

# RELIEF

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while the three other cities in Wallowa County will receive \$50,000 to \$230,000.

Burgess said Union County should receive half of the \$5.2 million within 60 days and the other half about a year later. Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett said Merkley told him the county and cities also will receive two separate payments, one this year and one next.

Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes said the federal government has yet to provide guidelines on how the county can spend the money. Anderes said he anticipates getting guidelines in the near future.

“The rules are starting to roll out and sometime next week we should have a better idea, that is my hope,” Anderes said.

The county in late 2020 received a little more than \$730,000 in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funding

from the state for grants to help businesses negatively impacted by the pandemic. County commissioners distributed that money as grants to 94 businesses.

Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage said the board of commissioners will meet to determine how to use the funds after receiving the rules from the feds.

“As always we want to use it wisely and we want to do whatever we can to help our county in future years,” Beverage said. “We want to make sure we have a long-term vision.”

Bennett also said he is waiting for guidelines, but the goal will be the same as with CARES Act money — to distribute money to businesses and other local entities that have struggled due to closures and other restrictions.

“Our goal would be to get the money out, and to make it the most efficient that we can,” Bennett said. “We don’t want to leave any holes. Our business community has suffered so many losses.”

## FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF FOR LOCAL COUNTIES, CITIES

Union County, pop. 26,840 — \$5.2 million  
 La Grande, pop. 13,460 — \$2.77 million  
 Union, pop. 2,175 — \$450,000  
 Elgin, pop. 1,730 — \$370,000  
 Island City, pop. 1,140 — \$210,000  
 Cove, pop. 555 — \$130,000  
 North Powder, pop. 445 — \$90,000  
 Imbler, pop. 305 — \$70,000  
 Summerville, pop. 135 — \$30,000

Wallowa County, pop. 7,160 — \$1.4 million  
 Enterprise, pop. 1,995 — \$410,000

Joseph, pop. 1,120 — \$230,000  
 Wallowa, pop. 840 — \$170,000  
 Lostine, pop. 215 — \$50,000

Baker County, pop. 16,910 — \$3.13 million  
 Baker City, pop. 10,010 — \$2 million  
 Haines, pop. 415 — \$90,000  
 Huntington, pop. 445 — \$90,000  
 Halfway, pop. 300 — \$60,000  
 Sumpter, pop. 210 — \$40,000  
 Richland, pop. 175 — \$40,000  
 Unity, pop. 75 — \$10,000

— Population information source: Oregon Blue Book

# GAME

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who in turn became more enthralled with the game and started studying as well.

By chance, the group met members of the Walla Walla Go Club during an event at Art Center East in La Grande. The players had come to town to promote and garner an interest in the game. At the behest of Steve Tanner, an associate professor of mathematics at Eastern Oregon University, they decided to found the La Grande Go Club.

As a history major, Bowen holds a keen interest in famous games that were played throughout antiquity — particularly, a story about a young go player named Honinbo Shusaku who had played a famous move against Japan’s strongest player, Inoue Gennan Inseki, at the annual castle games during the Edo period.

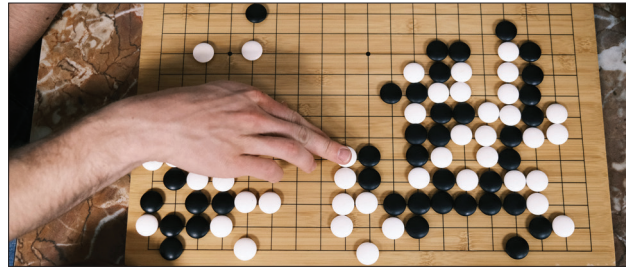
During the game, a doctor in attendance noticed Inseki’s ears became red after Shusaku placed his stone, a sign Inseki was flustered. Shusaku, who was only 17, would end up winning the match by two points. The “ear-reddening game” and Shusaku’s “ear-reddening move” entered into go history.

Another favorite story of Bowen’s is the match between Honinbo Jowa and Akaboshi Intetsu, when the latter vomited blood onto the go board in the middle



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Zaquarie Mendenhall (left) watches as Ty Bowen (center) and Forrest Farris play go on Sunday, March 21, 2021, at La Grande’s Brother Bear Cafe. The pair started playing go in college. Below, a complicated position forms in a match. A large group of stones is under threat of capture if either player blunders a placement.



of the match.

The group meets at the cafe every Sunday, boards in hand with two small pots containing 180 white stones and 181 black stones — the maximum number of points on the board, though nearly all games end long before the stones cover the board.

Much like chess, go is full of tactics. But while chess follows a hierarchical structure where pieces hold varying degrees of value, go is imperialistic. The goal isn’t to capture pieces

but the collection of territory — points along the board that your stones surround and control.

Players place stones on a board with a grid in an attempt to gain territory and subsequently score more points than their opponent. Players cannot move stones once they place them. As the game progresses, complex shapes and tactics emerge and players fight to hold on to territory and to deny space to their opponent. Corners, in general, are easier

to defend and hold, but a well-played invasion can be devastating.

There are thousands of these opening variations, called joseki, and stacks of books outlining their strengths and weaknesses.

Tanner is the club’s strongest player and Mendenhall is the second strongest. The two are close in rankings, so battles between them can be fierce.

“Watching the enjoyment they get out of playing each other,” Bowen said, “really spurred me on.”

Achieving a dan ranking — equivalent to earning a master title in chess — makes the list of the go group members’ life goals. But for now, they are content with sandwiches, coffee and ruthlessly attacking one another over the go board.

# GUNS

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licenses from \$50 to \$100, and renewals from \$50 to \$75.

The debate got so heated that Senate President Peter Courtney — who apologized earlier for a comment about “crushing opponents” that referred to Oregon opponents in the NCAA basketball tournaments — said, “People are getting angry about this measure from all sides.”

But it was clear that Democrats had the votes to prevail, rejecting Republican motions to send the bill to various committees.

The Senate Judiciary Committee spent four hours Feb. 22 listening to testimony, much of it from gun-rights advocates opposed to the bill, and passed it on

a 4-3 party-line vote a few days later.

## What supporters said

The bill’s chief sponsor and floor manager was Sen. Ginny Burdick, a Democrat from Portland and a long-time supporter of gun regulation.

Burdick said that under a state law dating back to 1969, possession of firearms in a public building is a felony unless that person has a concealed handgun license. But until 1989, Burdick said, when state law changed to require issuance of licenses to people who met specified standards, sheriffs had broad discretion over who could obtain licenses. Oregon now has about 300,000 people with such licenses.

“The events of 2020 are a flashing red light that we need to do some-

thing,” Burdick said.

She referred to armed invasions of the Michigan Capitol in Lansing — several men were arrested in an attempt to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer — and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6. (Anti-lockdown protesters also breached the Oregon Capitol during a special session Dec. 21, but they were confined to a vestibule and police ejected them.)

Burdick said the bill would give local governments flexibility, rather than impose a state policy.

“I think you are safer without a gun; the National Rifle Association thinks you are safer with a gun,” she said. “Neither of us gets to decide. The local community gets to decide. That’s as it should be.”

Sen. James Manning Jr., a Democrat from Eugene

and a 24-year Army veteran, said the bill is consistent with a 2008 U.S. Supreme Court decision that recognizes an individual right to bear firearms under the Second Amendment. The decision, written by Justice Antonin Scalia, also allows regulation of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings.

“This bill does not take anyone’s freedoms from them,” Manning said.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat from Eugene and Judiciary Committee chairman, said even Tombstone, Arizona, barred guns from town limits back in 1880 as violence grew.

## What opponents said

But Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, argued the opposite. He said the bill would deprive thousands of con-

cealed handgun license holders from being able to defend themselves. He also said he could think of only one instance — a 2019 shooting at a Eugene middle school that resulted in police killing a male parent involved in a custody dispute — when there was a conflict.

“What we have here is a bill in search of a problem,” Knopp said.

Knopp said if supporters were confident the bill had public support, they should vote to put it on a statewide ballot.

A motion to that effect failed on a party-line vote.

Sen. Bill Hansell, a Republican from Athena and a former Umatilla County commissioner, said counties do not want the burden of having to decide whether firearms should be allowed in public buildings.

While Oregon voters are removing criminal penalties, including those for possession of small amounts of drugs other than marijuana, “we are criminalizing this,” Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, said.

Sen. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose was the lone Democrat to join six Republicans to oppose it. Four other Republicans — Dallas Heard of Roseburg, Dennis Linthicum of Klamath Falls, Art Robinson of Cave Junction and Kim Thatcher of Keizer, among the most conservative senators — chose not to attend the session and were considered absent.

Three other senators were officially excused, including Sen. Brian Boquist of Dallas, now an Independent, whose stepson took his own life with a firearm in 2016.

# ELGIN

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museum’s materials and in restoring Elgin’s old jail, built in 1895 and now on public display just outside the museum.

Allen received the Woman of the Year award for her volunteer work with the Elgin Museum and the Women’s Service Club. She played a big role in refurbishing museum materials for display.

“She is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get it done,” Elgin Mayor Risa Hallgarth said.

Allen and Horn, like all the recipients, received awards saluting what they did in 2019, said Elgin Chamber President Kathy Bonney. The chamber scheduled the ceremony for 2020, but the pandemic meant postponing the event until this week.

Each winner received their award at city hall. Only one recipient plus members of their families and several presenters were in attendance at each presentation to allow for social distancing.

The Elgin Chamber of Commerce’s Spirit award went to Terry Hale, the Elgin Opera House’s executive director of creativity. The award recognizes Hale’s work with young people through the Opera House Youth Actors program. It also recognizes Hale for winning a



Elgin Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

Shay Marshall, left, who works for Timber’s Feederly in Elgin and Local Harvest Eatery and Pub in La Grande, receives the Elgin Chamber of Commerce’s award for Employee of the Year from Lezlie Reid, the previous honoree, during the chamber’s recognition ceremony Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at Elgin City Hall.

Freddie G Fellowship in 2020, a coveted honor for directors of youth theater. Freddie Gershon created the award. He is the recipient of a Tony Honor for Excellence in Theatre and is co-chair of Music Theatre International.

The Elgin Chamber’s Organization of the Year award went to the Elgin Alumni Association, whose members attended classes in the Elgin School District. The association conducts an annual banquet that anyone who went to school in the Elgin School District can attend. The association held the banquet almost every year for at least five decades, until 2020 when the pandemic led to its cancellation. Lara Moore of Elgin

said at the presentation the association is a huge supporter of everything that happens in the Elgin School District.

Megan Myers received the Young Woman of the Year award. Myers is a classroom aid at Elgin High School and previously taught at Stella Mayfield Elementary School’s preschool.

“She is a huge volunteer at sporting events and any other community events that need a helping hand,” said Moore, the 2018 Young Woman of the Year award winner.

Brian Evans received the Young Man of the Year award for his work as a volunteer for the Elgin Stampede, which puts on the annual Elgin Stampede

rodeo, and for serving as head coach of the Elgin High School girls basketball team.

The Employee of the Year award went to Shay Marshall, who works for Timber’s Feederly in Elgin and Local Harvest Eatery and Pub in La Grande — both are pizza and sandwich restaurants.

“She is an outstanding employee who can fill in at every position if needed,” said Bruce

Rogers, co-owner of both restaurants.

The Elgin Chamber’s Business of the Year award was given to Timber’s Feederly.

“They have a philanthropic attitude,” Hallgarth said. “If someone in the community needs a helping hand, they are there to give it.”

The Elgin Chamber of Commerce will present the award for Educator of the Year at an upcoming

meeting of the Elgin School Board.

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