

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Thursday, July 2, the 184th day of 2020. There are 182 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On July 2, 1881, President James A. Garfield was shot by Charles J. Guiteau at the Washington railroad station; Garfield died the following September. (Guiteau was hanged in June 1882.)

ON THIS DATE

In 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution saying that “these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.”

In 1937, aviator Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan disappeared over the Pacific Ocean while attempting to make the first round-the-world flight along the equator.

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Gregg v. Georgia, ruled 7-2 the death penalty was not inherently cruel or unusual.

In 1986, ruling in a pair of cases, the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action as a remedy for past job discrimination.

In 2018, rescue divers in Thailand found 12 boys and their soccer coach, who had been trapped by flooding as they explored a cave more than a week earlier.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.3 million

8-18-22-27-28-45

Mega Millions: \$53 million

9-16-29-37-53 – 11 x2

Powerball: \$42 million

9-36-49-56-62 – PB-8 x2

Win for Life: June 29

43-48-71-73

Pick 4: June 30

• 1 p.m.: 8-7-9-3

• 4 p.m.: 5-3-2-3

• 7 p.m.: 2-5-7-2

• 10 p.m.: 0-6-1-8

Pick 4: June 29

• 1 p.m.: 5-7-7-7

• 4 p.m.: 3-1-9-7

• 7 p.m.: 9-5-8-6

• 10 p.m.: 2-2-8-4

DELIVERY ISSUES?

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Imbler High School graduation plans announced

By Dick Mason
The Observer

IMBLER — Imbler High School’s graduation plans have been finalized, and they are marked by the presence and absence of tradition.

Commencement will begin at 10 a.m. on the Fourth of July near the south end zone of the school’s football field. The only spectators will be the families of the graduates, who will watch from their vehicles parked on the field.

This break from tradition allows for everyone attending to conform to social distancing rules during the coronavirus pandemic. Still, the Independence Day commencement will have a sense of normalcy for the seniors, who will sit together on the graduation stage, maintaining a long-standing custom.

In addition, all seniors will receive their diplomas Saturday from the school board’s chair, Pam Glenn, continuing the tradition of the head of the school board presenting the diplomas.

The end result is Imbler commencement may be the most traditional of any high school in Union County this year.

“We want our seniors to have as normal a graduation as possible,” said Imbler School District Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell.

She said the high school is in a better position to do this while conforming to social distancing rules because it has a class of only 13, one of its smallest in several years.

The families of the graduates will each be allowed to bring two vehicles to commencement and will have to remain in them during the ceremony. Each senior has received two tickets for the entrance of family vehicles to the graduation. Drivers of vehicles without a ticket will not be able to attend the graduation.

Drivers will be required to park in spaces, which will be drawn on the football field.

Those speaking at the graduation ceremony include valedictorian Ben Wagner and salutatorian Brendan Colwell.

Following the graduation, families will be able to leave their vehicles to have a photographer take photos with their graduates. Families will come up one at a time for photos and then return to their vehicles.

Lakey-Campbell said it is likely all of the school’s graduating seniors will be able to attend the ceremony. All have remained in the Grande Ronde Valley except one student who went to Utah but is expected to be at Saturday’s ceremony.

The Imbler School Board

decided in May to schedule the graduation ceremony for July 4 in the hopes the pandemic would have dissipated in Union County to the point social distancing standards would be relaxed, allowing for a traditional graduation in the high school gym.

These plans were derailed by the recent spike in COVID-19 cases.

The board in May also was hopeful that after the graduation ceremony, students could ride in Imbler’s annual Fourth of July parade, Lakey-Campbell said.

That hope ended when the city of Imbler canceled the event because of the pandemic.

Pendleton cautious about interpreting sewer COVID-19 data

La Grande is not testing wastewater

By Antonio Sierra
EO Media Group

PENDLETON — There may be COVID-19 in the city of Pendleton’s wastewater system, but city officials aren’t trying to take the results literally.

According to an internal spreadsheet provided by the city, Pendleton has been testing for the presence of coronavirus at its sewage plant since late March.

The system didn’t show any results until April 5, when a lab determined that COVID-19 was prevalent in 0.84% of its sample, a percentage it estimated came from a community of 150 infected people. The lab didn’t detect anything within the next six weekly samples until June 7, when Pendleton’s sample suddenly ballooned to a 4.2% prevalence rate, which led officials to estimate 730 cases in the community.

reported 13 cases in the Pendleton area.

City Manager Robb Corbett compared the sewer test results to an experimental drug trial, a new method of testing that needed more time and work to determine if it’s effective and accurate.

Corbett said the city hasn’t publicized the results or shared the data with local health officials because of the wildly fluctuating numbers.

Wastewater Superintendent Mark Milne isn’t trying to take the tests results at face value either, saying the data may just show the Pendleton area is seeing an upward trend in COVID-19 cases.

There are no state or federal rules that require sewer systems to test for the virus, but Milne decided to begin testing Pendleton’s system after he saw a promotion in Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies offering \$120 tests.

For the past three months, plant staff have been collecting a composite wastewater sample over a 24-hour period. They transfer the sample to a container Biobot provides, which then goes to the company’s lab for analysis.

While Biobot’s 730-case estimate suggests the Pendleton area has more cases than public data has indicated, Milne said Biobot compared Pendleton’s sample data to other cities without factoring in what makes those cities different, such as density or industry.



Photo by Sam Anthony/EO Media Group

Heidi Dalton is renovating the interior of the historic Pythian Castle at First Street and Washington Avenue, Baker City.

New owner hopes to recapture glory of Baker City’s Pythian Castle

By Sam Anthony
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Baker City’s Pythian Castle remains a distinctive example of downtown Baker City architecture, but its interior hasn’t aged as well as its exterior of locally quarried Pleasant Valley tuffstone.

Heidi Dalton hopes to change that.

Dalton bought the Castle, which was built in 1907 as a hall for The Fraternal Order of the Knights of Pythias, a nonsectarian organization, earlier this year with the goal of restoring the inside of the building to its former glory.

Two days later, Dalton started work on the Castle, at the southwest corner of First Street and Washington Avenue.

She’s had the interior stripped to the framing, with the original windows, boards and other

materials scattered on the floor, waiting to be reused.

While Dalton wants to modernize the Castle a bit, she also intends to retain its original charm.

“Almost everything is being reused,” Dalton said. “Most of the pieces of trim are being reused and the original hardwood floors are being refinished.”

Dalton said the history behind the Castle was one of the biggest reasons why she bought it.

“I think it’s amazing to think of all the people who have walked on these same stairs,” she said.

Dalton said she bought the Pythian Castle from a bank for \$400,000, and she hopes to have the renovations done by the end of summer. She sees the building as both an investment — with the downstairs offices and an apartment bringing in revenue — and a

home for her and her two daughters.

Dalton is a designer, as well as the former executive director of the Baker County YMCA. She has restored homes in the past, but she said this is “definitely the biggest project I’ve ever tackled.”

When finished, the Castle’s 17,000 square feet will include The Hen House Cafe on the first floor, an architectural design studio, six offices for businesses to lease, a basement apartment, a full housing area on the second floor where Dalton plans to live with her daughters, and a ballroom with stained glass windows.

Dalton said that she plans to turn the ballroom, once the site of parties, into an event center that could be rented for weddings, parties and fundraisers when restrictions on the size of gatherings are eased.

OK Theatre one of 8 to get preservation grant

By Bill Bradshaw
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Enterprise’s iconic OK Theatre is to be the recipient of part of a \$615,000 grant in federal funds the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department received for the preservation of historic theaters.

The state parks department announced the grants in a Monday, June 29, press release.

Darrell Brann, who owns the theater with his wife, Christi, said he hadn’t seen the press release, but was looking forward to it.

He said he had applied for the maximum of \$100,000 a single establishment could apply for and he expects to receive about \$85,000 of that amount. He’s now beginning the process of arranging contractors to do the work.

Brann said he hopes to restore the theater to its century-old look, and although the original had no marquee, he wants to give it one that would fit in 1919.

“One of the goals is to bring back the marquee ... that’s a little more appropriate to the time period,” he said.

The press release said work to the OK will be to restore the façade and store fronts, update the concessions area and add a bar service area.

Brann said some work has been done to the concessions area, which he hopes to complete, as well as add handicapped access.

The theater has been closed along with other businesses because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Umatilla County churches respond to Union County outbreak

By Nada Sewidan
EO Media Group

UMATILLA COUNTY — Some Umatilla County churches have reexamined their church service protocols following a COVID-19 outbreak at a Union County church.

The Lighthouse Pentecostal Church in Island City is now the site of the largest outbreak in Oregon since the pandemic began. The church is linked to at least 236 people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Hermiston Assembly Associate Pastor Alex Valle-Lopez said since the Union County outbreak, his church has been debating if they should remain open or temporarily close.

“As we’ve seen cases go up, there have been conversations among our staff,” he said. “We are thinking of closing as a preventative measure.”

Valle-Lopez said that conversations with other members of the church have ramped up, and although views may be polarizing on whether to go to church or stay home, there is no denying cases are spiking.

He said although the church is following the CDC-recommended guidelines, including social distancing measures, sectioning off pews and limiting the number of families in the church, he is unsure if they’ll remain open.

“We want to be proactive in ensuring health and safety in our building and staff,” he said. “There is a strong possibility that this weekend we might just close out of abundance of caution.”

A since-deleted video of a church service in the Lighthouse Pentecostal Church showed members worshipping in close proximity to one another. Valle-Lopez said one way to help mitigate close contact in his congregation is to limit the number of people who can be in the church building. While the space can usually house about 500 people, they are now limiting it to just 60 people at a time.

“For us, whatever keeps

people safe is what we’re going to do,” he said.

As word was coming out of the Union County outbreak, Executive Pastor Wes Sheley at Pendleton First Assembly said it became clear he needed to talk with their worshippers about safety.

“The outbreak is unfortunate,” Sheley said. “It’s an individual leadership and their decision, and it unfortunately affects a lot of people.”

Since the outbreak, Sheley noted more congregants have been attending services virtually rather than in person. He said the driving factor for the church’s safety protocols is to be there not just for one

particular individual but for all individuals.

“Our heart’s desire is to care for the people in our church, but also for the people in our community,” he said.

Sheley said Pendleton First Assembly is open and welcomes up to 130 people spread through the sanctuary. The church also added additional services throughout the week to get in more worshippers without compromising distancing measures.

First Christian Church in Pendleton is among churches that have either delayed reopening plans or remain closed in response to the Union County outbreak.

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