

TODAY IN HISTORY

TODAY

Today is Saturday, Jan. 16, the 16th day of 2021. There are 349 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On Jan. 16, 2020, the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump opened in the Senate, with senators standing and swearing an oath of "impartial justice." Trump again denounced the proceedings as a "hoax," while House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said new evidence reinforced the need to call additional witnesses.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1865, Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman decreed that 400,000 acres of land in the South would be divided into 40-acre lots and given to former slaves. The order, later revoked by President Andrew Johnson, is believed to have inspired the expression, "Forty acres and a mule."

In 1912, a day before reaching the South Pole, British explorer Robert Scott and his expedition found evidence that Roald Amundsen of Norway and his team had gotten there ahead of them.

In 1919, pianist and statesman Ignacy Jan Paderewski became the first premier of the newly created Republic of Poland.

In 1920, Prohibition began in the United States as the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution took effect, one year to the day after its ratification. (It was later repealed by the 21st Amendment.)

In 1969, two manned Soviet Soyuz spaceships became the first vehicles to dock in space and transfer personnel.

In 1987, Hu Yaobang resigned as head of China's Communist Party, declaring he'd made mistakes in dealing with student turmoil and intellectual challenges to the system.

In 1989, three days of rioting began in Miami when a police officer fatally shot Clement Lloyd, a Black motorcyclist, causing a crash that also claimed the life of Lloyd's passenger, Allan Blanchard. (The officer, William Lozano, was convicted of manslaughter, but then was acquitted in a retrial.)

In 1991, the White House announced the start of Operation Desert Storm to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

In 2002, Richard Reid was indicted in Boston on federal charges alleging he'd tried to blow up a U.S.-bound jetliner with explosives hidden in his shoes.

In 2007, Democratic Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois launched his successful bid for the White House.

Ten years ago: Former Haitian strongman Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who'd been living in exile in France, made a surprise return to Haiti as the country wrestled with a political crisis, cholera outbreak and stalled reconstruction from a devastating earthquake.

Three LGSD administrators to retire in June

By **DICK MASON**

The Observer

LA GRANDE — A trio of La Grande School District administrators are set to retire.

La Grande Middle School Principal Kyle McKinney and Central Elementary School Principal Suzy Mayes will retire at the end of the school year, Superintendent George Mendoza told the school board Wednesday, Jan. 13. McKinney and Mayes will join school district Business Manager Chris Panike, who also plans to retire at the end of the school year.

Panike has been the business manager after joining the school district in Nov. 28, 2006. Panike came to La Grande from the Ontario School District where he was its payroll clerk and had worked five years. Panike said he had to weigh a number of factors carefully before deciding to retire.

"I have mixed emotions. I enjoy my job, I enjoy what I do," Panike said.

He ultimately decided to retire, though, because the move will give him more time to travel to Southeast Asia with his wife Linda, who is from Singapore, after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The Panikes recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.

McKinney is completing



Dick Mason/The Observer

La Grande Middle School Assistant Principal Chris Wagner talks with LMS Principal Kyle McKinney, right, on Jan. 14, 2021. McKinney is one of three La Grande School District administrators set to retire at the end of the school year.

his 14th year as principal of LMS. He earlier was the school's assistant principal for four years and taught math at La Grande High School for six years. He, too, said retiring was a hard decision to make.

"I love my staff, I feel like I have the best staff in the district," McKinney said. "I will also miss my kids."

McKinney said he plans to remain in La Grande with his wife of 35 years, Eva, a secretary at Green-

wood Elementary School. Kyle McKinney plans to maintain his ties with the school district as a substitute teacher. This will give him a chance to do what he most enjoys, instructing students.

"I still miss being in the classroom with kids," McKinney said.

The principal said one of the changes he has noted during his career is today more grandparents are raising students than when he joined LMS 18 years ago.

"I take my hat off to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren," McKinney said.

Mayes has served as Central Elementary School's principal since the fall of 2014.

Mayes earlier served as an alternative school principal in the InterMountain Education Service District for eight years through June 2014. She has lived in Union County since 1978. Mayes said she has wonderful recollections of her

tenure at Central.

"I have so many fond memories of my time at Central School. As I reflect on my best part of being a principal, without a doubt I would have to say the children," Mayes said in an email. "Watching them grow up over the years and become great human beings is my greatest joy. A close second would be collaborating with a staff that have been as passionate about children as I am. I've also been very fortunate to have been blessed with incredible PTO teams and an admin team that I admire."

Mayes said she is looking forward to spending more time with husband Jerry Mayes, a retired educator who worked for many years in the La Grande School District.

"We have so much in common and we both love to travel and learn new things. Our top three travel destinations will be Italy, Ireland, an African safari, and of course a Disney World trip with the grandchildren," Suzy Mayes stated.

Mayes also will be devoting much time to her family and volunteer work in the La Grande School District. She added she always will hold Central close to her heart.

Pandemic threatens funding to control noxious weeds

By **BILL BRADSHAW**

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa Resources is spearheading an effort to retain funding for noxious weed programs in Wallowa County, despite funds being diverted elsewhere because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are in the process of seeking partner support for a letter stressing the importance of Oregon Department of Agriculture noxious weed program staff and the Oregon State Weed Board grant program to our region of the state with the goal of encouraging funding of these programs that have been impacted by the economic situation stemming from the pandemic," said Kris Crowley, Wallowa Canyonlands Partnership manager for Wallowa Resources in an email Dec. 30.

After a deadline of Wednesday, Jan. 6, to collect the signatures passed, Crowley said Thursday he had collected at least 44 signatures from Eastern



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Andy Marcum, manager of the Wallowa County Vegetation Department, patrols a field just outside of Enterprise in June 2020 to identify weeds he'll need to spray before they spread. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens funding to control noxious weeds.

Oregon residents, landowners and other partners with Wallowa Canyonlands. The goal is to present the letter to lawmakers in time for the coming legislative session that's scheduled to begin Tuesday, Jan. 19.

A copy of the letter can be found at <https://www.change.org/>

OregonNoxiousWeeds.

"For the most part, we've got good local support," Crowley said, adding that the WCP regularly works with 30-60 landowners each year to stem the spread of noxious weeds.

Crowley said that although the deadline has passed to sign on to support

the letter, concerned residents are welcome to contact their legislators and express their support.

He said that in the past, Wallowa Resources has received two grants of \$75,000-100,000 each from the Oregon State Weed Board to help keep noxious weeds in check in the county.

"Almost all (of the grant money) stays in Northeast Oregon for contracting with landowners to stop noxious weeds, salaries, etc.," he said.

The letter, in part, says:

"In the past five years, the WCP has received a total of \$486,715 in OSWB funding for high-priority noxious weeds such as rush skeletonweed, yellow starthistle, common bugloss and meadow hawkweed. This funding has been matched by over \$650,000 from private landowners and federal funds and over 2,000 hours of in-kind labor from private landowners. Over 90% of this funding stayed in Northeast Oregon

through wages, supply purchases and contracting with local small businesses.

"Results of this important investment include thousands of acres of noxious weed treatments, an improved rural economy, prevention of new invaders, strong partnerships to manage weeds, increased quality and quantity of forage for livestock and habitat for native species. Our success in controlling noxious weeds is just one of many examples throughout the state where the OSWB and ODA noxious weed program staff have been vital to mobilizing resources for on the ground work."

It also acknowledges that weed control isn't the only demand on state funding.

Still, Crowley said, the demands on state funding by the pandemic are felt even by weed control funding.

"It's been taken away or been substantially reduced since the onset of COVID," he said.

Don't toss envelope containing your federal stimulus aid into the trash

By **JAYSON JACOBY**

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Cherie Ward considered tossing the envelope into the trash.

It would have been the most valuable piece of garbage in the sack.

The piece of mail that arrived Saturday, Jan. 9, actually contained a Visa

card that was preloaded with the federal pandemic stimulus payment to Cherie and her husband, Bob, who live in Baker City.

Cherie Ward said her initial thought was the envelope contained a credit card offer.

"The kind you get all the time and that you throw away," she said.

But she was intrigued by the phrase "Economic Impact Payment," which was printed in two places.

Ward said she read the letter inside but was still skeptical, considering the prevalence of credible-looking scams.

For one thing, she said the couple's first federal payment last spring was a

direct deposit to their bank account.

"To get a Visa card in the mail is strange," Ward said.

Only after consulting the AARP website and calling her bank was Ward satisfied that the mail was legitimate. She and her husband called to activate the card.

Ward emailed the

Herald Monday morning because she was concerned other residents would receive the envelope and throw it away.

According to the IRS, the debit cards are intended to speed payments to Americans. Some people who received a check or a direct deposit this spring got the card this time.

In all, the IRS said it will mail about 8 million debit cards this month. People who don't receive a check or a direct deposit should watch their mail carefully for an envelope containing the card.

Unlike the cards mailed last spring, these envelopes include the Treasury Department seal.

Logging company sues, halts distributions from COVID-19 fund for Black Oregonians

By **STEVEN MITCHELL**

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A John Day-based lawsuit has halted further distributions of COVID-19 funds earmarked by the governor for Black-owned businesses and families.

The state's \$62 million relief fund for Black Oregonians will no longer issue grants, as it deposited the remaining \$8.8 million with a federal court Dec. 17, 2020, as legal challenges to its constitutionality continue.

John Day logging company Great Northern Resources, which lists Tad Houpt and Grant County Commissioner Sam Palmer as agents, filed a lawsuit alleging race-based discrimination when its grant appli-



EO Media Group, File

Tad Houpt, part owner of Great Northern Resources, addresses a crowd in John Day in 2016.

cation was denied. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Great Northern and a Portland-based, Latino-owned coffee company and restaurant had asked U.S. Judge Karin Immergut to issue a preliminary

injunction or restraining order to stop the fund distributing money based on race, according to a complaint filed in U.S. District Court Dec. 11.

Immergut denied those requests in November,

according to an amended class-action lawsuit filed with the U.S. District Court Dec. 6. In those instances, the Oregon Cares Fund set aside \$200,000 for Great Northern if they prevailed in their legal challenges, according to a legal brief filed Nov. 10. This led Immergut to find that they couldn't show the irreparable harm needed to warrant an injunction in a Nov. 20 legal opinion.

This time around, Great Northern Resources — the original plaintiffs in the case — joined with Salem electrical contractor Dynamic Service Fire and Security and sought class-action status for the suit, according to a complaint filed Dec. 6.

According to the amended class-action law-

suit, the plaintiffs applied for grants from other federal and state sources but were unsuccessful.

Great Northern applied for a grant through two Oregon-based community organizations designated by the state to review and administer funds earmarked for Black-owned businesses and families, the Contingent and the Black United Fund of Oregon, in early October.

According to the Dec. 6 complaint, the online application asked what percentage of owners of this business identify as Black. Great Northern answered zero. The complaint goes on to say that Great Northern sued the state on Oct. 29 to "stop them from enforcing their racial exclusionary policy." The complaint states

the Contingent denied Great Northern's application on Nov. 9.

The logging company intends to reapply for a relief grant when "the courts enjoin the enforcement of the racial exclusion that renders Great Northern ineligible for relief for the Fund."

Salem-based Dynamic Service Fire and Security saw their business go from grossing roughly \$40,000 a month to nearly \$10,000 to \$18,000, according to the Dec. 6 complaint.

The business tried to apply for relief from the state's small business grant program in November, but by the time they logged on to the website they could not submit an application as the funds were exhausted, the Dec. 6 complaint stated.