

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, June 27, the 179th day of 2020. There are 187 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On June 27, 1991, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first black jurist to sit on the nation's highest court, announced his retirement. (His departure led to the nomination of Clarence Thomas to succeed him.)

ON THIS DATE

In 1844, Mormon leader Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were killed by a mob in Carthage, Illinois.

In 1846, New York and Boston were linked by telegraph wires.

In 1880, author-lecturer Helen Keller, who lived most of her life without sight or hearing, was born in Alabama.

In 1942, the FBI announced the arrests of eight Nazi saboteurs put ashore in Florida and Long Island, New York. (All were tried and sentenced to death; six were executed while two were spared for turning themselves in and cooperating with U.S. authorities.)

In 1944, during World War II, American forces liberated the French port of Cherbourg from the Germans.

In 1950, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution calling on member nations to help South Korea repel an invasion from the North.

In 1957, Hurricane Audrey slammed into coastal Louisiana and Texas as a Category 4 storm; the official death toll from the storm was placed at 390, although a variety of state, federal and local sources have estimated the number of fatalities at between 400 and 600.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon opened an official visit to the Soviet Union.

In 1988, at least 56 people were killed when a commuter train ran into a stationary train in Paris. In 1988, Mike Tyson retained the undisputed heavyweight crown as he knocked out Michael Spinks 91 seconds into the first round of a championship fight in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled, in a pair of 5-4 decisions, that displaying the Ten Commandments on government property was constitutionally permissible in some cases but not in others.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.1 million
10-14-25-29-30-45

Mega Millions: \$35 million
6-20-37-40-48—15 x3

Powerball: \$33 million
15-22-27-33-46—PB-23 x3

Win for Life: June 24
15-39-46-64

Pick 4: June 25

• 1 p.m.: 7-3-5-3

• 4 p.m.: 2-5-2-8

• 7 p.m.: 8-2-2-5

• 10 p.m.: 7-1-7-9

Pick 4: June 24

• 1 p.m.: 8-4-3-1

• 4 p.m.: 5-8-6-0

• 7 p.m.: 3-3-9-0

• 10 p.m.: 2-6-9-1

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

La Grande teenager reported missing

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Local law enforcement is searching for a runaway teen.

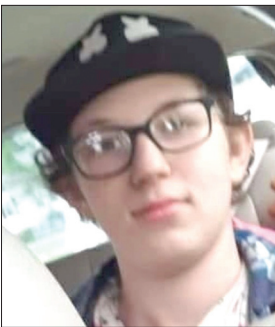
The La Grande Police Department in a press release Friday reported the family of 13-year-old Jarek Parker told police at noon Thursday the boy had run away from home. The family last saw the teen around 8:30 a.m. that morning, according to the press release.

Parker is 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighs 130 pounds and has light brown hair and hazel eyes. He was last seen wearing a Star Wars shirt, shorts, glasses, a Harry Potter hat and blue tennis shoes, according to police. The family told police it appears Parker took a backpack, a teal fanny pack, camping supplies, food and water with him.

The Union County Sheriff's Office, its search and rescue unit and Oregon State Police are assisting La Grande police and Parker's family in the search for the boy.

The La Grande Police Department did not report anyone found Jarek Parker by The Observer's press deadline Friday. Police also asked anyone who information that may help in finding Jarek Parker to call detective Ryan Miller at 541-963-1017.

Jarek Parker, 13, of La Grande, was reported missing at noon Thursday.



Contributed photo

State forestry initiates fire season in Northeast Oregon

By Phil Wright
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Oregon Department of Forestry in a press release announced it is declaring fire season for its Northeast Oregon District effective 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, July 1.

While wetter conditions were prevalent throughout the spring across much of the Northeast Oregon District, according to the press release, the weather is changing to a typical summer pattern of warmer and drier conditions, prompting fire managers to announce the beginning of fire season on the private lands under the department's protection.

"The fuel conditions will change rapidly with these summer weather conditions," Joe Hessel, district forester, said in the press release. "In some areas, we have an abundance of light and flashy fuels. These fuels will dry out quickly with the hotter and drier weather. These flashy fuels will often carry fire rapidly when they have dried out."

The Oregon Department of Forestry also stated declaring the start of fire season is a move to reduce the number of human-caused fires this summer. The declaration places fire prevention restrictions on landowners and the public. Additionally, fire prevention regulations on industrial logging and forest management activities are put into place.

"This year, debris burning is prohibited from the beginning of fire season," Hessel said in the release. "We normally restrict debris burning a month or so into fire season, depending on conditions. This change is an effort to mitigate COVID-19 exposure potential for the public and our firefighters. We also want to be sensitive to negative smoke impacts for our vulnerable populations, and reduce the resource commitments typically associated with escaped fires."

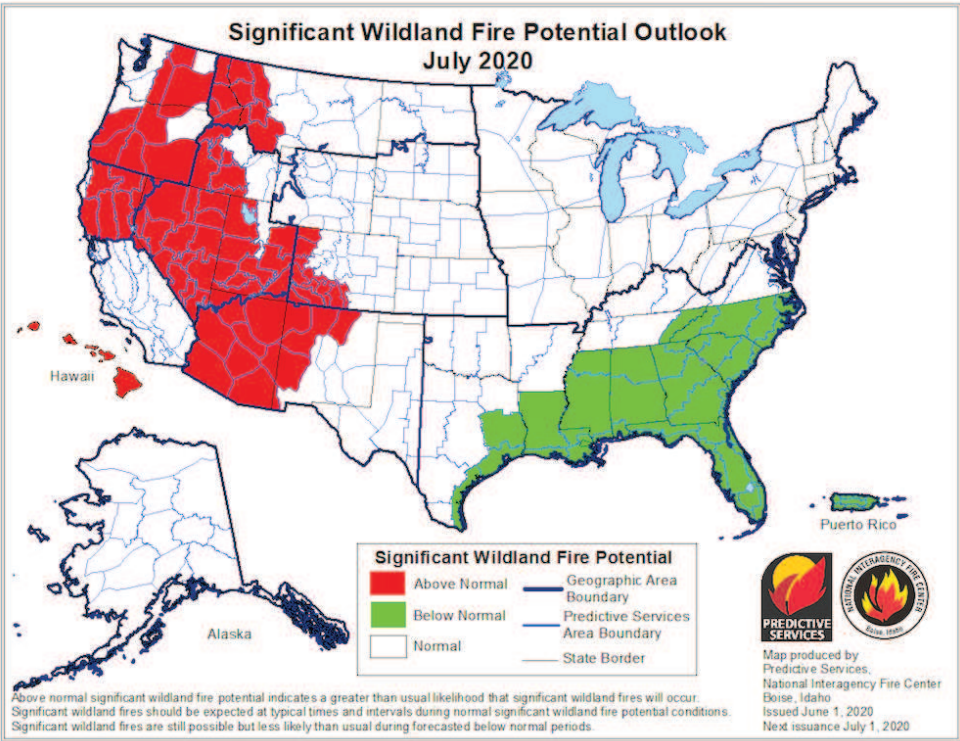


Image by Predictive Services of the National Interagency Fire Center

Farmers Market moving back to Max Square

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande Farmers Market will move back to Max Square on Saturday, a week after the city moved it to the parking lot of Eastern Oregon Net Inc., City Manager Robert Strope said.

"One of the reasons we moved it in the first place was the whole timing (of when) we had the outbreak," Strope said.

He said the decision to move the market was out of an abundance of caution.

"It was 'let's not put people in a situation where they could be exposed and let's evaluate,'" he said.

Strope added the intention was for the move to be temporary, and given there has not been a major surge in cases since the outbreak — there were 218 confirmations in two days, and 69 in the 10 days since — and the count since the outbreak, he said, was lower than many speculated, moving the market back to its original location was OK.

He also credited those at the farmers market for how they handled operating during the pandemic.

"The farmers market from the beginning has done an exceptional job with social distancing and masks," he said, adding he encourages those at the market to continue practicing those measures.

"They have been very responsible with what they are doing. We're seeing a continuation of their being attentive to precautions they need to do."

La Grande School Board adopts forward-looking budget

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School Board adopted a 2020-21 budget Wednesday designed to put it in a better position to weather possible financial shortfalls.

The school board adopted a general fund spending plan of \$26.39 million that will allow the district to maintain all programs and staff while boosting reserves significantly. The proposal is \$1.18 million greater than the 2019-20 budget and will allow the school district to build up reserves it likely will need a year from now to deal with expected state budget shortfalls due to the coronavirus-driven economic slowdown.

The school district will not spend state money it has saved since mid-March when all schools in the state were closed 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 due to furlough days, and savings on transportation and athletics expenses, according to Chris Panike, the district's business manager.

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. It appears there may not be a decrease in state funding in 2020-21.

Local education leaders, including La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza, said they anticipate the Legislature will decide this summer to provide extra funding to schools. This would allow them to receive all the funding the Legislature indicated it would provide in 2020-21 when it passed an education budget of \$9 billion for the biennium.

Panike emphasized the budget was difficult to build because there are so many financial unknowns due the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think this budget is as good as it can be with what we know about funding for next year," he said.

Union County may receive CARES grant

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Union County may receive a CARES grant in the next year.

The \$13.12 million 2020-21 general fund budget the Union County Board of Commissioners adopted Wednesday includes an appropriation for a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act grant of up to \$750,000. The appropriation was not included in the 2020-21 spending plan the county's budget committee approved on May 20 because it was not known if the county would receive a CARES grant.

Since then, though, the likelihood of Union County receiving a CARES grant has become much greater, said Shelley Burgess, the administrative officer/ budget officer for Union County.

The state will decide later when and how to distribute federal CARES funds to counties. Burgess said having the CARES grant in its budget will put Union County in a position to quickly accept and receive it.

Union County would have to adhere to U.S. Treasury Department guidelines when spending the CARES grant money.

The addition of the grant in the budget means the county's budget in 2020-21 will be about 5% greater than the current year's budget.

Despite these rosy numbers, there are potential clouds of concern on the horizon because the fiscal impact the COVID-19 pandemic will have on Union County is not known at this time, Burgess said.

Umatilla County law enforcement report two homicides in 72 hours

By Alex Castle
EO Media Group

UMATILLA COUNTY — The report of two murders in the span of 72 hours between Saturday, June 20, and Tuesday, June 23, marks the fourth and fifth homicides reported in Umatilla County this year.

On the west end of the county, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is working alongside Oregon State Police to investigate an apparent homicide after Tracey Scott Meadows, 29, of Hood River, was found dead June 20 with gunshot wounds while stopped in a pickup at the intersection of Lamb Road and Interstate 82 outside of Hermiston.

On the east end, the Pendleton Police Department arrested William Harvey Butcher III, 28, on June 23 on one probable cause charge of second-degree murder for allegedly beating and killing Daniel Wade Self, 47, according to a press release from the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office.

Both murders also occurred within 14 days of police initiating an investigation in Hermiston after Jesus Eli Lopez, 21, was found shot to death June 9 at a residence on East Francolin Avenue.

"There's no linkage between the three separate crimes," Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said. "If there were a linkage then we'd all probably be singing a different tune rather than, in essence, just worrying about our own backyard."

While the killings may not have a connection, they appear to be a deviation from the norm.

No homicides were reported in Hermiston in 2019 and the city had been averaging just one reported homicide per year over the last 10 years. But now Hermiston police are investigating the murders of Meadows and Lopez, along with the murder of Jordan Deloen Crandall, 28, who was found shot to death the morning of March 18 next to an irrigation ditch near Alpine Drive and Punkin Center Road.

The investigation into Crandall's murder has yet to yield any arrests. Edmiston said his department's recent investigations have been challenged with the unfortunate luck of having relatively few leads to start with and the inherent difference between police, who need to show probable cause, and prosecutors, who need to show proof beyond a reasonable doubt.



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