** 5-8-7-6

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Sometimes you have to be silent in order to be heard."

— Swiss proverb

Pilot Rock floodwaters recede slowly

By Kathy Aney
and Alex Castle

EO Media Group

PILOT ROCK — Ray Arriola stood in the muddy middle of Main Street in Pilot Rock and watched water sluicing over a parking lot that sits between rushing East Birch Creek and a second hand store called "Jer and Ter's."

He gestured toward a twisted length of metal safety fence at creekside that rushing water had flung aside like nothing during Wednesday's flooding of downtown Pilot Rock.

"The power of water is amazing," he said shaking his head, "but I think we're over the hump now."

Arriola lives on the other side of the creek. A row of sandbags did its job, keeping water out of his home.

Residents still are a bit shellshocked at how quickly the creek overflowed its banks and flooded Highway 395 where the road curls through the downtown core. Water had receded somewhat by Thursday morning, but the Pilot Rock Market parking lot was still a lake. The highway remained closed to through traffic.

At nearby Coffee Station No. 1, patrons sipped the local brew and exchanged information about where the creek is jammed up and whose basements are



Photo by Kathy Aney/EO Media Group

An emergency vehicle sends up spray as it travels Thursday along Highway 395 through Pilot Rock.

flooded. At City Hall, Pilot Rock Police Chief Bill Caldera was up almost 30 hours straight. He and his officers had knocked on doors to warn homeowners of rising water and helped wherever they were needed. He marveled at the esprit de corp of the city's residents who flocked to two sandbagging stations at opposite ends of town. Caldera said the Red Cross took three evacuated families and put

them up at Pendleton hotels.

The damage is still coming to light. Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer said county road crews were out Thursday attempting to assess and work on the most impacted areas, though Pilot Rock appeared to have suffered the worst of the floods. There's been no confirmed reports of bridges that have been washed out, but Shafer said the approach to one on

West Birch Creek Road in Pilot Rock was impassable and some residents are currently unable to reach their homes in the area.

"Our road crews can't get out there to work on it until the waters recede," he said.

Wednesday's and Thursday's flooding was the result of excessive rainfall throughout the region in recent days. The rainfall reached record levels for the

Pendleton area Wednesday. According to the National Weather Service in Pendleton, the area received 1.11 inches of rain Wednesday, shattering the previous record for May 20 that was set in 1894 at 0.79 inches.

The recent rainfall led to rising levels in rivers throughout the region and surrounding streams, including the Umatilla, Walla Walla, John Day, Grande Ronde and Imnaha rivers.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton extended minor flood warnings until Thursday afternoon for the Gibbon area on the Umatilla Indian Reservation and along the Umatilla River, which was recorded above flood stage at 7.4 feet at 4:15 a.m. Thursday by the Northwest River Forecast Center.

The river levels were expected to decrease throughout the day, and were recorded below flood stage by the forecast center at 6.7 feet as of 11:15 a.m.

Though it feels a bit like groundhog day after historic flooding ravaged the county in February, Shafer said initial reports indicate that county infrastructure damages won't come close to the \$25 million dealt by floodwaters months ago.

"The peak is over and we're starting to see the end of it," he said.

Former La Grande police chief takes on deputy role



Photo contributed by Baker County Sheriff's Office

Brian Harvey, right, former chief of police in La Grande, takes his oath of office Tuesday as a deputy for the Baker County Sheriff's Office. Harvey retired effective May 4 from the La Grande Police Department and then moved to Baker County, where he will work in the in the Richland/Halfway/Oxbow area.

Caring for the critters

■ Caretakers give wildlife at closed museum their only attention during pandemic

By Kyle Spurr

EO Media Group

BEND — Most of the animals at the High Desert Museum south of Bend can't tell that the natural history museum has been closed since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the three resident otters, Brook, Rogue and Pitch, have sensed something changed. Instead of showing off their tricks for hundreds of people each day, the social mammals eagerly wait to be fed by the museum's curator of wildlife, Jon Nelson.

Nelson and his three staffers are the only interaction the animals get during the day. Nelson feeds fish to the otters three times a day and spends an hour a day cleaning their enclosure. "The other animals don't really know whether we are open or closed," Nelson said, "but these guys get real excited when they see people."

Nelson, 41, has worked for the museum since 2009, when he started as a volunteer. He walks about 8-10 miles a day around the 135-acre museum as he cares for the wildlife. He is responsible for more than 150 creatures, including about 25 birds, 11 mammals — such as porcupines, badgers and a bobcat — and 64 spe-

cies of reptiles, amphibians and fish.

"Whether we are doing programs or not, the animals need to have a lot of enrichment so they are getting attention every day," Nelson said.

The museum still waits for direction from Gov. Kate Brown about when it will be allowed to reopen. Businesses such as retail shops, restaurants and salons reopened May 15.

"It's really not up to us," said Dana Whitelaw, executive director of the High Desert Museum. "We will wait for the governor's order."

In the meantime, the museum is creating a reopening plan. Part of it includes one-way routes through the museum, limiting the number of visitors at one time and making sure everyone is maintaining a six-foot distance.

Helix couple certifies as EMTs

By Kathy Aney

EO Media Group

HELIX — Mark and Karen Woolbright tried to ignore their nerves.

As the Helix couple drove to Eugene several weeks ago to take the national exam required to certify them as emergency medical technicians, they worked to remember every piece of knowledge gleaned during a six-month course at Blue Mountain Community College.

If they passed, their little town again would have EMTs in residence. The East Umatilla County Ambulance Area Health District, based in Athena, would be able to better cover a sizable district that extends 450 square miles. Mark and Karen would keep a quick response vehicle at their home and respond to 911 calls in their part of Umatilla County.

That was the dream.

Mark, who pastors the Helix Community Church, led Sunday services the day before the test. Afterward, they headed out. As the miles blurred by, they quizzed each other.

There was a lot to know. They had attended three-hour classes twice a week and Saturday labs for two semesters. They studied 25-30 hours per week.

This isn't the first time the Woolbrights have been study partners. Mark, 61, and Karen, 60, grew up four houses apart, married, raised five children and started careers. Mark farmed peaches, berries, pumpkins and other crops for a Sauvie Island agricultural operation. Karen did in-home day care and later worked as office manager for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. After



Photo by Kathy Aney/EO Media Group

Karen and Mark Woolbright of Helix recently completed more than six months of EMT classes and testing. They will use their quick response vehicle to respond to 911 calls, mostly in the Helix/Adams area.

an awakening of sorts, they decided to see where God led them and enrolled in Bible college together.

After graduating, the couple arrived at the Helix Community Church five years ago. Karen helps Mark with his ministry and works as the office manager at ODFW's Pendleton office. Mark started volunteering with the Helix Rural Fire Protection District in 2015.

When the couple enrolled in the EMT course, church members supported the effort by providing meals each week. Since the Wednesday class fell on the same night as the church's youth group, other leaders made sure the couple left on time.

"They shooed us out the door," Karen said.

On the morning of the test in Eugene, Mark and Karen tamped down their butterflies. The test is adaptive, using questions from a live item pool that

recalibrates depending on each answer given. When the Woolbrights finished, both believed they'd failed.

"The test blows your confidence completely," Karen said.

"We went back to the hotel room and sat there thinking, 'Oh, man,'" Mark said.

The next morning at 6 a.m., Mark located the results on his phone and grinned. He'd passed. He woke Karen, who fumbled for her phone, shaking as she logged on. She too had passed.

"I sat up in bed and squealed," Karen said.

"We were on cloud nine," Mark said.

Their journey wasn't finished. They passed a state practical demonstration of emergency care skills. Next came a fingerprinting session. David Wernland, a Helix resident whose certification lapsed, completed the BMCC class with the Woolbrights and will join them after testing.

Island City Cemetery
For your convenience
WATER will be available a the back of the
cemetery for flowers during the
Memorial Day Weekend

The family of
Beverly Hays
would like to thank everyone who sent texts, cards, prayers, and well wishes during the loss of our mom and nanny. Special thanks to Grande Ronde Hospital staff for the extra care and attention given to us during this crazy time. Also special thangs to Elgin Ambulance, Encompass Home Health, Heart 'n Home Hospice, and Daniels Valley Funeral Home.
Jerry and Tammy Hays, Dee Dee McClune, Gail and Eddie Toney, Denise and Don Ludwig, & Jennifer and Rick Smith



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