

# Dutch Bros. earns state honors

In Business, Page 1B

**DUTCH BROS**



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Island City Elementary School kindergarten teacher Dakota Jenkins on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020, points to someone coming to pick up one of her students after school.

Dick Mason/The Observer

## Ronald Lee murder trial canceled

Mental evaluation finds Lee unfit to proceed or aid in his defense

By Sabrina Thompson  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ronald Dwight Lee of La Grande is headed to the Oregon State Hospital in Salem instead of to a murder trial for the death of his wife Loretta Williams. Lee, 73, was to face a Union County jury in November on charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder more than a year after pleading not guilty. But state court records show Circuit Judge Thomas Powers on Tuesday, Oct. 6, signed an order finding Lee is unfit to proceed. The state has accused Lee of killing Williams in November 2018 at her home in Cove. At the time the two were divorcing.

See, Trial/Page 5A

# No longer online

Students, teachers enjoy return to their classrooms

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Close to 250 of the La Grande School District's youngest students are no longer going online each weekday morning and afternoon for classes. Instead they are getting in line — for recess and school bus rides.

The boys and girls are children in kindergarten through third grade who started attending school in person this week for the first time in at least six months after being taught only online by the school district due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The young students have been able to attend on-site since Monday, Oct. 5, after the La Grande School District met the state's K-3 COVID-19 safety standards.

The students are the only ones in the La Grande School District able to attend classes on-site.

Island City Elementary School Principal Brett Smith said Tuesday the children appear very happy to be back at school. This is most evident at the end of



Island City Elementary first grade teacher Kailie Sells talks with students after classes on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020.

Dick Mason/The Observer

the school day.

“Some have been asking teachers ‘Can we stay?’ and ‘Do we have to go?’” Smith said.

Island City second-grade teacher Kylee Goodwin said children seemed eager while being taught online to get

back to a bricks and mortar school.

“Some wanted to know when they were going to get back to real school,” Goodwin said.

Children are not the only ones

See, Schools/Page 5A

## Oregon gets boost to COVID-19 testing

By Suzanne Roig  
The Bulletin

SALEM — Oregon will receive up to 80,000 rapid COVID-19 tests per week from the federal government, doubling its testing abilities and allowing people who don't show any symptoms of the virus to be tested.

Gov. Kate Brown announced the testing boost Tuesday, Oct. 6. The first communities to receive these antigen tests, which will produce results in 15 minutes, will be those affected by wildfires, she said.

“I know it hasn't been easy. We've learned a new way of living that involves masks, physical distancing and the ever-popular Zoom rooms conferencing,” Brown said in a press conference Tuesday. “We have certainly seen a rise in COVID cases recently. This was to be expected coming off of Labor Day weekend and the intense wildfires that forced so many Oregonians from their homes.”

See, Testing/Page 5A

## Joseph teen comes back from the brink

Cross-country runner Keelan McBurney keeps going after injury

By Bill Bradshaw  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The accident nearly cost Joseph Charter School cross-country runner Keelan McBurney his leg, but he is not letting it keep him down.

It was May 15 when McBurney, then 15, went to visit a friend who lived about three miles south of Joseph. He decided to keep the

friend, who was the same age and has since moved out of the area, anonymous.

### The accident

“About 45 minutes later,” said his mom, Chantay Jett, “I get a call from his friend who is so distraught that he's not able to speak on the phone. I could hear Keelan in the background and he said, ‘Mom, I've been in an accident. I think I broke my leg. It's really bad. You need to come immediately.’”

Jett said the two had driven the friend's mom's car down the

driveway to the mailbox and upon returning, McBurney was guiding the friend into a parking spot at the house when the friend thought he had the car in reverse, but it was in drive. The friend hit the gas, panicked, hit the gas harder and pinned McBurney to the house, crushing his left leg.

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Keelan McBurney of Joseph shows the scar from the surgery that saved his leg after an accident in May.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

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Tonight  
42 LOW  
Clearing



Friday  
73/46  
Mostly sunny

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