

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, Aug. 8, the 221st day of 2020. There are 145 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On August 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon, facing damaging new revelations in the Watergate scandal, announced he would resign the following day.

ONTHIS DATE

In 1973, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew branded as “damned lies” reports he had taken kickbacks from government contracts in Maryland, and vowed not to resign — which he ended up doing.

In 2003, the Boston Roman Catholic archdiocese offered \$55 million to settle more than 500 lawsuits stemming from alleged sex abuse by priests.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$4.9 million 3-7-14-27-32-41

Mega Millions: \$20 million 2-22-30-42-62 — 20 x3

Powerball: \$147 million 7-14-17-57-65 — PB-24 x5

Win for Life: Aug. 5 20-36-43-77

Pick 4: Aug. 6

• 1 p.m.: 4-6-1-6; • 4 p.m.: 7-2-4-8

• 7 p.m.: 4-5-7-7; • 10 p.m.: 0-2-4-8

Pick 4: Aug. 5

• 1 p.m.: 1-7-1-8; • 4 p.m.: 4-0-0-4

• 7 p.m.: 5-4-2-1; • 10 p.m.: 2-4-0-9

DELIVERY ISSUES?

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Imbler schools face challenges of mask mandate

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

IMBLER — Imbler Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell said she wants to see students return to in-person classes starting Aug. 31, but at the school board meeting Wednesday, Aug. 5, it sounded like that was a less likely option.

Lakey-Campbell said several parents have notified the district their child would not attend classes if they are held in person. The main reason: Most of the parents don’t want their children to wear masks, one of the state’s requirements for schools to allow students and staff in classrooms in the fall. As a result, the district is looking at ways for students at home to receive their education from Imbler teachers.

The school board liked the idea of teachers streaming their classes from their classrooms. This would mean students who are attending class online would get the same instruction as students who are on site, rather than from another teacher via distance education with the InterMountain Educational Service District.



The Imbler School Board discusses plans for reopening in the fall at its meeting Wednesday, Aug. 5, at Imbler High School.

“You have people who don’t want to do on-site schooling because of the masks, but they want Imbler teachers,” Lakey-Campbell said. “So how can we make this work?”

However, this option comes with concern about students’ privacy. Lakey-Campbell explained if a teacher is streaming from a classroom and a student is called away for special education services, there is concern that information will reach those who are not privy to the student’s special education status.

“We don’t know who is watching at home,” Lakey-Campbell said. “Mom and dad or someone in background may hear ‘so-and-so, you need to go to Ms. Creech’s class,’ and now they know that kid is in special ed. And that is a

privacy issue.”

The school board circulated suggestions about how to protect students’ privacy, including waivers and arranging students who are in a special education program into a separate cohort.

School board members said the biggest problem they have is trying to finalize plans while the rules keep changing. Board members also brought up

the concern that teachers were not trained in distance learning and virtual teaching.

While many of the teachers have taken it upon themselves to learn about best practices, Lakey-Campbell said, they need more support. The InterMountain Educational Service District is scheduled to teach a one-day course about comprehensive distance learning. While Lakey-Campbell said this is a good thing, she and board members don’t believe it will be enough.

“None of us have been trained to teach in a distance-learning situation,” Lakey-Campbell said. “We have been trained (for in-person teaching), and we went into the profession because we wanted to work with kids in the building.”

The Oregon Department of Education will drop its next school metrics update on Tuesday, Aug. 11. Lakey-Campbell said the district will continue to work toward an education plan. Oregon school districts have until Aug. 15 to submit those plans to the state for approval.

Dust storm leads to 5-car pileup

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

IMBLER — A dust storm the evening of Wednesday, Aug. 5, blew across Highway 82 between La Grande and Imbler and led to a five-vehicle pileup.

Oregon State Police reported the series of wrecks involved 10 people, including three minors ages 4, 16 and 17. One juvenile passenger received medical treatment at Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande.

The crashes started around 6:48 p.m., state police reported, when Veronique Voltaire of La Grande stopped in the highway’s eastbound lane in a black Jeep Patriot because blowing dust reduced visibility to near zero. Dennis Cline of Imbler was driving a white Ford F150 eastbound and stopped behind the Jeep.

Winona Gaston of Elgin was heading east as well in a white Chevrolet Tahoe, according to state police, and drove into the rear of the Ford, which pushed the pickup into the Jeep.

Dustin Phillips of Elgin was driving east in a black Sorento and crashed into the Tahoe. And Bruce Rogers of Elgin was traveling east in a silver GMC Yukon and collided with the Sorento.

The La Grande Rural Fire Department was one of the agencies that responded. Fire Chief Craig Kretschmer said when the cars collided there was zero visibility from the dust.

“You are in a tough spot when something like this



Above, an emergency vehicle stops Wednesday, Aug. 5, at the scene of a five-vehicle pileup on Highway 82 between La Grande and Imbler. Oregon State Police reported a dust storm reduced visibility led to the series of crashes. Below, emergency personnel work at the scene of the crash.



“You are in a tough spot when something like this happens. Do you go forward and maybe run into somebody, do you stop and maybe get hit by someone else?”

— Craig Kretschmer, La Grande Rural Fire Department chief

happens,” Kretschmer said. “Do you go forward and maybe run into somebody, do you stop and maybe get hit by someone else? You can’t really see the side of the road, so it is hard to pull off to a safe spot.”

Kretschmer said visibility improved by the time emergency personnel arrived. He also said these kinds of calls about crashes due to windstorms are infrequent.

The crashes and cleanup led to the closure of the highway for approximately two hours. The first two cars drove from the scene, but wreckers towed the other three.

The La Grande City Fire Department, Imbler Rural Fire Department and Union County Sheriff’s Office also responded.

Pandemic does not deter Baker County Fair youths

By Sam Anthony
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — For more than a century the Baker County Fair and the youth-raised livestock that go along with it have been a part of the county’s culture.

While COVID-19 has shut down event after event this year, community members and participants were determined not to let the pandemic dismiss the hard work of 4-H and FFA members in raising and training their animals.

Although the fair this week is not open to the public and does not have its usual attractions, youngsters still have the opportunity to show and sell their pigs, sheep, steers and other animals.

The morning of



Baker County youths show their pigs the morning of Wednesday, Aug. 5, near the Baker County Fairgrounds.

Wednesday, Aug. 5, youths gathered in a temporary ring at the Leo Adler baseball field near the Fairgrounds to show the swine they raised from piglets.

Thursday the sheep, goats and small animals were display, and Friday the steers entered the ring.

Terri Siddoway, president of the Fair Sale Committee, said while the fair is different, some aspects are familiar.

“The sale part is fairly normal, with the exception of not having all of the buyers in the barn,” Siddoway said.

News BRIEFS

Union schools plan to reopen Aug. 31

UNION — The Union School District is set to begin the school year for all students Monday, Aug. 31.

Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells said there is a possibility that on-site classes will be conducted for students in kindergarten through third grade. However, all other courses will be taught via distance education because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Wells said new rules the Oregon governor’s office recently released — known as the School Health and Safety Metrics — make it much easier for schools with students in kindergarten through third grade to meet standards than schools with older students. Wells said, though, Union will not be able to have on-site K-3 classes unless Union County gets below the 5% threshold for new cases in the next three weeks.

Wells still is hopeful all students will have on-site classes when school begins because the state’s rules are regularly changing.

“This has a high potential to change and we are hopeful for less restrictions but we are preparing multiple scenarios for opening in the fall,” Wells said in a letter to parents and guardians.

The superintendent noted the state plans to provide an update on Aug. 11 on how schools will operate this fall. Wells said the direction the state provides for Eastern Oregon may be different than the rest of the state.

held a number of positions, including as La Grande Middle school vice principal and special education director.

Miles, who has a bachelor’s degree in education from Eastern Oregon University and master’s degree from Eastern Washington University, came to Union County after working as an educator in Washington.

Cove School District Superintendent Earl Pettit said Miles has many skills as an educator.

“He is very good at addressing students’ individual needs,” Pettit said.

Pettit said this skill is the reason he had Miles also serve as the Cove School District’s special education director. Pettit also credits Miles with being willing to do whatever it takes to move the school district forward.

The superintendent added that Miles is outstanding to work with.

“We complement each other very well,” Pettit said.

Motorcycle chase ends in crash, arrest

LA GRANDE — An attempt at a traffic stop in La Grande led to a police chase, crash and arrest.

The La Grande Police Department in a press release reported officer Ryan Herbel tried to stop a motorcyclist Thursday, Aug. 6, at 3:08 a.m. on North Depot Street near V Avenue after the driver, John Fine, 52, of Joseph, committed several traffic violations.

Fine was operating a 1987 Suzuki motorcycle and failed to yield, according to La Grande police, and led officers on a low-speed pursuit, exiting town and heading north on Mount Glenn Road. He then left the road and continued to flee through a farmer’s field near Elizabeth Lane.

Cove High School’s Mat Miles to retire

COVE — The Cove School District will soon be searching for a new high school principal.

Mat Miles has announced he will retire at the end of December. Miles has been Cove High School’s principal for the past 10 years.

He said he is retiring because he wants to be available for members of his family if they need assistance. Miles said his decade serving as CHS’s principal was a tremendous experience.

“I liked the kids, the families and the small school environment,” Miles said. “Cove is a great community.”

Miles came to Cove from the La Grande School District where he worked for 11 years. In the La Grande School District he

“Fine crashed his motorcycle after driving into an irrigation ditch,” the police department reported, “and continued to attempt to elude officers on foot.”

Herbel, though, caught the fleeing Fine.

Fine suffered non-life-threatening injuries, according to the press release, and an ambulance took him to Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande.

The La Grande Fire Department, Union County Sheriff’s Office and Oregon State Police assisted La Grande police, which also reported Fine faces charges for multiple traffic violations and crimes upon his release from the hospital.

— Observer staff