

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, Oct. 31, the 305th day of 2020. There are 61 days left in the year. This is Halloween.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On Oct. 31, 1941, work was completed on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, begun in 1927.

ONTHIS DATE:

In 1926, magician Harry Houdini died in Detroit of peritonitis resulting from a ruptured appendix.

In 1961, the body of Joseph Stalin was removed from Lenin's Tomb as part of the Soviet Union's "de-Stalinization" drive.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered a halt to all U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, saying he hoped for fruitful peace negotiations.

In 1998, a genetic study was released suggesting President Thomas Jefferson did in fact father at least one child by his slave Sally Hemings.

In 1999, EgyptAir Flight 990, bound from New York to Cairo, crashed off the Massachusetts coast, killing all 217 people aboard.

In 2001, New York hospital worker Kathy T. Nguyen died of inhalation anthrax, the fourth person to perish in a spreading wave of bioterrorism.

In 2005, President George W. Bush nominated Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. Civil rights icon Rosa Parks was honored during a service in Washington, D.C.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.8 million

6-8-21-27-42-47

Mega Millions: \$109 million

6-13-34-46-62 — 1 x3

Powerball: \$116 million

1-28-37-40-53 — PB-13 x2

Win for Life: Oct. 28

4-31-41-72

Pick 4: Oct. 29

• 1 p.m.: 9-9-5-1; • 4 p.m.: 6-0-3-0;

• 7 p.m.: 2-6-2-7; • 10 p.m.: 7-6-1-4

Pick 4: Oct. 28

• 1 p.m.: 6-0-5-8; • 4 p.m.: 7-3-4-9;

• 7 p.m.: 7-9-9-1; • 10 p.m.: 8-5-1-2

DELIVERY ISSUES?

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LGSD set for facilities assessment

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District’s buildings are set to receive a comprehensive assessment.

It will be an exam that could help the La Grande School Board decide whether to ask voters to later approve a bond levy to raise funds for the restoration or replacement of its oldest buildings.

The school district hired the firm BLRB architects, which has Oregon offices in Bend and Portland, to conduct the assessment, which will involve all of the district’s buildings and adhere to a formula and standards set by the Oregon Department of Education.

The assessment, which the school board discussed during a work session Wednesday, Oct. 28, will include information on the condition of electrical, heating and plumbing systems and hazardous materials in buildings.

“It will provide us with a snapshot of what we have,” said Joseph Waite, the school district’s facilities



Dick Mason/The Observer

The Annex is one of the La Grande School District’s oldest buildings. A new assessment of the district’s buildings could help determine whether the district keeps the building or demolishes and replaces it.

ties and bond manager.

The school district, Waite said, will be most interested in what the inspection reveals about the district’s three oldest structures, its Willow, Annex and maintenance buildings, all of which are at least 90 years old.

BLRB’s Facilities Assessment is expected to be completed by January. After that, BLRB will help organize a committee

of community stakeholders to create a long-range facility plan for the school district. The plan will be developed after taking extensive input from the community.

The Annex building, constructed in 1924 and just north of La Grande Middle School, may be the structure that receives the most attention. It houses a gym used extensively by the school district before

the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The long-range facility plan committee will want to determine if the Annex building should receive moderate or major restoration work or be demolished to make way for a new structure.

School District Superintendent George Mendoza said he would prefer removal and replacement of the Annex building, but the district will abide

by the wishes of the community.

“We will do what the people want,” Mendoza said.

The long-range plan should be finished by June, Waite said.

Once the plan is complete, the La Grande School District will be eligible to apply for a Oregon School Capital Matching grant from the state. Most school districts awarded OSCM grants will receive up to \$4 million in funds if district voters approve a bond for capital construction and maintenance of that amount or more.

Some school districts can receive up to \$8 million in matching funds, according to the Oregon.gov website.

The BLRB firm currently is doing design work for the Union School District’s \$8 million building renovation project. Waite said this is a plus for La Grande because it means the firm’s architects will be in Union County more often.

“This is fortunate for us because we will have more access to them,” Waite said.

Elgin losing U.S. Bank branch

By Kaleb Lay
The Observer

ELGIN — The Elgin branch of U.S. Bank is set to close on Jan. 2, 2021, leaving the small Eastern Oregon town with just one remaining financial institution.

“Obviously we’re sad that we’re losing a bank and with that we lose a few local jobs,” said Elgin Mayor Allan Duffy.

“Anyone that was local that was employed (at the bank) ... we want to make sure they’re taken care of.”

U.S. Bank recently announced the closure of 32 Oregon branches, including the Elgin branch. The impending loss will leave only one financial institution in town.

“It’s definitely not a good thing if there are less financial institutions in a community,” said Scott McConnell, who teaches economics at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande. McConnell noted “financing is the lifeblood

of a local economy.”

The closure leaves only a Community Bank branch in Elgin. With no banks in nearby Imbler, those seeking an alternative will have to travel 20 miles into La Grande.

“I would guess that Community Bank is seeing some influx and some new accounts,” Duffy said. “We loved having two banks, but if we have one bank and we have people moving accounts over there, hopefully that kind of secures them in our community.”

According to a Federal Reserve report on rural banking access from November 2019, the distance a person has to travel to access financial services can make banking more expensive.

“Studies find that interest rates increase as the distance between a business and the local branch of its lender grows — a potential reason why the majority of small businesses borrow from institutions with a

local presence,” the report stated.

McConnell said the closure represents a trend with larger banking organizations, which are moving their services online while shuttering much of their brick-and-mortar presence.

But smaller, more locally focused banks have been slower to move online. McConnell noted there might be a silver lining in that trend.

“Banks that are more regionally or locally owned are more invested in keeping the local economy moving,” McConnell said.

The news of the closure comes as concerns abound over the potential loss of Elgin’s Boise Cascade plywood plant this winter.

“It’s been tough, you know, there’s no doubt about it,” Duffy said. “Being smaller and rural obviously puts a little more burden on us, but I think we have a strong community and, you know, we’ll pull out of this.”



Bill Bradhsaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, file

Gwen Trice, founder and executive director of the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center, Joseph, points out her father in a photograph of loggers at Maxville, which existed north of Wallowa from 1923-33. The Cultural Advocacy Coalition recently endorsed the center’s request to receive \$750,000 in Cultural Resource Economic Funds and is among 11 locations in Oregon to receive endorsements for the funding.

Cultural centers could receive grants

By Rachel Hart
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture and the Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center are two of 11 capital construction projects The Cultural Advocacy Coalition endorsed in Oregon to receive \$9.5 million in Cultural Resources Economic Funds.

The coalition’s board of directors identified the most broadly supported and impactful projects recommended for funding, given limited state dollars, and urged Gov. Kate Brown to include these projects in the 2021-23 budget, which has to receive approval of the Legislature.

In June, the coalition issued a statewide call for capital construction proposals and received 44 submissions, which a subset of the coalition’s volunteer board reviewed. The board selected 26 submissions and meticulously reviewed the final applications resulting in the 11 endorsements.

“The organizations behind these projects have all demonstrated commitment and momentum in their endeavor and are ready to engage in the collective advocacy necessary for success of the entire slate,” said Isaac Marquez, Eugene Cultural Services director and chairman of the coalition’s capital construction committee.

The Maxville center requested \$750,000 toward the preservation of the Maxville townsite with the estimated project cost totaling \$2.5 million.

“The funding will be crucial to match additional funding to bring preservation back to the Maxville site,” said Gwendolyn Trice, executive

director. “We have recently entered into a purchase agreement for 240 acres including the Maxville townsite. We have received multiple grants toward this work and will be campaigning for funds right away for the purchase of the site.”

Using its collections and the Maxville townsite itself, the center envisions more robust educational experiences with access and events for K-12 students and internships through Eastern Oregon University, as well as increased tourism activity. The organization has pledged to hire locally and partner with the community in rebuilding and relocating the historic lodge and in building a fence around the site.

The Josephy Center requested \$600,000 for facility expansion and renovation with the estimated project cost totaling \$1,892,330. The center is raising funds to purchase the building it is renting in downtown Joseph to secure a permanent home. A new facility will have an expanded ceramics studio, a dedicated space for Nez Perce education and artifacts and more.

“I am pretty excited about what it could mean for our county,” said Kellee Sheehy, development director.

The Americans for the Arts reported in its Arts & Economic Prosperity study that Oregon’s arts and culture sector contributed \$687 million and 22,299 jobs to the state’s economy in 2015.

And the Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre in Baker City requested \$295,000 toward the renovation of the iconic vaudeville Orpheum Theatre.

Fire damages historic Forest Service cabin

By Jayson Jacoby
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Hunters renting a historic Forest Service log cabin in the Elkhorn Mountains doused a fire that spread from the cabin’s fireplace to a wall and the ceiling Tuesday, Oct. 27. No one was hurt in the fire.

Their efforts saved Peavy Cabin, built in 1934, said Kendall Cikanek, Whitman District ranger.

The cabin, along the North Fork of the John Day River between Anthony Lakes and Granite, was built in 1934 by George Wilcox Peavy, then dean of the School of Forestry at Oregon State University. A Forest Service employee, Larry Bilyeu, restored the cabin in the early 1990s.

The Forest Service makes the cabin available for rent through a contract administered by Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

“While the fire at Peavy Cabin was an unfortunate incident, it was also a



Wallowa-Whitman National Forest/Contributed Photo

George Peavy, dean of the School of Forestry at Oregon State University, built the Peavy Cabin in 1934. The Forest Service later acquired the cabin.

shining example of cooperation and shared stewardship,” Kendall said.

“Everyone is safe, and the cabin is still standing, and that is thanks to a coordinated response from the hunters staying at the cabin, the North Powder Rural Fire Protection District, and Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.”

The fire started when heat escaped from the fireplace chimney, setting fire to a wall and the ceiling, according to Cikanek.

Jay Moore, recreation specialist for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, said: “Clearly, the cabin will need to be repaired, although we are relieved to see that it remains sealed from the winter weather. We will also explore alternatives to firewood heat to reduce the risk of a future fire.”

Peavy Cabin was set to close for the season on Oct. 31 regardless. The Whitman District’s goal is to have it ready for rental by May 1, 2021.

Two dead, one hurt in shooting outside Hermiston

By Jade McDowell
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Sheriff’s office reported two men were killed and a third injured in a shooting outside Hermiston on Thursday, Oct. 29.

According to a press release from the sheriff’s office, the shooting occurred about 8:30 p.m. on Thursday on Sagebrush Road near Bensei Road just outside Hermiston. Deputies arrived to find two men dead and a third man receiving medical treatment for a gunshot wound.

“At this time, there is no reason to believe there is

any outstanding danger to the community,” the release stated.

The release, sent out Friday at 7:30 a.m., stated he sheriff’s office is working with the Umatilla Morrow Major Crimes Team to investigate the shooting. The incident is the latest in an unusually high number of shootings for the Hermiston area this year, including the following, according to previous information from law enforcement:

•On Oct. 19, Cuauthemoc Romero of Hermiston told police he had been driving along Westland Road outside Hermiston when someone in another vehicle

shot his truck multiple times. No one was injured, but police found bullet holes in the truck and a building.

•On Aug. 21, Julian Zapien, 27, of Hermiston, was shot in the parking lot of the Hermiston Safeway.

•On June 20, Travis Scott Meadows, 29, of Hood River, was found dead of a gunshot wound near Lamb Road and Interstate 82 outside Hermiston. In connection with the his death the Umatilla County Grand Jury indicted Jaime Ubay-Farfan, 24, on murder and weapons charges.

•On July 7, the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office asked the public for infor-

mation on two drive-by shootings that took place July 5 and July 6 in the Hermiston area. The bullets struck houses but there were no reports of injuries.

•On June 9, Jesus Eli Lopez, 21, of Hermiston was found dead from a gunshot wound at a residence in Hermiston. His death is being investigated as a homicide.

•On June 27, a man shot into the cab of a pickup with several occupants on Interstate 82 outside Hermiston. No one was injured. Oregon State Police arrested Steven Dario Quiriconi, 62, on murder and weapons charges.