

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 22, the 357th day of 2020. There are nine days left in the year. **TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:**

On Dec. 22, 2001, Richard C. Reid, a passenger on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami, tried to ignite explosives in his shoes, but was subdued by flight attendants and fellow passengers. (Reid is serving a life sentence in federal prison.)

ON THIS DATE:

In 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrived in Washington for a wartime conference with President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe rejected a German demand for surrender, writing "Nuts!" in his official reply.

In 1984, New York City resident Bernhard Goetz shot and wounded four youths on a Manhattan subway, claiming they were about to rob him.

In 1989, Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu, the last of Eastern Europe's hard-line Communist rulers, was toppled from power in a popular uprising.

In 1991, the body of Marine Lt. Col. William R. Higgins, an American hostage slain by his terrorist captors, was recovered after it had been dumped along a highway in Lebanon.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$5.9 million

1-2-5-7-28-44

Mega Millions: \$310 million

1-10-18-20-46 — 5 x3

Powerball: \$304 million

27-32-34-43-53 — PB 13 x2

Win for Life: Dec. 19

5-9-20-22

Pick 4: Dec. 20

• 1 p.m.: 1-8-7-5

• 4 p.m.: 0-9-5-4

• 7 p.m.: 0-7-0-1

• 10 p.m.: 5-9-7-2

Pick 4: Dec. 19

• 1 p.m.: 7-6-4-7

• 4 p.m.: 2-1-8-4

• 7 p.m.: 7-7-5-2

• 10 p.m.: 9-6-5-7

Pick 4: Dec. 18

• 1 p.m.: 0-7-1-5

• 4 p.m.: 3-7-8-2

• 7 p.m.: 0-2-2-1

• 10 p.m.: 7-4-0-5

DELIVERY ISSUES?

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

Rocky Mountain elk arrive, with appetites

By Jayson Jacoby

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Dan Marvin chuckles as he lampons the way Rocky Mountain elk sometimes act.

He knows how tough these animals are.

During winters when sub-zero temperatures and snowdrifts deep enough to bury cars conspire to kill hundreds of mule deer in Northeast Oregon, most of the elk make it through, a bit undernourished, maybe, but otherwise hale.

Yet Marvin finds it amusing that when a couple of snowstorms arrive earlier than usual, while jack-o-lanterns still sit on some porches, the elk turn up, looking for a free meal.

"Acting like they're going to starve to death," Marvin said.

He can laugh because the storms that brought a couple of feet of snow to the mountains the first half of November didn't actually imperil the elk.

Yet the animals have become so accustomed to Marvin and his crew doling out alfalfa when the snow lies deep, that sometimes they arrive before he's ready to start bucking bales.

This was one of those years, said Marvin, who's starting his third winter as manager of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Elkhorn Wildlife Area.



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald, File
Rocky Mountain elk eat alfalfa at the Elkhorn Wildlife Area during a past winter.

The state started the project in 1971, and Marvin, who has worked for ODFW since 2005, is just the third full-time manager.

The project's purpose isn't to spare animals from starvation but rather to keep them from munching hay that cattle ranchers in the Baker, Bowen and North Powder Valleys put up each summer to feed their herds.

Because the Elkhorns lack a foothill zone where elk and deer can find sufficient natural forage during winter, the animals adapted to treat the valleys as their winter range.

But once farmers and ranchers began settling in those valleys in the second half of the 19th century,

the conflict between their operations, and the hungry wild animals, was all but inevitable.

The wildlife area consists of 10 sites along the base of the Elkhorn Mountains, ranging from Auburn at the south end to Shaw Mountain northwest of North Powder.

Marvin said he doesn't start setting out alfalfa until after Dec. 1, regardless of early storms because until then the wildlife area's sites are open to the public, including elk hunters. While hunting season is going, Marvin said, state officials don't want to entice elk to a specific area.

"We don't want to create a baiting situation," he said.

The elk, in any case, didn't loiter long after the early November tempests. Once more typical mid-autumn weather returned, and some of the snow melted, the elk drifted back into the mountains, Marvin said.

After Dec. 1, small herds of elk showed up, but interest among the animals was "kind of hit or miss," he said. But when wintry weather resumed the second week of December, the elk began their seasonal migration, and this time in larger numbers, to the feeding sites.

"They know where the hay sheds are at," Marvin said.

Significant numbers of elk arrived the weekend

of Dec. 12-13, with close to 300 head at the Auburn site and 100 to 150 at the Anthony Creek site near the wildlife area headquarters, about 10 miles west of North Powder.

Those numbers are pretty typical for early winter, Marvin said.

Come January, unless the winter is abnormally mild, the wildlife area crew likely will be feeding about 500 elk at Auburn and 250 at Anthony Creek.

Numbers vary at the other sites, some of which also attract deer.

The Auburn and Anthony Creek sites are the two publicly accessible properties with maintained roads where people can park and watch the big herds of elk, which usually include multiple mature, branch-antlered bulls.

To get to the Auburn site, drive south of Baker City on Highway 7 for about 7 miles, and turn right on Old Auburn Lane. Follow this gravel road (maintained in winter) for about 3.5 miles where a sign marks the wildlife area. The elk are fed on a knoll south of the road.

To reach the Anthony Creek site, from North Powder drive west on River Lane for about 8.5 miles. The elk are fed in a meadow south of the road. You can also reach River Lane via Haines and the Anthony Lakes Highway.

La Grande K-6 students return to on-site learning Jan. 11

The Observer

UNION COUNTY — K-6 students in the La Grande School District are returning to real-world classrooms Jan. 11.

The district on its website late last week announced the move, stating "LGSD has been in constant communication with the Oregon Department of Education to advocate for students to return to on-site learning."

The state gave the

approval Thursday, Dec. 17, for K-6 students in the district to return to on-site learning under the Safe Harbor exception of the Oregon School Metrics.

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade will attend on-site Monday through Friday on a modified schedule of 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., according to the district.

Also beginning Jan. 11, La Grande's sixth-grade students will be in an A/B

cohort schedule, from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and will work on four periods at a time in two-week blocks. Cohort A will be students with last names starting with the letters A-K. Cohort B will be students with last names starting with the letters L-Z. Families with multiple last names will have individual conversations to determine their cohort, the district reported.

Students will continue to receive instruction through

Google Classroom on days they are not on campus.

Teachers also will provide services to students who are isolated, in quarantine or unable to attend on site.

La Grande School District also announced it has the potential to have grades 7-12 returning to on-campus learning on Jan. 27.

And Elgin School District Superintendent Dianne Greif on the district's

Facebook page last week announced its students can continue with in-person instruction.

The district will have to change to distance learning only under certain conditions, including if the school has two or more individual cases in two or more separate cohorts or the school has two more clusters — two or more confirmed cases — with onset within 14 days of one another.

Holiday spirit endures with decoration-viewing caravan

By Kaleb Lay

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Union County residents proved over the weekend the holiday spirit is enduring and adaptable when more than 100 vehicles full of people turned out for a holiday decoration-viewing caravan, bringing charity and cheer to the community.

The caravan, which the Union County Chamber of Commerce and La Grande Main Street Downtown organized in a joint effort, brought people across the community together to enjoy one of the heart-warming traditions of the holiday season: seeing homes decked out in dazzling light displays.

"It was fantastic," said Suzannah Moore-Hemann, executive director of the chamber. "We printed off 100 hard copies of the maps, and we ran out well before everyone was able to get them. I would estimate we had between 125 to 150 cars."

The vehicles and their occupants gathered in the Bi-Mart parking lot in La Grande before traveling to view well-decorated homes in La Grande, Island City, Union, Imbler, Elgin, Cove and North Powder. A map of the destinations is at visitunion-county.org.

Some drivers reportedly joined in spontaneously after seeing the line of cars — some of which were decorated themselves as part of the event — perusing around town.

"I want to say at least 10 or 15 cars were decorated," Moore-Hemann



Union County Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

A Volkswagen Beetle with decorations befitting old Saint Nick himself awaits the start of the inaugural holiday decoration-viewing caravan on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020, at the Bi-Mart parking lot, La Grande. More than 100 vehicles were part of the caravan that traveled around Union County to take in the lights.

said. "It really neat to be driving around and once in a while you see a couple of cars with the lights."

The event's competition for best decorated vehicle selected three winners.

"We awarded first, second and third place," Moore-Hemann said. "Just bragging rights only for this year, but hopefully next year we can have some really great prizes."

As part of the caravan event, the chamber and Main Street Downtown helped collect donations of nonperishable foods and toys to distribute throughout the community in conjunction with the

local Boy Scouts and the Presbyterian Friendship Center. The effort received enough donations to fill an entire van with food.

"I would say at least a van-load full of food, and quite a bit of toys," Moore-Hemann said. "I was really shocked and impressed. ... We were really impressed with the number of people. It was impressive."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has turned life on its head, especially in recent months, the success and spirit of the holiday decoration-viewing caravan show that the spirit of the season continues to endure.

NEWS BRIEFS



Oregon State Police/

Contributed Photo

Union County sheriff's deputy Tad Butcher on Friday, Dec. 19, 2020, checks Michael Steven Trumbo, 37, of La Grande, after law enforcement caught him after a crash near Imbler.

Police catch fleeing man after crash

IMBLER — A man who bolted Friday morning after crashing into another vehicle near Imbler managed to evade police more than an hour. But Oregon State Police reported it soon enough issued several citations to Michael Steven Trumbo, 37, of La Grande.

The wreck occurred at approximately 5:55 a.m. on Highway 82 near milepost 10, about two miles south of Imbler, according to OSP, when Trumbo was driving a Kia Optima heading west in the east-bound lane. The driver of an oncoming Dodge Dakota steered toward the right shoulder but was unable to avoid the collision.

State police reported no one was injured, but tow trucks hauled away both vehicles.

Trumbo took off on foot from the the crash. State police reported law enforcement searched for Trumbo 60-90 minutes before finding and arresting him near mile-

post 8. State police then cited Trumbo for hit-and-run with property damage, reckless driving, driving while suspended and driving while uninsured.

Union County death toll rises to 13

UNION COUNTY — The death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic rose again over the weekend as the virus claimed another local life, bringing the Union County death toll to 13.

The most recent person to die of COVID-19 in the county was a 78-year-old woman who tested positive Nov. 17 and died Dec. 18. The Oregon Health Authority reported she died at her residence.

The Center for Human Development, Union County's public health arm, reported her death on Saturday, Dec. 19. CHD and the OHA reported 11 new cases in Union County over the weekend, bringing the county's total number of cases to 946.

As of Sunday, Dec. 20, the state death toll had reached 1,341, and 102,930 cases of COVID-19 had been recorded in Oregon since the start of the pandemic.

The Observer to observe Christmas holiday

LA GRANDE — In observance of the Christmas holiday, The Observer will not publish an edition on Saturday, Dec. 26.

"It's a chance to give our employees an opportunity to spend an uninterrupted holiday with their families," said Andrew Cutler, regional

editor for the EO Media Group, which owns The Observer. "But we will beef up our Dec. 24 edition."

The Observer will publish an expanded edition, including additional comics and puzzle features on Thursday, Dec. 24. The Observer's office will close at noon on Dec. 24 in observance of the holiday.

— The Observer

Police investigate kidnapping at marijuana dispensary

ONTARIO — Police are investigating a kidnapping that occurred early Sunday morning in the parking lot of a recreational marijuana dispensary in Ontario.

Argus Observer reporters heard a police dispatcher at about 9:25 a.m. tell police the incident happened at about 6:30 a.m. to an employee, who was reportedly safe in Payette and wanted to report the incident.

Ontario Police Department Sgt. Victor Grimaldo responded to an email request about information this afternoon, saying officers responded at about 9:25 a.m. to Burnt River Farms regarding the report.

He said officers learned the victim, a woman, was in the parking lot when "she was approached by an adult male suspect who forced her to drive outside city limits."

Ontario Police along with Malheur County Sheriff's Office and Payette City Police are investigating the incident, according to Grimaldo.

— The Argus Observer
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