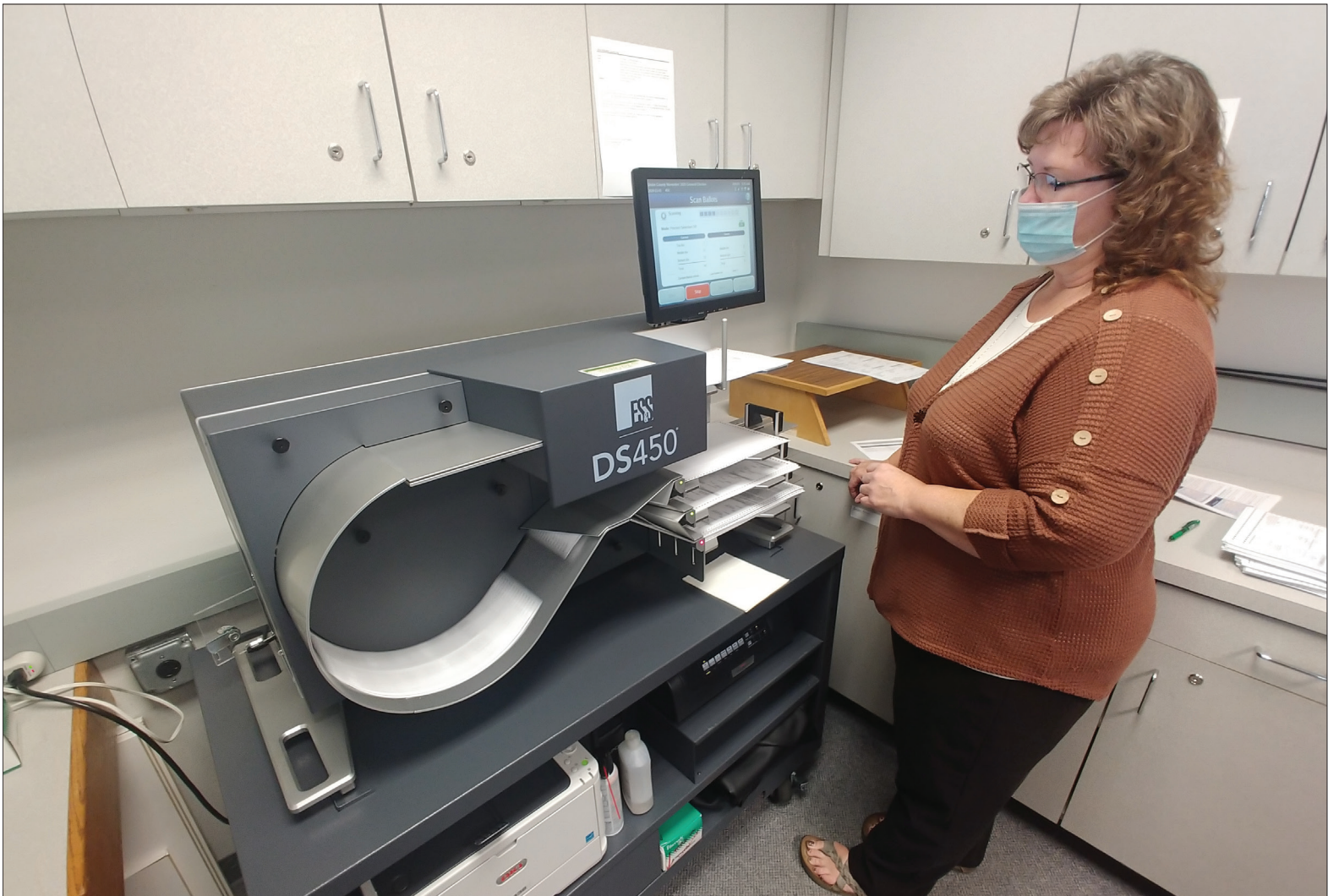




Ronald Bond/The Observer

Lisa Feik, chief deputy for the Union County Clerk's Office, La Grande, conducts a test run of the county's new ballot tally machine on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2020. The new machine can sort out write-in and questionable ballots from others that scan OK. The machine is set for more test runs, including one that can be watched by citizens Oct. 27, before the Nov. 3 election.

Every vote counts

Almost 8,000 voters in Union County did not cast a ballot in May primary

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

This is the first of a two-part series on voting. The second part, breaking down the margin between Kate Brown and Knute Buehler in 2018, runs Tuesday, Oct. 13.

LA GRANDE — Robin Church is adamant about voters making sure their voices are heard.

The Union County clerk this week talked with The Observer not only about the importance of voting in next month's general election and understanding that votes do count, but how margins — both large and small — can be made up by the votes that are left on the table.

Church wants to dispel a notion she said Eastern Oregon residents often carry — that their vote doesn't count at the state level.

That is true only if a person elects not to vote, she said.

"I've been trying to tell people for years 'You do count, you just choose not to,'" she said. "They choose not to be heard because they refuse to vote, and that's my personal opinion."

Church cited the example of the close 2018 Oregon governor's race between

"I've been trying to tell people for years 'You do count, you just choose not to.' They choose not to be heard because they refuse to vote, and that's my personal opinion."

— Robin Church, Union County Clerk

Dates and places to keep in mind for the 2020 general election

- **Oct. 13:** Last day to register as a first-time voter in Oregon.
- **Oct. 14:** Ballots dropped off at post office for delivery.
- **Oct. 27:** Recommended last day to mail ballot.
- **Nov. 3:** Registration update deadline for voters.
- **Nov. 3, 8 p.m.:** Deadline to turn ballot in at drop box.
- **BALLOT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:**
 - **La Grande:** 1001 Fourth St.

- **Island City:** 10605 Island Ave.
- **Imbler:** 180 Ruckman Ave.
- **Elgin:** 890 Alder St.
- **Union:** 342 S. Main St.
- **Cove:** 504 Alder St.
- **North Powder:** 635 Third St.
- **MORE INFORMATION**
 - If you have not received a ballot by Oct. 21, contact the Union County Clerk's Office at 541-963-1006.

Knute Buehler and Kate Brown. Less than 120,000 ballots decided the race in which smaller counties didn't vote at the level of larger counterparts.

A local, more recent election — Union County's May primary for sheriff — points to the importance of voting as well as being sure to sign ballots.

In that election, registered voters in the county cast 10,556 ballots out of more than 18,500. That's a turnout of about 57%, which means nearly 8,000 voters did not take part.

Deputy Cody Bowen won the primary easily to reach the November general elections with close to 42% of the vote. But the

4,305 votes for Bowen were just more than half of the number of voters who did not submit a ballot.

The race for second and third was much tighter. Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen won by only 133 votes over Bill Miller. That difference accounts for just 1.67% of the number of voters who did not participate. A fifth of those who did not vote would have been enough to make up the margin between Bowen and Rasmussen. There even were enough non-voters that Shane Rollins, who finished fourth with 785 votes, could have ended up closer in the race.

See, [Vote/Page 5A](#)

Two recent area calf deaths not by wolves

ODFW also says they are not mutilation cases

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Two of the most recent livestock depredations the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife investigated in Eastern Oregon lack any markings that point to a wolf.

The kills occurred in late September, one in Union County, according to the ODFW investigation report, which showed 25 depredation exams from July to September.

The first investigation was Sept. 23 after a livestock producer that morning found a dead 400-pound calf in a large private pasture in the Manning Creek area of Baker County. Investigators estimated the calf died the day before.

"No attack or struggle scene was found," according to ODFW's report. "There were no pre-mortem bite marks or hemorrhage found on the carcass. The death of this calf was not wolf related."

The next morning, a landowner in the McIntyre Road area of Union County found a dead 500-pound calf in a large forested private pasture. The calf, investigators determined, died about three days before the examination on the carcass began. It was missing intestines and muscle tissue from its spine, ribs and hindquarters.

The examination of the site found no signs of an attack or struggle, and this carcass also lacked pre-mortem bite marks or hemorrhaging.

"The death of this calf was not wolf related," the reported stated.

Michelle Dennehy, ODFW communications director, said there is no evidence of the death falling in the same camp as recent mutilation cases that have been reported around the state.

"There was nothing to suggest the death or missing parts were human caused," she said. "The missing portions of the animal were consistent with scavenger activity — not surprising since there was sign of coyotes, fox and scavenging birds at the scene. This is virtually always the case unless the carcass is found very quickly after death. Had there been evidence of human involvement it would become a potential criminal case and law enforcement would take over."

See, [Wolves/Page 5A](#)

La Grande renames field to honor Doug Trice

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande has a new memorial to the late Doug Trice, the community volunteer who lifted young people to greater heights without raising his voice.

Wednesday night, Sept. 7, the La Grande City Council voted to rename Community Field at Pioneer Park in honor of Trice. The name change took effect immediately.

Councilor Mary Ann Miesner said this is an excellent way to salute the legacy of Trice, an

award-winning Special Olympics coach and a hall of fame athlete who died in his sleep at his La Grande residence May 6, 2020, at age 68.

"He touched a lot of lives in this community," Miesner said.

The field's official new name is Douglas Trice Community Field.

Lin Casciato, a retired La Grande High School teacher and a softball coach, said it is fitting that Trice's name will precede the word "community" because he gave so much to the one in which he lived.

"I think it is a great honor,"

Casciato said. "I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this."

The La Grande Parks and Recreation Department began pursuing the name change after receiving a recommendation to do so. An electronic survey showed overwhelming support for the name change, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission voted to recommend the name change to the city council.

Trice's contributions as a Special Olympics coach were far from overlooked during his life. He was named an assistant coach for

Team USA at the World Games in Shanghai, China, in 2007. That same year he received a Governor's Gold Award from Gov. Ted Kulongoski for his work in Special Olympics. Four years later, Trice was selected as a Special Olympics coach for Team USA in Athens, Greece.

Six months before his passing, Trice was inducted into the La Grande High School Tiger Booster Hall of Fame. He was recognized for his Special Olympics

See, [Trice/Page 5A](#)

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
40 LOW
A few showers



Sunday
54/44
A shower or two

CONTACT US

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Issue 121
2 sections, 12 pages
La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.



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TUESDAY

LA GRANDE CITY COUNCIL RACES

Online at lagrandeobserver.com