

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY
Today is Saturday, July 25, the 207th day of 2020. There are 159 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT
On July 25, 1866, Ulysses S. Grant was named General of the Army of the United States, the first officer to hold the rank.

ON THIS DATE
In 1814, the Battle of Lundy's Lane, one of the bloodiest battles of the War of 1812, took place in present-day Niagara Falls, Ontario, with no clear victor.
In 1943, Benito Mussolini was dismissed as premier of Italy by King Victor Emmanuel III, and placed under arrest. (However, Mussolini was later rescued by the Nazis, and re-asserted his authority.)
In 1946, the United States detonated an atomic bomb near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in the first underwater test of the device.
In 1952, Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.
In 1956, the Italian liner SS Andrea Doria collided with the Swedish passenger ship Stockholm off the New England coast late at night and began sinking; 51 people — 46 from the Andrea Doria, five from the Stockholm — were killed. (The Andrea Doria capsized and sank the following morning.)
In 1960, a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina, that had been the scene of a sit-in protest against its whites-only lunch counter dropped its segregation policy.
In 1972, the notorious Tuskegee syphilis experiment came to light as The Associated Press reported that for the previous four decades, the U.S. Public Health Service, in conjunction with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, had been allowing poor, rural Black male patients with syphilis to go without treatment, even allowing them to die, as a way of studying the disease.
In 1985, a spokeswoman for Rock Hudson confirmed that the actor, hospitalized in Paris, was suffering from AIDS. (Hudson died in October 1985.)

LOTTERY
Megabucks: \$4.3 million 1-13-17-29-30-33
Mega Millions: \$113 million 14-25-26-41-43—15 x3
Powerball: \$106 million 16-25-36-44-55—PB-14 x3
Win for Life: July 22 15-19-43-59
Pick 4: July 23
• **1 p.m.:** 1-9-9-3; • **4 p.m.:** 6-9-7-3
• **7 p.m.:** 8-9-5-7; • **10 p.m.:** 0-9-5-8
Pick 4: July 18
• **1 p.m.:** 3-9-2-3; • **4 p.m.:** 0-1-8-1
• **7 p.m.:** 7-7-0-5; • **10 p.m.:** 2-9-0-3

DELIVERY ISSUES?
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Elgin schools to open Aug. 31

By Dick Mason
The Observer

ELGIN — School is set to reopen in the Elgin School District late next month.

The Elgin School Board endorsed via consensus Monday night a plan Superintendent Dianne Greif proposed to have the district reopen for classes Aug. 31. The opening would mark the first time Elgin's public schools have been open since mid-March when they and all of the state's schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greif said another local spike in the number of COVID-19 cases could delay reopening.

“Hopefully our numbers will keep going down in the community,” Greif said.

Her plan calls for conducting classes at Stella Mayfield Elementary School in a traditional manner, though with precautions to protect against the virus.

Extensive sanitizing will be a part of the work day, students will eat meals in classrooms and students will not move to different sites throughout the building for classes.

“Everything will have to be controlled,” Greif said. “Children will not be running out of school when the bell rings.”

Elgin High School students will learn in cohorts. The district will determine the number of students in each group later. Cohort members will remain in their classroom while teachers come in and out during the school day.

“We will transition teachers instead of kids,”



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Schools in Elgin will open Aug. 31 under a plan School District Superintendent Dianne Greif revealed earlier this week barring a local spike in the number of COVID-19 cases.

“Everything will have to be controlled. Children will not be running out of school when the bell rings.”

— **Dianne Greif**, Elgin School District Superintendent

Greif said.

Greif said this would be more efficient than moving students from room to room for classes, which would mean more cleaning. That would not be the case each time a teacher enters a classroom.

A major advantage of keeping students in cohorts, Greif said, is if one gets COVID-19 only a relatively small number will have to be isolated.

The COVID-19 reopening issues the board discussed included school supplies. Greif and the board agreed it would be best for the school district to provide school supplies to students rather than have them bring their own to avoid contamination.

“This would be a good

year not to give out school supply lists,” Greif said.

The superintendent said some parents may be pulling their children out of school because of the pandemic, and so far the parents of at least four children have indicated they will keep their children out of school. But Greif said the families intend to re-enroll their children in the district next year.

“They are not upset with the school district about anything,” Greif said.

Teachers nationwide have indicated they are worried about returning due to risks of catching the virus. Greif said the district's teachers have not raised that concern,

but if employees do and working from home is not an option, they have paid and unpaid leave choices. She said they also will be able will to submit a written request for paid leave available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Oregon Family Leave Act and Oregon Sick Leave.

The Elgin School District later will post a letter about its reopening plan on its website and seek advice from the Union Public Health Department regarding how best to meet social distancing standards. All Oregon school districts must submit their reopening plans to the Oregon Department of Education by Aug. 15.

Joseph City Council member dies

By Bill Bradshaw
EO Media Group

JOSEPH — Richard Pointer, a member of the Joseph City Council, died Thursday, July 16, at his home in Joseph, City Administrator Larry Braden said.

Pointer had been resting at home for several weeks after undergoing surgery on a leg, Braden said. He did not attend any city meetings during that time.

“He was kind of quarantined because of the surgery,” Braden said.



Pointer

“He hadn't been around anyone since mid-June.”

No cause of death could be confirmed.

A memorial, of sorts, was posted on the city's Facebook page mourning the loss of Pointer.

“The city of Joseph, the Joseph City Council and Joseph Charter School have lost a great man. There are not words to describe the hole that is left in our

hearts and in our community,” the post said.

“Councilman Richard Pointer passed away at his home the night of July 16. Richard and his wife, Jeanette, had only lived in Joseph a few years. However, if you didn't know better, you'd think they had been here their whole lives. Richard truly loved this community and the people who call it home. Richard loved his wife and family and spoke about them everyday. He loved his Joseph Eagles

and took so much pride in them. He loved those kids and if you spent much time with him, he would tell you all about them. But, above all, he loved God.”

Pointer is survived by his wife, Jeanette.

Pointer had served on the council only about six months, Braden said, having been appointed to fill one of two vacant seats. Filling the vacancy left by Pointer's death will be discussed at the next council meeting, scheduled for Aug. 13.

Fewer coins making the rounds

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The United States is facing its first coin shortage since the 1960s, and Kelly McPhee, vice president of communications for Banner Bank, La Grande, said a convergence of challenges is the cause.

“There's a perfect storm brewing,” she said. “We have a pandemic that is a health crisis that, for a lot of families and businesses, had turned into a financial crisis. No one could have foreseen that. We're facing a number of components we didn't see coming.”

Some businesses that go through a lot of coin or cash transactions remain closed, or businesses that are open are restricting the amount of coins for transactions unless a customer has exact change.

“You have a lot of other businesses that handle cash and coin that have asked their customers to use plastic,” she said, while also pointing to a reduction of hours at businesses slowing the circulation of coinage.

Additionally banks are being rationed in the amount of coinage they receive from the U.S. government and are restricted on the amount they can give out.

“It's coming right

down from the federal reserve that the change shortage is happening,” said Loretta Bly, service manager at the La Grande Wells Fargo. “It definitely doesn't help with taking care of our customers with the supply and demand. You have customers that need it for laundry. ... We do have to limit the rolls of denomination that go out.”

McPhee said the federal response to the shortage has been to accelerate the timeline at which it produces new coins. The decision to ration and restrict the amount given out also is part of the plan.

Bly and McPhee said the shortage is restricted only to coins and not cash.

The feds began to notice the shortage in early June, according to McPhee, and she said the impact of it began to be felt in the Northwest a few weeks later.

“We've been in it about six weeks right now. It affects different parts of the country differently. We didn't see it until the last three weeks in the Northwest,” she said.

The expectation from the government, McPhee said, is as more businesses open back up, the shortage should be short lived.

La Grande at sunset



Staff photo by Phil Wright

The sun sets Thursday behind La Grande. The town's temperature that day peaked at 82, according to the National Weather Service, and the weekend looks to have clear skies and warm days. But the Weather Service forecast shows temperatures reaching the mid 90s starting Monday.

Cove Cherry Fair canceled but parade marches on

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

COVE — The Cove Cherry Fair came to a demise this year because of the coronavirus. While the event will not see its 21st year until 2021 at the earliest, the parade of cars and trucks that would have marked its kickoff still will roll.

“People like to do this

stuff, it's fun and everyone needs a little bit of joy this year, and I am hoping the Cherry Fair Parade does that,” Cherry Fair coordinator Cindy Edwards said.

The parade is Aug. 15 and starts at 10 a.m. and features residents and organizations from cities across Union County. The route follows Highway 237 from Ash Street to Church

Street in the hamlet. The parade does not allow political floats but anyone who would like to participate is welcome to sign up.

“This year's parade will look different in that spectators will be expected to use their judgements in following the governor's orders,” Edwards said. “I'm sure you'll see a lot of masks and face coverings.”

News BRIEFS

The Observer

Former Enterprise thief faces new charges

ALBANY — A former Enterprise woman who stole thousands of dollars from two local organizations now faces similar charges in Linn County.

Amber Wulff in 2010 took a deal and pleaded guilty to multiple counts of theft and forgery for ripping off the Enterprise Education Foundation and Wallowa Valley Little League.

Now Wulff, who lives in Scio, faces once count each of first-degree theft, identity theft and money laundering and eight counts of first-degree aggravated theft.

All the charge are felonies. According to court documents, the state has accused Wulff of stealing more than \$300,000 from a one person.

The state indicted her on the charges on July 10. Court records also show she used a credit card to pay \$10,000 — 10% of her \$100,000 bail — on July 13 to get out of jail. Her next court appearance is Aug. 17.

The Wallowa County Circuit Court in 2010 handed Wulff a sentence of 130 days in jail, three years of probation and ordered her to pay \$8,223 to the Wallowa Valley Little League Association and \$8,798 to the foundation, plus thousands of dollars in fines.

Grant helps vet transportation roll on

UNION COUNTY — The Oregon Department of Transportation provided Union County Veterans Services with a \$50,000 grant for its Veterans Ride to Wellness program. The grant will fund the program for the next fiscal year, according to Union County Veterans Service officer Brian Blais.

The Veterans Ride to Wellness program provides veterans with transportation to nonemergency medical appointments at no cost. According to Blais, the program gives veterans the ability to seek medical care at veteran's medical facilities outside Union County.

“There can be many different reasons why a veteran needs a ride to and from a medical appointment,” Blais said. “Especially when their appointment is in Walla Walla or Boise. Transportation for veterans to get to and from outside of the area medical appointments is something that we need here in rural Eastern Oregon, and the Veterans Rides to Wellness program is instrumental in meeting this need.”

The state transportation department also provided grants to six other counties for a total of \$230,000 under the Rural Veterans' Healthcare Transportation Grant Program.

Neighbors Together receives boost from coffee company

LA GRANDE — The Dutch Brothers Foundation donated almost \$1,000 to the Neighbors Together of Union County food bank.

The nonprofit that provides food for residents of Union County reported the donation Wednesday in a press release. The funding has gone toward purchasing food and supplies for people in need, according to Neighbors Together President Hannah Voetberg.

“We would not be able to provide nearly as much food to the neediest in our community without support from groups like the Dutch Bros. Foundation,” Voetberg said in the release.

The Dutch Brothers Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Dutch Brothers Coffee and has been donating to Neighbors Together throughout the COVID-19 crisis as the need for assistance has increased, according to Voetberg.