

KILLING

Continued from Page 1A

caller reported hearing a man bragging about accelerating his pickup to hit several pronghorns as they bunched together in the middle of the road. The man said he left the scene to get a hamburger, then returned later to retrieve the buck’s horns.

Troopers served a search warrant on Phillips’ residence in May. They recovered the horns and other evidence linking Phillips to the crime, according to division Sgt. Lowell Lea. Phillips confirmed the antelope were bunched together in the road and said he accelerated to more than 60 mph to hit them. Phillips said he did it because he hates pronghorns, according to Lea. State police arrested Phillips on May 21. He is lodged in the Lake County Jail.

“Not all poaching involves the use of a firearm,” Lea said. “This is not the first case of people poaching with a vehicle. And poaching takes opportunities away from hunters and others.”

State court records show Phillips faces seven charges in all. Two relate to the killing the antelope — a wildlife violation for the taking of the antelope and a felony for first-degree aggravated animal abuse. The other five charges include unlawful use of a weapon, menacing and coercion for threatening a man on May 16 in Lake County.

The antelope killing comes after three Oregon men were cited in May for allegedly poaching 27 big game animals in multiple counties over the past two years. A concerned citizen contacted the TIP Line to report the poaching ring. Restitution for the crimes, which occurred in Benton, Lane, Linn, Lincoln, Polk and Tillamook counties, may top \$162,000.

In April, two men were charged with poaching a pronghorn buck, a branch bull elk and six buck deer over the past year in Grant County.

In July, the division identified a poaching hot spot in Columbia County, where two elk and a buck deer were shot over a period of three months near Weyerhaeuser property. All three animals were left to waste where they were shot, with little or no meat taken.

The Oregon Hunters Association operates the TIP Line. Callers receive a cash reward or hunting preference points if their report leads to a citation or arrest. The TIP Line rewards program is funded primarily through hunter restitution fees and fines. The reward for reporting a poached deer, elk or antelope is four preference points or \$500. Last year OHA awarded more than \$21,000 in rewards, and ODFW awarded 143 hunter preference points to people who reported to the TIP Line.

ODFW anti-poaching campaign coordinator Yvonne Shaw said the crimes reflect wanton disregard for wildlife, wildlife laws and fellow Oregonians.

“When people poach, they steal from all of us,” Shaw said. “Coming across a herd of pronghorns is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that most Americans would hold as a treasured memory. Instead, a poacher has robbed the animals of their lives and everyone else of the experience.”

ROADWORK

Continued from Page 1A

pass slower moving semi-trailers, thus preventing getting stuck between large semis. Patterson said large trucks sometimes roll at only 20 miles per hour on the uphill passage while many cars are traveling at least 70 miles per hour.

The truck lanes are made out of concrete instead of asphalt because it will hold up better under the weight of heavier vehicles.

“We expect them to last for 50 years,” Patterson said.

Concrete is more expensive than asphalt but has greater longevity, which will save the state money.

“There is more of an upfront cost, but it is worth it in the long run,” Patterson said.

He also said he anticipates there will be fewer repair costs for the concrete lanes during their lifespan. The asphalt lane, by contrast, will need extensive work, including patching, he added.

The only problem Patterson anticipates with the concrete lanes is semis



Staff photo by Dick Mason

The new concrete lanes through the Ladd Canyon portion of Interstate 84 south of La Grande cost more upfront than asphalt but will last longer under the strain of heavy semitrailers.

will wear ruts into them. To address this, the lanes are 11 inches thick. This will allow ODOT crews to slice off the ruts and even out the concrete surface later, while leaving enough roadway for trucks to continue traveling.

The Ladd Canyon Freight Improvement Project started in April 2019. In that first year,

crews widened the shoulders of the east- and west-bound lanes of Interstate 84 for 10 miles between La Grande and Ladd Canyon, removed a bridge and installed a concrete box-like culvert large enough to accommodate semitrailers. Eliminating the bridge was beneficial because it tended to get icy.

Work on the second

phase of the project started in April this year. Traffic through the construction area is restricted to 50 miles per hour.

Patterson said drivers generally are obeying the speed limit but there were major exceptions this spring.

“We had two drivers go through at over 100 miles per hour in a couple of

days,” he said.

Since then, though, there have been few major problems thanks in part to Oregon State Police troopers, who Patterson credited with doing an excellent job of patrolling the work site.

“The OSP has made a big difference,” Patterson said. “It gets a lot of attention and respect.”

SCHOOLS

Continued from Page 1A

able to have 100% student connectivity and have demonstrated that this is not a major barrier for instruction of Cove students,” Superintendent Earl Pettit said. “Quality of internet in Cove remains a challenge, but all students will have access to a device and internet.”

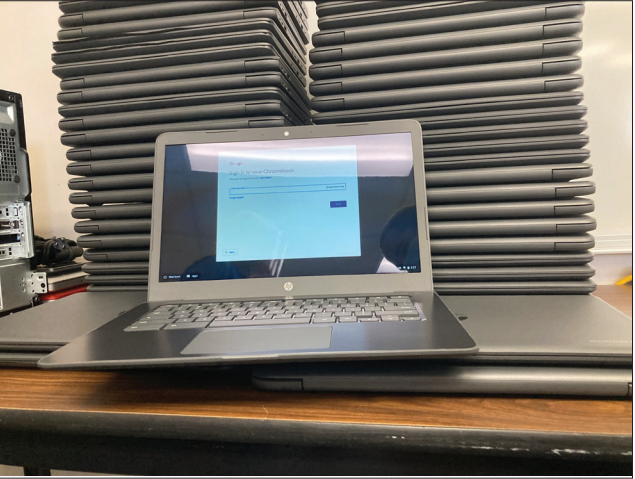
Union School District also had enough devices for every third- through 12th-grade student to have a Chromebook during the spring and intends to provide the same tools during the upcoming school year. Superintendent Carter Wells said the district is working to find the best device for younger children in kindergarten through second grade.

“In our district’s mind, we have made technology a priority when learning,” Wells said. “It is the future, and that is what Union School District is focused on.”

The Elgin School District is in a similar position with enough iPads, Chromebooks and laptops for each student. Superintendent Dianne Greif said the technology will be distributed to the students when school begins at the end of August. The devices were accumulated a few years ago, she said, as a way for students to get engaged in online learning.

“It’s how some of the classes teach, and especially in the older grades, it’s how they turn in assignments,” Greif said.

North Powder School District still is developing its plans. Superintendent Lance Dixon said the dis-



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

The La Grande School District has enough Chromebooks for every student who needs one to have access while participating in distance learning this fall.

trict is following a plan similar to the La Grande School District’s model.

The La Grande School District announced its fall 2020 reopening plan Tuesday, Aug. 4, and is going with a comprehensive distance learning model for the start of the year.

“Comprehensive distance learning is going to be better than that distance learning we did last year in April and May,” Super-

intendent George Mendoza said. “We will have synchronous and asynchronous learning options every day. We will have student grades, monitoring, and feedback on their progress. We will have embedded intervention times. We will have a focus on a well rounded education as well as we have electives, club offerings, this fall.”

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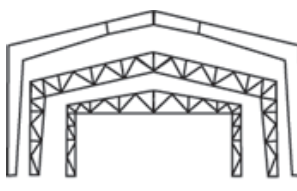
Carter Wells, Union School District superintendent

reopening plan addressed the need for students to have access to technology with Chromebooks or hotspots available to check out. Mendoza said the school has enough Chromebooks for any student who needs one. The hotspots are more limited. The district only has 100 hotspots and is looking to get around 50 more for the coming school year. Hotspots likely will go to those who have been identified as in need, but Mendoza said the school district will work to get whoever needs help with internet access the assistance they need.

Additionally, in ensuring accessibility to all students, all district super-

intendents have said they will continue to work with children who have Individualized Education Program plan or a 504 disability accommodation plan.

“By their very nature, IEPs and 504 plans are individualized,” Pettit said. “Therefore, in the event we are temporarily serving students through distance learning, those adjustments to the delivery methods of IEP/504 accommodations would also be individualized. Each accommodation would need to be individually reviewed for the best method of delivery under whatever restrictions are driving the decision to shift to a distance learning model.”



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Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics proudly welcomes:
Steven Pinther, DO
To the **GRH Specialty Clinic** team as an **ENT/Otolaryngologist**



Steven Pinther, DO

Dr. Steven Pinther joins the GRH Specialty Clinic from Ascension St. John Macomb in Oakland, Michigan, where he completed his Otolaryngology and Facial Plastic residency, and worked as an adjunct clinical faculty member at Michigan State University. He is a graduate of the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Pinther enjoys all aspects of general ear, nose, and throat (ENT) care, but has particular interests in sinonasal and ear conditions. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family participating in outdoor activities such as mountain biking, hunting, fishing, camping, and gardening. He also enjoys woodworking and working on old cars. Join us in welcoming otolaryngologist/ENT and osteopathic physician Steven Pinther to the Grande Ronde Valley. Call for an appointment today!

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