

COMMUNITY

Union County Senior Center takeout lunch menu — June 15-19

Pickup 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1504 N. Albany St., La Grande. For delivery, call 541-963-7532 before 10 a.m. Age 60+, \$3 suggested donation; all others, \$5. Call ahead for weekend meals for four.

JUNE 15-19

Monday: baked potatoes with variety of toppings, salad greens.
Tuesday: chicken enchiladas, chips and salsa.
Wednesday: pork roast or BBQ chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, baked apples, tomato-cucumber salad, fresh bread, dessert.
Thursday: Italian sandwiches, pasta salad, watermelon, fruit tarts.
Friday: chicken Alfredo, Caesar salad, steamed vegetables, Italian bread, dessert.

Union County Kids Summer Food Program grab & go lunch menu — June 15-19

Pickup 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Riviera Activity Center, 2609 Second St., La Grande. Free for age 1-18; all others, \$4.

JUNE 15-19

Monday: ravioli, fresh veggie medley, rolls, fresh fruit, Jell-O.
Tuesday: enchiladas, rice and beans, chips and dip, fresh fruit, steamed veggies, pudding.
Wednesday: roast pork, mashed potatoes, baked apples, veggie sticks, cookies.
Thursday: deli sandwiches, macaroni salad, grapes, dessert.
Friday: chicken Alfredo, rolls, garden salad, steamed veggies, fresh fruit.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

WEDNESDAY

8:21 a.m. — La Grande police received a complaint about vandalism on the 400 block of Fir Street. An officer took a report.

9:48 a.m. — A caller reported the possible illegal sale of morel mushrooms on the 2400 block of Adams Avenue. An officer contacted the caller, who already reported the incident to the U.S. Forest Service.

11:41 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of a person suffering a mental or emotional crisis. Officers responded, and the person went to Grande Ronde Hospital for observation.

3:38 p.m. — A La Grande resident reported a burglary on the 200 block of Polk Avenue.

5:18 p.m. — A caller reported vandalism 4 miles north of La Grande. A Union County sheriff's deputy checked and determined the culprit responsible was the weather.

THURSDAY

11:19 a.m. — A Union County sheriff's deputy responded to Walmart, 11619 Island Ave., Island City, on a report that someone left children in a vehicle. The deputy found the vehicle and counseled the driver.

2:18 p.m. — Union County dispatch received three 911 calls from the same residence on the 64600 block of Orchard Road, La Grande. A deputy responded, and the situation was OK.

4:51 p.m. — A caller reported a horse on the loose at Fruitdale Lane and Mt. Glen Road, La Grande. A Union County sheriff's deputy tried to contact the horse's owner.

5:51 p.m. — A caller reported the theft of a trailer from Mountain Life Church, 10700 Walton Road, Island City.

9:32 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1000 block of X Avenue for a domestic disturbance. Officers separated the parties involved.

FRIDAY

1:23 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of a vehicle theft on the 2200 block of 26th Street. Police took a report.

Betty E. (Newton) Morse

La Grande

Betty Evangeline (Newton) Morse, 92, of La Grande, died June 11 at Grande Ronde Hospital. Arrangements are by Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.

Brenda D. Shaffer

Formerly of La Grande

Brenda D. Shaffer, 81, formerly of La Grande, died May 30 in Las

Vegas, Nevada. Arrangements are by McDermott Funeral & Cremation of Las Vegas.

Glenn D. Clark

Elgin

Glenn D. Clark, 91, of Elgin, died June 11 at his home. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel and Crematory.

Eva W. Bennett

La Grande

Eva Winnefred Ben-

OBITUARIES

nett, 95, of La Grande, died April 26 at her residence. A graveside service will be held June 20 at 2 p.m. at the Island City Cemetery.

Charles 'Leroy' Poe

Island City

Charles "Leroy" Poe, 73, of Island City, died May 28 at his residence. A celebration of his life will be held June 25 at 4 p.m. at the Summerville Baptist Church.

Upcoming local services



Calendar courtesy of Loveland Funeral Chapel

June 13 — RONALD CASWELL: 10 a.m. memorial service and potluck (bring a dish to share); Riverside Park Pavilion, La Grande.

June 20 — EVA BENNETT: 2 p.m. graveside service; Island City Cemetery.

June 25 — LEROY POE: 4 p.m. celebration of life, Summerville Baptist Church.

Scouts work, play and camp virtually

How the organizations are staying active while unable to meet in person

By Sabrina Thompson

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Like many organizations that made the transition to virtual meetings because of the coronavirus pandemic, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in La Grande are taking their experience to the internet.

"There are a variety of things available," said Angie D'Antonio, leader for Girl Scout Troop 50145. "Camps closed for the summer so they mail supplies. People meet mostly via Zoom."

GIRL SCOUTS

Girl Scouts of the United States of America told local troops not to hold meetings until Aug. 31, D'Antonio said. To keep troops together and continue the Scouting experience, D'Antonio has encouraged girls to participate in the camping activity projects and invited guest speakers for weekly Zoom meetings. The activity packets from the national organization offer three experiences to get girls outdoors and active: the camp adventures at home marketplace, at-home outdoor activities and virtual outdoor events.

The marketplace allows girls to sign up for events



Photo contributed by Stephen Koza

Russ West, far left, instructs Boy Scout Troop 514 on avalanche rescue at Anthony Lakes March 14-15, the last outing by the troop since the start of the pandemic.

across the nation, with prices between \$25-\$100, depending on age group and activity. Parents can use the marketplace to purchase gear for activities such as camping, crafting and sporting equipment to use along with the virtual guides. The girls' at-home outdoor activities are self-guided activities to complete from home, with a focus on nature.

A "Camp in Campout" will be June 27 with addition events in the works for July and August. The Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington are providing girls with camping related activities

and suggestions for girls to do at home, and those who register and complete the event will receive a patch to commemorate the occasion.

D'Antonio is offering the girls in her troop the opportunity to participate in these programs in addition to her own troop's weekly online meetings. Prior to the pandemic, the troop would meet less often, but with the girls no longer in school and missing their friends, they asked to meet more frequently.

"I don't think they love doing the meetings virtually. They miss getting

together," D'Antonio said. "But it is nice to still see everyone and talk. The speaker series is something the girls are enjoying and something we wouldn't normally have done."

In addition to badge work, D'Antonio has introduced a guest lecture series into the meetings. Girls have the chance to talk to professionals from a variety of fields including a movie producer, Broadway performer, professional chef, aquanaut and special effects makeup artist.

BOY SCOUTS

The Eastern Oregon District of Boy Scouts of

America Troop 514 held its last in-person meeting in March. With students no longer in school, the troop decided to cancel meetings for the foreseeable future according to scoutmaster Stephen Koza, but badge work continued.

"Since our meetings were canceled, some of the parents and volunteers took up working with some of the boys via Zoom to work on their rank advancement and merit badge work," Koza said. "Eric Valentine and M.J. Heather, who worked on merit badges with some of the boys, found the Zoom platform worked very well as the boys were able to focus on the work being done without the distractions of others being around them."

In-person meetings for the troop will resume June 22 with adherence to state guidelines.

Koza said outings such as camping will also return slowly as the troop works through logistics. National events and camps have been canceled. With the extra time, he added, the boys can continue to work on their merit badges and individual projects.

"Overall, we're excited to get started back up," Koza said. "We want to do it properly to protect everyone and stay within the proper guidelines. We also want to keep the Scouts engaged during this time."

Upcoming La Grande schools budget tops \$26 million

School district budget committee approves spending plan

By Dick Mason

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District moved a step closer Wednesday to being in a better position to weather a financial shortfall starting a year from now.

Its budget committee voted to recommend the adoption of a 2020-21 general fund spending plan of \$26.39 million that would allow the school district to maintain all programs and staff while boosting reserves significantly. The proposal is \$1.18 million greater than the 2019-20 budget and would allow the school district to build up reserves it likely will need over the next three years to deal with state budget shortfalls due to the coronavirus-driven economic slowdown.

"It is a well-thought-out, prudent plan," said La Grande School Board member Joe Justice, who like all school board members is also on the school district's budget committee.

Under the budget proposal, the school district would not spend state money it has saved since mid-March when all schools in the state were shut down to curb the spread of the coronavirus. The school district has saved a total of \$900,000 since then, including \$250,000 on substitute teaching costs, \$300,000 on employee pay



Observer file photo

The La Grande School District is considering a \$26.4 million budget that could enable the local schools to weather cut backs in state funding.

due to furlough days, and substantial savings on transportation and athletics expenses, according to Chris Panike, the district's business manager.

"The budget will allow us to preserve these savings," Panike said.

The intent of building up reserves is to put the La Grande School District in a position to withstand projected decreases in state funding in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

"We will experience a shortfall in the next (2021-23) biennium," La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza told the budget committee.

Mendoza said Oregon's public schools may see their state funding cut significantly both years. His goal is to have at least \$3.2 million in reserve entering that two-year period, which he said would greatly enhance the district's chances of retaining its staff and programs

during that time.

"We need to save money now so we can continue having a high-quality school district," Mendoza said.

The funding outlook for Oregon's schools is murky at best because of the coronavirus pandemic, which forced the state to shut down many businesses for two months, costing it significant income tax revenue and crippling the economy.

The state expects its school fund to lose about \$490 million in revenue, but Mendoza said he thinks there is such strong support for education in Oregon that schools will receive all of their funding lawmakers approved — a \$9 billion education budget for the 2019-21 biennium. He said he believes this could be achieved by drawing money from several reserve funds and money generated by the new Corporate Activities Tax, which

could generate between \$1 billion and \$2 billion a biennium, all of which is to be spent on boosting student success.

Mendoza said if the state backfills its education fund it will prevent the La Grande School District from having to draw upon its reserves in 2020-21, putting it in a much better position to deal with likely budget cuts in afterward.

The Legislature is expected to meet this summer to determine how it will deal with the state's funding shortfall. Until then, Oregon's public school funding picture will be anything but in sharp focus. This delay is helping to make it exceptionally challenging to create a school district budget for 2020-21 because it is impossible to know what to expect in terms of state funding.

"I have never built a budget with this much uncertainty," said Panike, who has been the La Grande School District's business manager for about 14 years.

Adding to the level of anxiety, Panike said, is the possibility the school district could lose students because of the coronavirus. He explained some parents may choose to homeschool their children to protect them from possible exposure to it or choose other education options. A drop in student enrollment could have a big impact on funding because the money school districts receive from the state is based on enrollment. The La Grande School District receives about \$8,800 per student from the state.

The La Grande School Board will vote June 24 on adoption of the proposed 2020-21 budget.



Nicole Cathey

Reed & Associates for excellent service *LOCALLY!*



Medicare, Auto, Home insurance and Annuities



Kevin Reed

10106 N. 'C' • Island City

541-975-1364

Toll Free 1-866-282-1925

www.reed-insurance.net