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Baker County judge taken to task on ruling

■ Oregon Supreme Court gives him until Tuesday to explain or vacate his ruling on virus restrictions

By Gillian Flaccus
Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Oregon Supreme Court is giving a Baker County judge until Tuesday to toss out his ruling that found the governor's coronavirus restrictions are invalid.

If the judge declines to do so, justices said Saturday that Baker County Circuit Judge Matthew Shirtcliff must explain why and give the state and churches who sued over the stay-at-home directives an opportunity to make further arguments.

Shirtcliff ruled May 18 that Gov. Kate Brown exceeded her authority by shutting down in-person religious services to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. Ten churches around Oregon brought the lawsuit, which several local elected officials and business owners later joined.

Shirtcliff's broad ruling also invalidated many of the other provisions of Brown's stay-at-home order, including a ban on public

gatherings and a ban on non-essential businesses and sit-down service in bars and restaurants.

The Supreme Court quickly stayed Shirtcliff's order, keeping Brown's directives in place.

Saturday, the justices sent the case back to Shirtcliff with orders to expunge his ruling or explain why not.

In his opinion, Shirtcliff wrote the damage to Oregonians and their livelihood was greater than

the dangers the coronavirus presented. He also noted other businesses deemed essential, such as grocery stores, had been allowed to remain open even with large numbers of people present and have relied on masks, social distancing and other measures to protect the public.

"The governor's orders are not required for public safety when

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Enterprise man in custody for ax assault

By Ellen Morris Bishop
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Enterprise police Sunday night arrested a man for using an ax to assault his roommate.

Michael Zanello suffered serious injuries in the attack. Police arrested Phillip Evans on accusations of carrying out the assault.

The attack came to light when a family driving past Video Buffs on West North Street noticed Zanello bent over and staggering down the street toward Safeway. The family stopped to provide help, then called 911.

The Enterprise police department, Wallowa County Sheriff's Office and Wallowa Memorial Hospital ambulance arrived minutes later.

Zanello, who was bleeding from multiple wounds, told officers Evans attacked him with an ax.

Wallowa Memorial Ambulance took Zanello to the hospital, where an emergency helicopter flew him to a Boise hospital facility, according to Enterprise Chief Joel Fish, who did not disclose the full extent of Zanello's injuries.

Enterprise police and Wallowa County sheriff deputies went to Evans' nearby rental house on North Street, where at about 9 p.m. the team of law enforcement officers broke down the dead-bolted front door, entered the building and emerged about 10 minutes later with Evans in handcuffs.

Fish said he requested the Oregon State Police Crime Lab assist in the investigation. The crime lab team was on the scene Monday morning.



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande High School freshmen Jace Schow, left, and Owen Rinker attach grommets Thursday to a banner for Cove High School seniors. Northwood Manufacturing and Outdoors RV, La Grande, designed and printed the banners and donated them to Union County high schools.

Businesses turn out banners for seniors

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Two area businesses that recently were able to resume operations after Oregon began to lift COVID-19-related restrictions are behind a project to support Union County high school seniors.

Each of the six Union County high schools either already has or will in the coming days receive banners from Northwood Manufacturing and Outdoors RV to commemorate the class of 2020, which is set to graduate in the coming weeks.

Lance Rinker, Northwood and Outdoors'



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande High School freshmen Jace Schow, left, and Owen Rinker attach grommets to a banner Thursday that honors area high school seniors.

director of purchasing, marketing and information technology, said company owner Sherry Nash,

CEO Craig Orton and CFO Cerise Smallwood discussed what the businesses could do to support

the seniors.

"What can we do to help these people while they're going through all this?" Rinker said was the question Nash posed. "We employ like 550 people in this valley between Northwood and Outdoors. To support those families — almost 550 people, they're all over this county. It's somebody's grandkid, it's somebody's nephew, it's somebody's neighbor. It's hard on all of them. So I started kicking around ideas."

The idea Rinker and marketing supervisor Rich Zinzer formulated was to use the company's

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Union school project starts in June

■ Superintendent says COVID-19 should not affect this summer's work

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION — The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a terrible toll on schools everywhere, but it is not derailing plans for the Union School District's bond project work — at least not yet.

Work will start next month with the replacement of the roof on Union Elementary School's J.F. Hutchinson classroom building. The building's roof is about 20 years old and needs replacing, said Mendy Clark, the district's deputy clerk and a member of its bond design team.

Phase I of the bond project will continue this summer when crews remove the Hutchinson building's old windows and install more energy-efficient ones. A third bond project, which has not been finalized but may be done this summer, would be the painting of the Hutchinson building, Clark said.

Money for the projects come from the \$4 million bond for maintenance

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Grand Army of the Republic honors local Civil War vets

■ Union County Memorial Day history goes back to the beginning

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Trumpets, bagpipes and the voices of eloquent speakers were not heard Monday at La Grande's cemeteries.

Pageantry-filled Memorial Day ceremonies saluting the sacrifices made by our nation's veterans were canceled in La Grande because of state rules prohibiting large

public gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, many families and members of local veterans groups visited local cemeteries, which the many flowers and flags placed at the headstones of veterans attest to. Most of the fallen veterans saluted for their sacrifices are those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces after 1900.

Ironically, in the midst of this outpouring of love and respect, veterans who participated in the Civil War, the conflict that gave rise to Memorial Day, were overlooked.

Precisely how many

Civil War veterans are buried in Union County is not known, but those laid to rest here are among 20,000 in Oregon cemeteries according to oregonlive.com.

This much is also known — 110 years ago the focus of Memorial Day in Union County was on honoring Civil War veterans.

Stories in May 1910 issues of The Observer make this apparent. A May 30 article states that members of the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic, a



Observer file photo

Veterans salute during the 2016 Memorial Day ceremony in La Grande. Such gatherings did not take place Monday to honor the nation's war dead due to prohibitions against spreading the coronavirus.

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section
Tonight 47 LOW Clearing
Wednesday 76/46 Partly sunny

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