

THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Pat Atkinson of La Grande

Education

America to the rescue

American Rescue Plan Act funds will give local schools a boost

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

NORTHEAST OREGON — The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Union and Wallowa counties' school districts and their students to travel a rugged and harmful path the past 13 months.

Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, the latest COVID-19 relief package from the federal government, however, will help put them on the road to recovery.

The office of U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, released figures from the Congressional Research Service that show school districts in Union County will receive about \$7.2 million in funding from the act, and school districts in Wallowa County will receive about \$1.8 million.

The funding will be provided on the basis of federal Title I guidelines, which include the percentage of people in school districts living below the poverty

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Pause on Johnson & Johnson vaccine

By **GARY A. WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon has "paused" using the Johnson & Johnson one-shot COVID-19 vaccine even though none of six newly reported severe reactions to the vaccine occurred in the state, health officials said Tuesday, April 13.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged states to temporarily stop using the vaccine given to 6.8 million people after six women who received the vaccine became seriously ill and one died.

"This appears to be extremely rare," Dr. Paul Cieslak, Oregon Health Authority's medical director for acute and communicable disease and immunizations, said

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Alex Wittwer/The Observer

La Grande Arts Commission is seeking proposals for a new sculpture to display on the concrete bulkhead on the Fourth Street entrance to Cook Memorial Library in downtown. The bulkhead measures 41 inches tall, 17 inches wide and 36 feet long.

Call for artists

La Grande seeks next public art sculpture

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande is calling for Northeast Oregon artists to submit proposals for a new sculpture for downtown.

The La Grande Arts Commission on Saturday, April 11, announced the call for proposals.

The selection commission, according to the request, is especially interested in submissions that "consider the values of the communities that make up La Grande, are multicultural, interactive and engaging. ... We're looking for an innovative and cre-

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BASICS OF ART PROPOSAL

The La Grande Arts Commission seeks proposals for a sculpture with the theme of "Honoring the Past; Celebrating the Present; Embracing the Future." The piece could go on display in the summer of 2022.

Location

The piece will be in display on the concrete bulkhead outside the Fourth Street entrance of Cook Memorial Library. The bulkhead measures 41 inches tall, 17 inches wide and 36 feet long.

The sculpture must be freestanding and there is no water access. The area is well lit at night.

Eligibility

Open to all residents of Union, Baker, Wallowa and Umatilla counties (single artist or artist teams) who are 18 and older

Applicants with previous large-scale project experience and/or a connection to La Grande receive preference.

Objectives

A cohesiveness between the landscape and the artwork.

Creatively reflect the multicultural history of La Grande.

Embody the values of agriculture, history and wildlife.

Hansell faces backlash after doing his job

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

SALEM — When Oregon State Sen. Bill Hansell told a colleague he was planning to show up to work on March 25, he received a firm warning.

"His immediate words to me were, 'Bill, you'll be crucified,'" the Republican from Athena said.

Hansell was one of six Senate Republicans who showed up to the floor on March 25 as the chamber took up a proposal to ban firearms in state buildings and lay the foundation for other bans.

The bill passed despite opposition from Hansell and other Republicans, who fought the bill for more than six hours on the floor, pointing out holes and sections they considered unconstitutional, Hansell said. Now, several Republicans, including Hansell, have received backlash for showing up and not leading a walkout.

"We've gotten some very nasty emails," Hansell said. "Even to the extent that we've



Claire Withycombe/Oregon Capital Bureau, File

State Sen. Bill Hansell, far left, speaks on the Oregon Senate floor on June 29, 2019. Hansell was one of six Senate Republicans who showed up to the floor on March 25, 2021, as the chamber took up a proposal to ban firearms in state buildings and lay the foundation for other bans.

had to turn over some of the emails to the state police because we were threatened to be shot."

Hansell said the Oregon Firearms Federation had requested Senate Republicans deny the quorum prior to March 25 with a walkout. He caucused with other Republicans about the proposi-

tion. Some agreed to walk out, but Hansell said he, and five other colleagues, decided to "stand and fight, rather than run and hide."

Since then, Hansell said his constituents have been contacted to gather signatures to recall him, though they have so far

declined to do so.

"I've been told by others that they're trying to get a recall for me," he said. "But it's not going to stop me from doing what I believe is the right thing for me to do in order to serve the people that have elected me to the office I hold."

Democrats hold 18 seats in the Senate, with a required quorum of 20 members. Hansell said he is unwilling to consistently deny a quorum on bills he doesn't agree with.

"For us to deny a quorum, we're going to have to come back at some point," he said. "And the bill will still be there. It didn't make any sense to me to deny a quorum over this one bill this early in the session."

By showing up, he felt that he was upholding essential parts of the democratic process.

"The people have a chance to vote on it," he said, adding that being on the floor allowed him to go on the record challenging the bill. "If they don't like what the

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	Tonight 32 Low Clear and cold		Friday 63/31 Sunshine, nice
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CONTACT US

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.



SATURDAY PUBLIC POOLS

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