

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY
Today is Tuesday, June 23, the 175th day of 2020. There are 191 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT
On June 23, 1888, abolitionist Frederick Douglass received one vote from the Kentucky delegation at the Republican convention in Chicago, effectively making him the first black candidate to have his name placed in nomination for U.S. president. (The nomination went to Benjamin Harrison.)

On This Date
In 1868, Christopher Latham Sholes received a patent for his "Type-Writer," featuring a QWERTY keyboard; it was the first commercially successful typewriter.

In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for a second term of office at the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

In 1938, the Civil Aeronautics Authority was established.

In 1947, the Senate joined the House in overriding President Harry S. Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, designed to limit the power of organized labor.

In 1972, President Nixon signed Title IX barring discrimination on the basis of sex for "any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

In 1985, all 329 people aboard an Air India Boeing 747 were killed when the plane crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Ireland because of a bomb authorities believe was planted by Sikh separatists.

In 1988, James E. Hansen, a climatologist at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, told a Senate panel that global warming of the earth caused by the "greenhouse effect" was a reality.

LOTTERY
Megabucks: \$2.9 million
6-12-18-40-44-47
Mega Millions: \$26 million
11-34-36-52-56—7 x2
Powerball: \$25 million
10-31-41-63-67—PB-5 x3
Win for Life: June 20
1-12-13-69
Pick 4: June 21
• **1 p.m.:** 9-8-1-8
• **4 p.m.:** 0-1-1-8
• **7 p.m.:** 6-3-9-5
• **10 p.m.:** 8-9-9-1
Pick 4: June 20
• **1 p.m.:** 6-4-3-1
• 4 p.m.: 4-8-2-7
• 7 p.m.: 4-4-9-1
• 10 p.m.: 7-4-6-8
Pick 4: June 19
• 1 p.m.: 6-6-6-7
• 4 p.m.: 3-1-8-5
• 7 p.m.: 9-1-7-1
• 10 p.m.: 1-4-3-2

DELIVERY ISSUES?
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Union schools boss optimistic about funding

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION — Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells is confident about the financial outlook for his district in 2020-21.

Wells said he believes the Legislature will take significant steps at its special session in July to minimize the impact COVID-19 will have on the state's school fund in the upcoming school year.

"I'm very, very optimistic about the Legislative session," Wells said.

He said he expects the Legislature to draw money from its reserves to build up the school fund to the same level it would have been had the coronavirus pandemic not occurred.

The pandemic forced the state to shut down many businesses for two months, costing it significant income tax revenue and crippling the economy.

The state's May 20 budget forecast indicates the school fund will lose \$490 million in 2020-21



Observer file photo

The Union School District, like other local school districts, is banking on the Oregon Legislature to provide full funding for the 2020-21 school year.

unless the Legislature backfills this amount. If the Legislature, does this, public schools will receive the \$9 billion for the 2019-21 biennium the Legislature approved for them about a year ago.

Wells said legislators are not likely to cut school funding now because they do not want to begin a downward spiral after spending years getting the school fund back to a level it was years ago before an economic downturn

hit, forcing substantial reductions.

"They do not want to go backward," Wells said.

He said it is particularly important the state fully fund schools because of the extra costs they will encounter in 2020-21 due to following state rules for sanitizing and social distancing.

Wells noted the number of students schools will be able to have per square foot of classroom space will be cut. With schools

limited to fewer students per classroom, Wells said, some districts may have to add classroom space and others may have to hire more staff to make sure all classrooms have supervisors.

Wells does not expect the fewer-students-per-square-foot rule to be a problem in Union because the school district has additional classroom space and enough staff available.

"We will be creative in how we address this," he said.

Should the state fully fund Oregon's schools, the Union School District will likely have a 2020-21 budget that will be a little higher than its current year's budget. This budget would allow the school district to retain all of its staff and programs in 2020-21. The school district's budget committee has recommended this budget to the school board for adoption. The board will vote on adoption of the budget at its June 24 meeting.

Should the Legislature

not fully backfill funding for Oregon's schools, the Union School Board may have to meet later this summer to address spending cuts. Wells said the school district is in a solid position financially because of frugal budgeting in past years and because it received more funding than anticipated from the state in 2020-21.

The reason for the higher than anticipated funding is the school district underestimated what its enrollment would be in 2020-21, and thus built its budget based on this.

The higher than anticipated enrollment means the school district received money from the state it had not budgeted for. Wells said Union will be able to carry this funding over to 2020-21 and use it to deal with COVID-19 costs.

Enrollment has a major impact on school funding because Oregon school districts receive at least \$7,000 from the state per student.

Umatilla County's COVID-19 cases surge past 300

By Antonio Sierra and Alex Castle
EO Media Group

UMATILLA COUNTY — A surge in newly reported COVID-19 cases Monday caused Umatilla County's count to soar past the 300 threshold.

According to a Umatilla County Public Health press release, the 52 new positive cases bring the county's total to 304.

Despite the massive uptick, the public health department is reporting all the new patients are recovering at home in self-isolation and the hospitalization count remains steady at three people. Since the beginning of the pandemic, four people have died from COVID-19 in the county.

The active case count, which now stands at 131, is beginning to catch up with the recovery count at 169.

There have now been 2,969 tests in Umatilla County, with 281 coming positive and the rest considered presumptive because the patient is showing COVID-19 symptoms and had contact with a previously positive case.

The county is continuing to advise seniors and the medically vulnerable to stay home regardless of their health in addition to frequent and thorough hand washing by all residents and social distancing of at least six feet when leaving the home.

The county also is cautioning against employees going into work while sick.

"Now, more than ever, it is important for businesses to ensure that employees are not coming to work sick," the press release states. "Employees may feel internal and external pressure to work through mild illness. Businesses are encouraged to develop flexible leave policies to support employees who become ill and establish procedures for sending employees who are not feeling well home."

The 52 new cases come after Umatilla County set a record in number of cases for the previous week.

After entering Phase 2 of reopening on June 6 with 130 total cases, Umatilla County reached 243 cases on June 19, an increase of nearly 90% in that span and

including a weekly record increase of 85 new cases. Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara last week called the spike "shocking."

"We feel confident that we've positioned ourselves well, but this is not over," he said. "This is Phase 2 — this is not business as usual."

Fiumara said the health department's contact tracing investigations continue to attribute many of these new cases to instances of employees going to work with minor symptoms they don't believe are COVID-19. Other employees feel either external pressure from their employer or internal pressure from the impact of losing hours, but Fiumara said their best guidance is to be careful and stay home at first sign of any symptoms.

"One or two days home sick from work is way better than 10 to 14 days home sick from work for all of your colleagues," he said.

Graduation parties also have shown up in the county's tracing, he said, though those cases have been diffi-

cult to track because people have withheld the names of their friends and those who may have attended. While frustrating, Fiumara said that's their right, though it does affect the county's ability to meet the state's contact tracing standards.

According to data from the Oregon Health Authority, between June 8 and June 14, Umatilla County was unable to track 45% of its new cases to a source. The state has asked counties to keep that number below 30%, but Umatilla County also has failed to meet its standard of a downturn in positive test result rates.

That number is on the rise, and Fiumara said it can be attributed to more and more close contacts of known cases being tested along with the county keeping its focus on testing individuals with symptoms even though the virus can be spread by those without any.

But with testing accessibility still relatively limited in Eastern Oregon and the fact evidence of the

virus can linger and lead to a positive test result after an individual is no longer contagious, Fiumara said it's still most effective to target those outwardly sick.

"If an asymptomatic person gets a test and it's negative, it tells us nothing because tomorrow they may be positive if we test again," Fiumara said. "And if it's positive it actually tells us very little because we don't know if they're positive right now or were 10 to 20 days ago."

Morrow County last week reported its first death due to COVID-19 and its largest single-day increase in cases, with five more confirmed on June 19.

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Police detain 13 at 'high crime' home in Baker City

By Chris Collins
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Thirteen people were detained by police Wednesday morning at what officers describe as "a known high crime activity home" in an east Baker City neighborhood.

The operation, conducted by members of the Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team (BCNET), took place at 2339 East St., said Baker City police Lt. Ty Duby.

The BCNET includes officers from the Baker City Police Department and Baker County Sheriff's Office. The team is supported by the Baker County District Attorney's Office and Oregon State Police, Duby said.

The home had been owned by James Coe until March 15, when U.S. Bank took ownership of the 864-square-foot house and property for \$15,201, according to Baker County Assessor's Office records. Coe has continued to live at the address.

Duby characterized the property as "a flop house," which is known to welcome transients, many of whom have been involved in criminal activity.

He said these people were found at Coe's house Wednesday: James Reedy, Margaret Lacey, Emily Speelman, Chuck Briney, Alexander Harold Wise, Brandon Radle, Trevor Heath, Chad Cox, Eliannah Banister, Jeffery Heller, Christopher Griffith, Mariam "Evee" Collard and Haden Buck.

Buck, 25, of Klamath Falls, was arrested and lodged at the Baker County Jail on a Josephine County warrant charging him with a post-prison supervision violation on original charges of burglary and dangerous drugs, Duby said.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions at the jail, three others were cited and released.

Briney, 27, of Baker City, was cited on a Baker County Circuit Court warrant charging him with

failure to appear.

Griffith, 27, of Baker City, was cited on multiple Baker County Circuit Court warrants charging him with failure to appear.

Wise, 18, of Baker City, was cited on a Union County warrant charging him with failure to appear.

A fifth person, Cox, was wanted on an Idaho warrant, but the state of Idaho declined to extradite him, Duby said.

Wednesday's enforcement effort is part of the revival of the Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team, Duby said. The team had not been actively operating in the area for several years because of limited resources.

Duby said the focus of the BCNET as it continues to gain momentum will be on crimes related to drugs, guns and violence in the Baker County area.

David Jettison

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