

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, Nov. 28, the 333rd day of 2020. There are 33 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On Nov. 28, 1520, Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan reached the Pacific Ocean after passing through the South American strait that now bears his name.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1942, fire engulfed the Coconut Grove nightclub in Boston, killing 492 people in the deadliest nightclub blaze ever.

In 1961, Ernie Davis of Syracuse University became the first African-American to be named winner of the Heisman Trophy.

In 1994, Jeffrey Dahmer was slain in a Wisconsin prison by a fellow inmate.

In 2012, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said his state would need nearly \$37 billion to recover and rebuild from Superstorm Sandy.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$4.9 million
1-2-5-33-34-48

Mega Millions: \$200 million
9-15-34-61-64 — 6x2

Powerball: \$202 million
2-57-58-60-65 — PB-26 x2

Win for Life: Nov. 25
7-10-47-68

Pick 4: Nov. 26

• **1 p.m.:** 1-4-0-5; • **4 p.m.:** 7-3-7-3;

• **7 p.m.:** 7-5-0-4; • **10 p.m.:** 7-7-9-8

Pick 4: Nov. 25

• **1 p.m.:** 2-1-9-3 • **4 p.m.:** 7-7-7-5;

• **7 p.m.:** 7-7-1-1; • **10 p.m.:** 6-2-3-2

Pick 4: Nov. 24

• **1 p.m.:** 2-4-0-0 • **4 p.m.:** 2-0-1-4;

• **7 p.m.:** 4-7-6-1; • **10 p.m.:** 9-3-2-2

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, please call 541-963-3161.

Resident deputy now on duty in Union

By Dick Mason

The Observer

UNION — Union County sheriff's deputy Dan Johnson never has to worry about being late for work.

All he has to do is open the front door of his house and he is on the job.

A job making him a key player in the launch of a new law enforcement era in Union.

The city, for the first time in four years, is receiving enhanced law enforcement service from the Union County Sheriff's Office. The city contracted with the sheriff's office for 40 hours of patrol work a week from Johnson, a Union resident. Until Johnson came on board at the start of November, the town lacked a regular police presence. Its service from the sheriff's office was limited to periodic patrols plus calls for service for emergencies and less immediate matters.

Having Johnson available, said Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen, means Union will be receiving better and faster law enforcement service.

"Being closer to the citizens on a regular basis will allow Dan to more quickly and efficiently address their needs," Rasmussen said.

Johnson has lived in Union since 2008 and was a volunteer firefighter for its fire department for eight years through 2016.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Union County sheriff's deputy Dan Johnson works Monday, Nov. 20, 2020. Johnson is the new deputy on patrol in Union, where he also lives.

Johnson also served as an emergency medical technician during his final four to five years with the Union Fire Department. This familiarity with Union will serve the town well, Rasmussen said.

The resident deputy took his new position after serving as a corrections deputy at the Union County Jail for 3-1/2 years and then graduating from a training program at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Salem. Johnson said he is delighted to be in his new first responder position.

"This is my calling. It is my passion. This is what I was meant to do," Johnson said.

He added he cares a lot about helping put Union in a position to succeed.

"I am invested in seeing this community thrive," he said.

As a patrol officer, Johnson views himself as an educator who wants to first teach people about the value of laws they may have been breaking.

"I am striving to correct behavior. I educate before I enforce," Johnson said.

He said, for example, if he sees someone making an

illegal U-turn he may first issue a warning and counsel the driver on the danger of such violations and only later issue a ticket if the practice continues.

The new Union patroller has a lot of experience working with youths, having headed the Union Wrestling Club for age 5-14 for many years. The club, which conducts its practices at Union High School, has not been able to meet since the COVID-19 pandemic hit earlier this year. Johnson said he is anxious to get the club rolling again after the pandemic is over. Johnson, a 2004 Imbler High School

graduate, was introduced to wrestling while growing up in Imbler and La Grande.

Regardless of what age of people he is working with, the burly Johnson strives to refrain from being intimidating.

"I want everybody to feel comfortable," he said.

Johnson also said he tries to be understanding of the perspective of those who call for help. He said he understands they may not be in the best of emotional states or they would not have contacted him.

"People don't call the police when they are having their best days," he said.

Johnson said serving as a resident deputy is a fulfilling experience, but added a high stress level is built in, one he will focus on managing. He said working as a corrections deputy helped him learn the importance of listening to people and improved his communication skills. He said many times inmates who cause problems only need someone they can talk to about their life issues.

The new contractual agreement calls for Union to receive four years of enhanced services from the sheriff's office.

The position is funded primarily from a \$125,000 Community Oriented Policing federal grant the sheriff's office received and \$200,000 from the city of Union.

Hermiston lengthens lead as largest city in Eastern Oregon

By Jade McDowell

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hermiston continues to expand its lead as Eastern Oregon's largest city, adding an estimated 360 new residents between July 2019 and July 2020, according to data released by Portland State University's Population Research Center.

The center released its preliminary estimates for the year on Nov. 15. They showed Umatilla County as a whole gained an estimated 335 people, bumping the population up to about 81,495 residents.

Pendleton gained five residents, putting Hermiston at an estimated 18,775 and Pendleton at 17,025.

The Population Research Center shows La Grande's population increased from 13,290 to 13,460. Yet the data show preliminary population estimate for Union County's remained at 26,840, the same as 2019. Wallowa County, however, gained 10 residents for a total of 7,160, and Baker County increased by 90 to reach 16,910.

Baker City eclipsed the 10,000 mark, reaching 10,010, an estimated 45 more than in 2019. And Enterprise added 10 for a total of 1,995.

As Hermiston's population has grown, its housing stock has too. According to a news release from the city of Hermiston, the city

issued permits for 83 new homes inside city limits in 2020 through the end of October. Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the city has worked to promote additional housing development in several ways, including investing in a new water tower and other infrastructure to bring down the cost of developing housing in the northeast part of the city.

"Hermiston, Umatilla and Stanfield can really all be thought of as neighborhoods in a larger west-end real estate market," he said in a statement. "Our hope with these targeted public investments was certainly to drive housing in northeast Hermiston, but also to allow private developers to negotiate better prices for land region-wide."

Other Umatilla County cities also grew, according to PSU's estimates. Umatilla added 135 residents for a total of 7,605. Milton-Freewater added 65 residents for 7,210. Stanfield added 35 residents for a total of 2,280. Echo added 10 residents for a total of 720, while Weston, Athena and Adams stayed at 2019 estimates.

In Morrow County, Boardman added 75 for a total of 4,580 and Irrigon added 10 for a total of 2,040. Heppner stayed the same at 1,275. Morrow County as a whole grew by an estimated 145 residents,

up to 12,825.

In Hermiston, Morgan said, just two of the housing developers the city is currently working with represent about 350 planned new homes for Hermiston over the next few years. He suggested a few reasons for Hermiston's continued housing growth, including "expansive work in 2017 through 2019 to actively build a deeper bench of housing developments just waiting for the right conditions to pull the trigger." Historically low interest rates have helped pull that trigger, he said.

Morgan also referenced the area's comparatively quick rebound in unemployment rates from the unprecedented spike in the spring. According to the news release, Umatilla County's unemployment rate spiked to 13.9% in April 2020, but fell back to just 6.2% by September.

Portland State University's Population Research Center is the lead agency for the Oregon State Data Center, a state-level partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau. The PSU center creates detailed annual population estimates by analyzing birth records, death records, driver's licenses, school enrollment, Medicare enrollment, voter registrations and other records.

— *Observer staff contributed to this report.*

NEWS BRIEFS

Red Cross blood drive reaches goal

LA GRANDE — Union County is filled with generous people.

This was proven again during the Red Cross-operated La Grande Community Blood Drive conducted Nov. 17 and 18.

Local residents donated 198 units of blood during the drive, according to a press release from Sheldon and Linda Strand, coordinators of the La Grande Community Blood Draw. Each unit represents a pint.

Sheldon Strand said in a press release this is the highest total the La Grande Community Blood Drive has had since at least 2000.

"We are grateful for those who participated by donating blood and supporting the effort in any way," the Strands said.

Sheldon Strand said according to the American Red Cross, each unit of blood can save the lives of three people.

"This means that our two-day effort can have a lifesaving affect on just under 600 people in need of this life preserving substance," the press release stated.

The Nov. 17-18 blood draw was one of five conducted as part of the La Grande Community Blood Drive in 2020. A total of 643 units were drawn, 178 more than in 2019.

Sheldon Strand said he is grateful for the volunteers who helped run the La Grande Community Drives this year.

"You may think it a small thing to take temperatures, register or escort donors, or contact the media and others in the community. And, don't forget the people doing set-up and clean-up. Without these things the drive wouldn't run smoothly," Sheldon Strand told volunteers in a blood drive report.

Stephen Dalmas, a blood drive recruitment manager for the American Red Cross in Boise, said blood being donated now is checked for COVID-19 antibodies, an indication someone had the virus. Dalmas said when COVID-19 antibodies are detected, plasma from the blood is used at hospitals to treat patients suffering from the virus.

Cove City Council seeks to fill vacancies

COVE — The Cove City Council will meet Tuesday, Dec. 1, to discuss the resignation of council president Nate Conrad and to enter agreements for the use of federal and state grant funding.

Conrad resigned the position after selling her home and moving out of Cove.

"She moved out of the city," said Donna Lewis, Cove's city recorder. "She had her house for sale for the longest time.... She went ahead and ran, then it sold."

Cove has multiple city council positions open, and Lewis said the city has reached out to those who received the most write-in votes in the most recent elections to fill the vacancies. Rather than holding an election, the city council will make appointments to fill the seats.

Lewis added the parties have until Dec. 14 to return a response.

The council also will consider agreements to spend grant funding from the

federal CARES Act, which the city plans to use to purchase equipment to help its employees work safely during the pandemic, and the Small Cities Allocation, which awarded Cove \$100,000 to make road improvements.

Lewis said the council also plans to bring up the city's planned development of a municipal court, but the only action the council is likely to take would be to schedule a work session.

The city council meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at Cove City Hall, 504 Alder St. The city is encouraging attendees to connect virtually. Visit www.cityofcove.org, or email cityadmin@cityofcove.org to request the link and an agenda. You may also dial in using your phone: dial 1-877-309-2073 and use access code 566-891-733.

To submit public comment send e-mail to cityadmin@cityofcove.org before 6:45 p.m. the night of the meeting.

GRH announces entrance screening changes

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande, announced in a press release that patients with appointments, visitors and those not seeking emergency medical care should use the visitor entrance during the day.

The hospital on Tuesday, Dec. 1, will again reserve the emergency entrance for patients seeking emergency medical care.

The visitor entrance is open 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except for holidays). Those entering the hospital for nonemergency purposes will be screened at the visitor's desk, the release stated. After hours, the emergency entrance will be open for all purposes.

Patients with COVID-19-like symptoms, or those who are within two weeks of a COVID-19 diagnosis, should remain in their cars and call 541-963-8421 to request assistance, the hospital emphasized in the release. A screener will come out to the car.

Wallowa County removes parole and probation from under sheriff's office

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Board of Commissioners has removed Community Corrections from under the umbrella of the sheriff's office.

The board made the move at its regular meeting Wednesday, Nov. 18. Commissioners agreed to place Community Corrections, which handles parole and probation, and its agencies under the county board.

Commissioner Susan Roberts explained this came after the county's auditor recommended the change because Community Corrections and its operations are grant funded. She said the auditor found Wallowa County is the only county in the state where parole and probation was under purview of sheriff's office. It would be better to have the county board oversee the department because of the grant funding.

"They felt it would be cleaner and we'd have less issues with our audit," Roberts said.

— *EO Media Group*

Flying Old Glory day in and out



Dick Mason/The Observer

Craig Beverage, the owner of Craig's Antiques, 1409 Adams Ave., La Grande, puts up a United States flag, Monday, Nov. 23, 2020, outside his store. The flag is one of three American flags he puts up each morning while opening his shop. The other two are another flag of the Stars and Stripes and a centennial flag.