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Union County sees eighth case of COVID-19

LA GRANDE — Public health officials Wednesday afternoon announced the eighth confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in Union County. The day before, the Center for Human Development Inc. reported the seventh case. Union County has had no deaths from the disease, and only three of

the cases are considered active, according to the Oregon Health Authority. These are the first and second confirmed cases in the county since May 18. They came less than a week after the county entered Phase 2 of reopening but nearly four weeks after the county went into Phase 1. This seventh case was com-

munity acquired, according to the press release from the center, meaning the individual does not have a direct epidemiological link to a known confirmed case. "This means that the infection was acquired from an unknown source and place in the community," the press release stated. The center did not provide details on how the eighth case was

acquired. As in previous cases, the center reported it is working to contact and isolate or quarantine those who may have been in close contact with individuals. A close contact is defined as anyone within 6 feet of the individual for more than 15 minutes. "If you are identified through this investigation as someone that may be at risk for COVID-19,"

the center reported, "public health will contact you." Oregon has 5,060 total cases and 169 deaths as of Wednesday, according to the Oregon Health Authority's COVID-19 website. Just less than half of the cases — 2,457 — are considered active. The state has conducted 156,605 tests for the disease, and 151,698 have come back negative.



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande's Granada Theatre, which has been closed since mid-March, will reopen Friday, with the slate for the upcoming week including the 1981 classic "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Granada set to reopen Friday

By Ronald Bond

LA GRANDE — It's been three months since digital images played on the screens at the Granada Theatre in La Grande. The coronavirus-induced hiatus will officially end Friday as the venue reopens with Union County in Phase 2 of the state's reopening plan. The reopening moves the theater one step closer to normalcy after what manager Patty Johnson said has been a challenging time since the cinema closed in mid-March. "It's been hard not knowing when we would be able to open up," she said. "Luckily we were able to open the drive-in (recently). It's hard to get a rhythm going when you're not working." Johnson said the reopening of the La Grande Drive-In a few weeks ago helped staff find that rhythm again. All three theater rooms at the Granada will be operating, but

"You pretty much got classics right now until July. We'll be doing different things. We might bring some Star Wars in, Lord of the Rings (or) Harry Potter."

Patty Johnson, Granada manager

Johnson said alternating rows will be taped off to help the venue comply with social distancing protocols. "We're still doing some measurement to see what I can get in each theater," she said. She noted the largest theater of the three typically would hold a maximum of 175 moviegoers. Between the three there are 323 seats. Staff didn't need to do a whole lot of deep cleaning to ready the venue for patrons in the lead-up to the reopen as Johnson said it already was being kept up during the closure. "While we were closed we went through and were doing some cleaning," she said. "We

were wiping down (and) cleaning off seats." The theater will open with two movies that were released just days before state-imposed closures due to the coronavirus pandemic — the animated children's movie "Trolls World Tour" and the superhero actioner "Bloodshot"— but is also cracking open the vault to air an early-1980s classic, "Raiders of the Lost Ark." The Granada was showing "Bloodshot," featuring Vin Diesel, before the closure. "We were trying to find a kids movie," Johnson said of selecting "Trolls," and of the 1981 Indiana Jones flick, she said, "We were throwing in a classic."

Showing old favorites, in fact, will probably be a theme in coming weeks with new releases unlikely until later in the summer. "You pretty much got classics right now until July," Johnson said. "We'll be doing different things. We might bring some Star Wars in, Lord of the Rings (or) Harry Potter." Each of the movies firing up on Friday will have three daily showings — two matinees and one in the evening. Johnson said prices have been lowered, and the Granada's website shows matinees for \$5.75 and the night films at \$7.75. Seniors and children get into the evening shows at the matinee price. Once it does reopen, the the Granada Theatre will operate daily. The drive-in will revert to a Friday-Sunday schedule after this weekend. It, too, is showing classic hits, this weekend airing a double feature of "E.T. the Extra Terrestrial" and "Jaws."

EOU may still change name of its library

Library moniker draws criticism, petition calling for change

By Sabrina Thompson

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University still is reconsidering the name of its campus library. The university named the building the Walter M. Pierce Library, after the 17th governor of Oregon. Pierce was a landowner in the Grande Ronde Valley with progressive attitudes on gender issues and taxation. EOU changed the name in 1999 to the Pierce Library to include the contributions of his third wife, Cornelia Marvin Pierce, who was Oregon's first state librarian. But as Tim Seydel, the vice president of University Advancement, put it: "They represent a part of Oregon's history that sometimes contradicts today's values." That's because Walter Pierce supported eugenics and had ties to the Ku Klux Klan. Nothing indicates he was a member of the La Grande KKK chapter, but he attended several meetings. The minutes of those meetings from 1922-23, which the Oregon Historical Society obtained and organized, document a clear connection between Pierce and the Klan, which supported him in his bid for governor. He and the Klan also supported the Oregon Compulsory Education Act, which required school-age children to attend only public schools and not parochial schools. Oregonians approved the measure, but the United States Supreme Court struck down the law as unconstitutional. While the Klan would later try to recall support for Pierce, his connection to the organization makes him a controversial figure

See, Library/Page 5A

July 4 fireworks to be a blast on Wallowa Lake

Private backers step up after others cancel show due to virus

By Bill Bradshaw

WALLOWA — The usual backers of the annual Fourth of July fireworks display on Wallowa Lake may have bailed, but other organizers are picking up the ball and running with it. The annual "Shake the Lake" fireworks display was previously put on by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce

with help from the county, but this year both groups declined to help fund it over concerns that the event would draw together too many people and violate COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings. "We didn't want to do something that would make the governor deny us Phase 2 or Phase 3," Chamber Director Vicki Searles said before the Wallowa County Commission June

3. "If an outbreak happens, it could be assigned to the Fourth of July event, and it would mean that we broke the protocol, and (the governor's) statement about opening is pretty strong about not having any large events." While the chamber and the county won't be involved, Searles said she's not opposed to it

See, Fireworks/Page 5A



EOU Media Group file photo

Fireworks fill the night sky in 2019 at Wallowa Lake. This year, the fireworks may be on again despite COVID-19.

INDEX

Business 1B Dear Abby 8B Opinion 4A Classified 2B 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 55 LOW Partly cloudy Friday 79/48 Shower or t-storm

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