

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY
Today is Saturday, Aug. 1, the 214th day of 2020. There are 152 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT
On August 1, 1957, the United States and Canada announced they had agreed to create the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).

ON THIS DATE
In 1714, Britain's Queen Anne died at age 49; she was succeeded by George I.
In 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established an aeronautical division, the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force.
In 1912, the U.S. Marine Corps' first pilot, 1st Lt. Alfred A. Cunningham, went on his first solo flight as he took off in a Burgess/Curtis Hydroplane from Marblehead Harbor in Massachusetts.
In 1914, Germany declared war on Russia at the onset of World War I.
In 1936, the Olympics opened in Berlin with a ceremony presided over by Adolf Hitler.
In 1944, an uprising broke out in Warsaw, Poland, against Nazi occupation; the revolt lasted two months before collapsing.
In 1981, the rock music video channel MTV made its debut.
In 2007, the eight-lane Interstate 35W bridge, a major Minneapolis artery, collapsed into the Mississippi River during evening rush hour, killing 13 people.
In 2014, a medical examiner ruled that a New York City police officer's chokehold caused the death of Eric Garner, whose videotaped arrest and final pleas of "I can't breathe!" had sparked outrage.

LOTTERY
Megabucks: \$4.6 million
12-22-28-32-34-38
Mega Millions: \$20 million
17-20-27-31-34—19 x4
Powerball: \$126 million
7-29-35-40-45—PB-26 x2
Win for Life: July 29
4-29-32-77
Pick 4: July 30
• **1 p.m.:** 0-5-2-7
• **4 p.m.:** 5-2-3-6
• **7 p.m.:** 4-6-7-8
• **10 p.m.:** 7-3-9-9
Pick 4: July 29
• **1 p.m.:** 4-1-6-3
• **4 p.m.:** 2-2-3-1
• **7 p.m.:** 5-8-5-9
• **10 p.m.:** 6-0-9-8
DELIVERY ISSUES?
If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

CORRECTION
The Observer in the Thursday, July 30, 2020, article, "Census takers are on their way" reported inaccurate information from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the start date of census takers visiting homes. Census takers began training July 30 and will start visiting homes Aug. 11.

Lightning sparks fires in Blue Mountains

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest puts more restrictions into effect

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Lightning strikes caused several fires to break out in Union County on the night of Wednesday, July 29. But Union County Emergency Services Manager JB Brock said rainfall following the lighting extinguished the flames before firefighters arrived.

“There were several down strikes on the face of Mt. Harris and Mt. Fanny, and dispatch was getting a ton of calls as fires popped up,” Brock said. “But then rain came through, which made finding the fires difficult.”

Calls regarding the fires started coming at 8 p.m. according to Union County dispatcher Ronda Griffin. Most fires were near Cove, and by 9 p.m. dispatch answered 32 calls about the fires.

The Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch

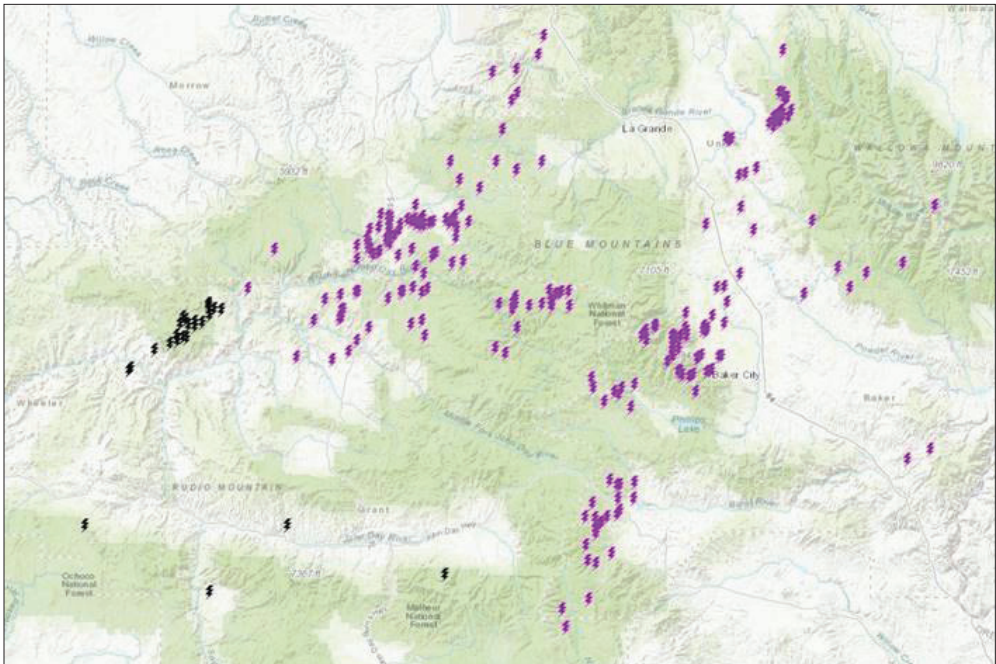


Image contributed by Oregon Department of Forestry

This image of the Blue Mountains in Eastern Oregon displays where fires popped up Wednesday night as thunderstorms rolled through the area. The hot and dry conditions could spark more fires.

Center and John Day Interagency Dispatch Center received approximately 30 reports of fires, according to a press release from the Oregon Department of Forestry, which also anticipated more reports as hot weather continues and the fire danger remains high.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton is forecasting dry conditions and high temperatures into the low 90s for La Grande through the weekend. The NWS issued an excessive heat warning for the town for Friday, which had a high of at least 100.

Assistant forecaster Ann Adams, however, said the Grande Ronde Valley is unlikely to see any additional thunderstorms or lightning in the coming days.

In response to rising fire danger levels, additional public use restrictions went into effect Friday on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest that prohibit campfires, wood stoves, briquette fires and other activities.

The restrictions allow

campfires in fire pits at developed recreation sites. Anyone with a campfire must have a tool that can serve as a shovel and at least 1 gallon of water. Campfires must be attended at all times and completely extinguished prior to leaving. Campfires also are OK in Designated Wilderness Areas — however, campfires are not allowed in the Lakes Basin of the Eagle Cap Wilderness any time of the year.

Chainsaw use requires a permit, and generators must be contained in the bed of a pickup or in an area with all flammable material at least 10 feet away. Other internal combustion engines are prohibited, except for motor vehicles.

Forest users also cannot drive motor vehicles off developed forest roads and trails with one exception: Vehicles may be used to access campsites within 300 feet of an open developed road.

The Oregon Department of Forestry Northeast Oregon District also implemented public use restrictions that went into effect Friday on lands under its protection.

News BRIEFS

La Grande recreational pot tax fizzles

LA GRANDE — La Grande voters probably will not vote in November on a 3% tax on recreational marijuana.

The La Grande City Council held a public hearing and first reading on the proposal on July 1. But City Manager Robert Strobe said Tuesday the council is likely to table the measure at its meeting Monday, Aug. 3.

The city had scheduled a second reading for the tax ordinance at that meeting, which would have allowed the council to vote and put the measure on the ballot for the Nov. 3 general election.

Strobe said he is recommending the council table the tax proposal because there is now no need for it.

Earlier this year this was a possibility when Rona Lindsey, the owner of HWY30 Cannabis, a La Grande medical marijuana dispensary, started a petition drive asking residents to consider repealing the local ban on the sale of recreational marijuana.

Lindsey had until July 6 to submit her petition to the city, but she did not submit petition by the deadline.

“It would not make sense to have it on the ballot when there would be nothing to tax,” Strobe said.

Second arrest made in connection to 2018 murder

JOHN DAY — A second suspect has been arrested for murder and arson after a couple's house was destroyed by fire in rural Grant County in 2018.

Gabrielle I. Connery, 46, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was arrested by the Albuquerque Police Department on a fugitive warrant from Grant County, according to a July 30 press release from Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer.

A July 27 grand jury indictment accuses Connery of first-degree murder for the deaths of Terry and Sharon Smith, first-degree arson and unauthorized use of a vehicle on July 18, 2018. She is being held in the Bernalillo County Detention Center, awaiting extradition to Oregon.

Her son, Isaac Connery, 23, was arrested in New Mexico on June 26 on the

same charges. He has been extradited to Oregon and is being held in the Grant County Jail with bail set at \$500,000.

The two are accused of killing Terry and Sharon Smith in July 2018 and setting fire to their home on Nans Rock Road in the Laycock Creek area between Mt. Vernon and John Day.

Enterprise woman cited after refusing to wear face mask

ENTERPRISE — A woman upset that she was required to wear a face mask at Ace Hardware in Enterprise was cited for trespassing when she refused to get a mask or leave the premises Friday, July 24, according to a Wallowa County sheriff's deputy.

The deputy said the matter has been turned over to the Enterprise Police Department. The woman was not identified.

Nick Cameron, owner of the store, said the woman became upset when told she was required to wear a face mask or leave the store. She refused to do either until the deputy arrived. At that point, she cooperated with the deputy and left.

Cameron said the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the agency charged with enforcing Gov. Kate Brown's orders intended to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. On Wednesday, July 22, Brown issued stricter guidelines to be implemented Friday that included face masks indoors.

Cameron said OSHA has told him the agency has received complaints about the store, though no citations have been issued. He wants to keep it that way, and said he had no choice but to call police.

American Red Cross seeks volunteers

PORTLAND — The American Red Cross is seeking volunteers to help during fire season in the Pacific Northwest, the organization announced in a press release.

Shelter needs are a special point of emphasis, according to the release.

The crisis support group also is seeking help on the health care front from RNs, LPNs, LVNs, APRNs, NPs, EMTs, paramedics, MDs/DOs or PAs who have an active, current and “unencumbered” license. There also are roles for CNAs or CHHAs.

Those interested in volunteering should visit [redcross.org/volunteertoday](https://www.redcross.org/volunteertoday).
— EO Media Group

Cove eyes revised charter

By Dick Mason
The Observer

COVE — A municipal court may be on the horizon for Cove.

The town's residents this fall could vote on a revised city charter that would make it easier to create a municipal court. Cove City Recorder Donna Lewis said the city is having difficulty enforcing its ordinances, and a municipal court would remedy that issue.

While the city council has revised the charter, it still needs to pass a resolution directing Lewis to put it in the ballot for the Nov. 3 election. The council will vote on this resolution when it meets Tuesday, Aug. 4 at 7 p.m. at city hall.

Coronavirus restrictions still limit the number of people who can attend the meeting. Information on watching the meeting online is available on the city of Cove's website, www.cityofcove.org.

The city has been working on revising the charter for the past year-and-a-half with some assistance from the



Photo contributed by the city of Cove

The Cove City Council takes to city hall, above, Tuesday, Aug. 4, to pass a resolution to place the town's revised charter on the ballot for November.

League of Oregon Cities, which advocates for Oregon's cities via the Legislature and other means. The league suggested revisions to make sure wording in the city's charter conforms to state and federal laws.

Lewis said the league was a “big help” with the project.

The Cove City Council made its revisions at six public meetings, and at least one revisions reflects society's technological advancements.

For example, the current charter states the city must advertise all council meetings in three sources or locations, which can

include The Observer and the Cove post office but not the city's own website. But the revision would allow the city to post notices about its meetings on the city website.

Lewis said she can understand why the present charter omits the website.

“I don't think we had a website in 2000,” Lewis said, which was the last time the town revised the charter.

Other revisions involved making language in the charter gender neutral. For example, the word “councilor” replaces all references to “councilman.”

Local film festival goes online for 2020

EOFF selection committee working to choose 12 features, 40 shorts

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The annual Eastern Oregon Film Festival in La Grande will be completely online for the 2020 season.

The weekend-long festival in October has operated in venues along Depot Street in downtown. But due to coronavirus regulations regarding gathering sizes, the festival's films now will be available for viewers to screen at home Oct. 22-24.

“We are not ones to give up easily and throw in the towel,” festival director Christopher Jennings said. “We are still going to do it for several reasons.”

He said that includes respecting the time and money filmmakers have put into their projects. Additionally, the festival has elevated the area, Jennings said, and would like to keep the event on people's radar.

“If we stopped it would be easy not to pick it up



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

The Eastern Oregon Film Festival in La Grande operated in 2019 in downtown venues but this year goes entirely online because of the coronavirus.

“We will still have a hub for the festival. A place for people to come together to discuss the film, ask questions and talk to the people who make them.”

— Christopher Jennings, EOFF director

again,” Jennings said. “We want to keep our name and the event in people's minds. It is something people from all over have come to look forward to.”

This year's festival

received more than 120 films, which the film festival's selection committee is narrowing down to about 12 features and up to 40 short films.

Jennings said if cases

in Union County improve and the governor lifts gathering regulations, it is possible the event will be in person. The festival likely will use Vimeo to stream films and use a meeting platform to give audience members the chance to talk to filmmakers.

“We will still have a hub for the festival,” Jennings said. “A place for people to come together to discuss the film, ask questions and talk to the people who make them.”