

## DAILY PLANNER

### TODAY

Today is Saturday, June 20, the 172nd day of 2020. There are 194 days left in the year. Summer begins at 2:44 p.m., Pacific time.

### TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On June 20, 1837, Queen Victoria acceded to the British throne following the death of her uncle, King William IV.

### ON THIS DATE

In 1943, race-related rioting erupted in Detroit; federal troops were sent in two days later to quell the violence that resulted in more than 30 deaths.

In 1967, boxer Muhammad Ali was convicted in Houston of violating Selective Service laws by refusing to be drafted and was sentenced to five years in prison.

In 1994, O.J. Simpson pleaded not guilty in Los Angeles to the killings of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

In 2014, the Obama administration granted an array of new benefits to same-sex couples, including those living in states where gay marriage was against the law.

### LOTTERY

**Megabucks:** \$2.8 million

8-16-23-26-31-42

**Mega Millions:** \$22 million

21-23-33-35-42-6 x3

**Powerball:** \$22 million

7-10-63-64-68—PB-10 x3

**Win for Life:** June 17

16-30-41-43

**Pick 4:** June 18

• 1 p.m.: 3-7-3-5; • 4 p.m.: 1-1-1-6

• 7 p.m.: 7-8-3-4; • 10 p.m.: 0-1-2-5

**Pick 4:** June 17

• 1 p.m.: 5-7-2-4; • 4 p.m.: 3-6-4-8

• 7 p.m.: 9-8-7-2; • 10 p.m.: 6-3-0-3

### DELIVERY ISSUES?

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### TODAY'S QUOTE

"Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old."

— Franz Kafka, Austrian author and poet (1883-1924)

# La Grande schools add classrooms, boulder garden

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Two new classrooms, improved security and a decorative boulder garden.

All are on the La Grande School District's summer projects list. Completing the projects is making for a busy summer for the school district's physical plant staff and its contractors.

"We want to get as much done as we can before the students come back. We do not want to disrupt classes," said Joseph Waite, the school district's bond and facilities manager.

One of the most labor intensive of the improvements this summer will involve adding two classrooms to La Grande Middle School. Both will be on the north portion of the school's library. The classrooms will occupy 40% of the space the library has, Waite said. The district expects construction to start in early July and finish by late August. The classrooms will help the school accommodate an expected enrollment increase, Waite said, and also make it easier for the school district to meet state social distancing standards to protect people from the coronavirus.

The cracked and crumbling concrete outside La Grande Middle School's main entrance is getting replaced as well. This will boost safety, especially in the winter. Waite explained once the rough areas are replaced with smooth concrete, it will be easier to remove snow from the expansive entrance area

each winter.

Extensive concrete work also will be done at La Grande High School outside the Second Street entrance to its gym and auditorium. All of the concrete in this section, much of which is deteriorating, will be replaced, Waite said.

A second summer project involves the south entrance to the high school track and field complex. Crews removed thick brush about 10-20 feet inside the entry to take away cover where anyone could hide, Waite said.

Now, at least 150 boulders cover the site, and native vegetation likely will be planted in the area.

On the technology front, the installation of additional cameras for monitoring activity in the school district will boost security. The cameras will expand the area the school district can monitor, Waite said. The new cameras will be part of a system with more memory capacity, making it possible for school district officials to look further back at photos for security purposes.

The school district will receive another tech boost when the card key entry system, which almost all of its school buildings have, will be linked into one network. This will allow the card key system to operate much more efficiently, Waite said.

The computerized system, which the school district has had for about four years, is based on coded cards employees



Staff photo by Dick Mason

A jogger moves past the new boulder garden the La Grande School District installed at the high school's track and field complex to replace thick brush. The project is among several improvements the district is making this summer.

use to enter into buildings. It has been efficient to operate, except when a new employee is hired or someone leaves. Then computers at the card key systems of buildings have to be manually uploaded to recognize the new employee's card or reject the card of the employee who left. This can be a time-consuming process depending on how many buildings an employee has or had access to.

Waite said, for example, that if a new employee needed a card that provides access to all buildings, the uploading process could take two hours. Once the network is established,

however, this process will be quick.

Work on reducing radon levels at Willow School and Island City Elementary School also is underway. Radon is a naturally occurring below-ground radioactive, colorless and tasteless gas that can cause health problems when there is prolonged exposure. Testing identified portions of Willow and Island City as having radon levels that need to be lowered.

Much of the mitigation work at Willow and in the principal's office at Island City involves the installation of vents and exhaust fans to suck out radon gas, preventing it from entering

buildings.

Waite said he had hoped to get a head start on summer projects this spring after schools were closed because of the pandemic. The work had to be postponed, though, because it was not known how much money would be available for projects because of the potential financial impact of the coronavirus.

"There was too much financial uncertainty," Waite said.

Today, however, the school district, Waite said, has a clearer idea of what the range of the fiscal impact might be, allowing it to move ahead on projects this summer.

## Wallowa Lake fireworks on hold after rise in COVID-19 cases

■ No set date for final decision on popular event

By Ellen Morris Bishop  
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — This summer's Fourth of July fireworks show at Wallowa Lake is on hold.

Fireworks coordinator Mike Lockhart delivered the update Wednesday to the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners, citing the steep rise in COVID-19 cases in neighboring Union County.

"At this time, we have most everything ready to go," he said. "The contractor is ready. We have the money. We have approval from the sher-

iff's office and Paul Karvoski, head of Wallowa County Emergency Management. We are down to the point of signing the contract."

But things can change rapidly these days.

"As the situation in La Grande popped up, the landscape changed a little bit," Lockhart said. "At this point in time we are just holding off a little bit to see how that develops. We don't want to do anything that's irresponsible."

Lockhart said the group is considering ways people might be able to attend by watching the show from their vehicles or other measures, which he didn't specify.

The fireworks are in a similar situation to what

Chief Joseph Days had been, he said.

"We will wait as long as we can before we make an announcement," he said. "But we don't have a set date for that decision in mind."

Commissioner Todd Nash thanked Lockhart for his transparency and for voluntarily providing the commission and the public with an update on plans.

"It's going to be a hard thing to give up. In light of what's gone on in La Grande, you need to make your decisions based on that," he said.

Wallowa County resident Bruce Macke expressed concern about the potential for the spread of coronavirus in

Wallowa County, now that it has exploded in a neighboring county. Macke recently retired from teaching science at Cove High School. He brought that experience to bear in his pleas for the commissioners to recognize and address the threat posed by a serious COVID-19 outbreak close at hand.

"This outbreak is way beyond the number posted by the Oregon Health Authority this week," he said. "Some 240 cases have been out there (contagious, spreading the disease) for two weeks, and the numbers are much greater than those who have been diagnosed. To be honest about it, there could be 1,000 infections

in Union County, easily. We have a wildfire in La Grande."

Commissioners assured Macke they were consulting with the medical community.

Commissioner John Hillock noted the board was set to meet with the hospital and other medical leaders.

"We have a shipment of N95 masks coming and we are happy to give one to anyone who wants one," Commissioner Susan Roberts said.

The Oregon Health Authority announced a fifth positive COVID-19 case Thursday in Wallowa County. The person is a Wallowa County resident in their 30s and isolating while recovering.

## North Powder schools budget picture in limbo

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

NORTH POWDER — The North Powder School Board will vote on the adoption of a 2020-21 budget Tuesday, one which would be about \$100,000 greater than its 2019-20

pending plan.

The adoption, though, will not give members of the school board reason to experience a sense of relief. Superintendent Lance Dixon said there is a chance the board will have to make spending cuts later.

The budget is built on the assumption the Legislature will provide the state's school districts \$8.97 billion for the 2019-21 biennium. But the state expects the school fund to lose \$490 million for 2020-21 due to the financial effects

from mitigating the coronavirus pandemic.

The Legislature meets to decide on this in the summer.

"We will not have a true idea (about the budget situation) until then," said Dixon.

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### CURRENT RATES TWO RECIPIENTS

Ages	Rate
60/65	4.0%
65/70	4.4%
70/75	4.8%
75/80	5.3%
80/85	6.2%
85/90	7.5%
90/95+	8.8%

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