

## TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, May 13, the 133rd day of 2021. There are 232 days left in the year.

### TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On May 13, 1607, English colonists arrived by ship at the site of what became the Jamestown settlement in Virginia (the colonists went ashore the next day).

### ON THIS DATE:

In 1914, heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis was born in Lafayette, Alabama.

In 1917, three children reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary near Fatima, Portugal; it was the first of six such apparitions that the children claimed to have witnessed.

In 1940, in his first speech as British prime minister, Winston Churchill told Parliament, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat, were spat upon and their limousine battered by rocks thrown by anti-U.S. demonstrators in Caracas, Venezuela.

In 1961, actor Gary Cooper died in Los Angeles six days after turning 60.

In 1967, a vault fire at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Culver City, California, destroyed hundreds of the studio's early films.

In 1985, a confrontation between Philadelphia authorities and the group MOVE ended as police dropped a bomb onto the group's row house, igniting a fire that killed 11 people and destroyed 61 homes.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton nominated federal appeals Judge Stephen G. Breyer to the U.S. Supreme Court to replace retiring Justice Harry A. Blackmun; Breyer went on to win Senate confirmation.

In 2002, President George W. Bush announced that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin would sign a treaty to shrink their countries' nuclear arsenals by two-thirds.

# Foundation prep underway for EOU Field House

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The \$9 million Eastern Oregon University Field House under construction may be less than a year from completion.

"The building is scheduled to be completed in April of 2022," said John Garlitz, EOU's director of planning and facilities.

Construction workers are in the process of preparing the site for the pouring of a concrete foundation for the future structure. Work on the building's exterior then will start and should be finished by early fall. Once this is done, construction workers will have the protection they need from the weather to do the interior work for the Field House, Garlitz said.

Original plans called for the concrete foundation to be in place in 2020, but a prolonged planning and permitting process, Garlitz said, prevented this. The project's contractor, Mike Becker General Contractor, however, was able to install the underground utilities, install drainage facilities, complete grading of the site and building pad and install base rock on the site for spring work. Mike Becker, a Union County firm, now is able to install the concrete footings and will work throughout the spring, summer and fall to enclose the building, Garlitz said.

The structure will house



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Tom Hall (left) and Mark Lowery on Friday, May 7, 2021, prepare the foundation at the site of the Eastern Oregon University Field House, the \$9 million multi-use compound that will allow the college's track team to practice indoors during the winter.



John Garlitz/Eastern Oregon University, Contributed Graphic

This 2021 rendering of the Eastern Oregon University Field House gives an idea of what the facility will look like. Construction of the building is underway. John Garlitz, EOU's director of planning and facilities, said the project could be finished in April 2022.

a classroom for EOU's Health and Human Performance program that will be able to double as a lab. The facility also will be the new

home of EOU's Outdoor Adventure program, now in the Hoke Union Building,

Original designs for the building called for it to

have 88,300 gross square feet, which would have allowed for a 200-meter track, making indoor track meets a possibility. How-

ever, budget constraints led to reducing the space about 25%, which means a smaller track.

The partial track will provide a multipurpose practice area for EOU's track and field team, other athletic programs and EOU students.

EOU track and field coach Ben Welch said the smaller building and track still will be a big plus for his team in the winter. He explained the track team conducts its winter practices in Quinn Coliseum's small gym, which has 4,545 square feet. But in the Field House, he said, his team will have access to about 48,000 square feet for practices.

He noted pole vaulters will be able to practice with a full approach, and runners training for the 60-meter hurdles will be able to run a full course and then have 40 feet to decelerate. Welch said presently those training for the 60-meter hurdles event, which has five hurdles, can run only about 20 meters while clearing two hurdles before they have to slow down and stop.

The Field House will be open to all students and the public. Tim Seydel, Eastern's vice president of university advancement, said the new building brings another benefit.

"Having a facility like this will help us recruit students," Seydel said.

## Enterprise puts hold on new Airbnbs

City council sets 90-day moratorium on the rentals, citing concerns about affordable housing

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chief of Police

ENTERPRISE — New Airbnbs in Enterprise are on hold. The city council during its meeting Monday, May 10, approved a 90-day moratorium on any new Airbnbs in town.

Despite some disagreement between council members over the rights of property owners, the council unanimously approved a resolution affirming the three-month ban with the option to extend it for another 90 days.

City Administrator Lacey McQuead said she reached out to Airbnb owners to get their input with only limited response.

"The planning commission held a meeting. I sent out nine invites to Airbnb owners within the city of Enterprise," McQuead said. "There are 16 Airbnbs so that means seven of them are not registered with us. Out of the nine, one couple showed up, but I did get some input from some other Airbnb owners. (Enterprise resident) Stacy Green also attended the planning commission meeting. There was great conversation between them — they happened to be neighbors, so the one

she was concerned about had someone attending."

Still, McQuead seemed disappointed more Airbnb owners hadn't responded.

"That was it," she said. "Even with all the advertising and invitations to come to the Planning Commission meeting and I invited them to come to this meeting, as well. That was all that we received."

One of the main issues seemed to be the availability of affordable housing.

McQuead presented a letter from the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District that she asked Mayor Ashley Sullivan to read into the record.

The letter was largely about short-term vacation rentals in residential zones and the economic impact of them.

The NEOEDD recently conducted a Community Needs Assessment to assess the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January, NEOEDD conducted more than 70 interviews with a wide variety of community leaders and organizations.

"Like many other rural areas, housing-related challenges are widespread," the assessment stated.

Among the results of the assessment were:

- More affordable housing is needed for workforce and moderate-income families and individuals. A lack exists due to the conversion of residential housing to tourism lodging by

absentee property owners and second homeowners.

- Limited rental options are available for tenants due to them being priced out of units because of increasing property values.

The letter also cited the real-dollar impacts.

- People working in lower-wage jobs ... have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The majority of jobs in the region pay less than \$15 per hour, while two adults working full time would each need to earn at least \$16.06 per hour to cover basic needs in a household with one child, \$19.88 per hour for two children and \$23.09 an hour for three children.

- Lack of affordable workforce housing, an aging population, the high cost of living and underemployment have negative effects on retaining a workforce.

The letter stated that because the city has zoning ordinances, "education and outreach could help spread understanding of the permitting requirements involved and the process by which conflicts are addressed."

The NEOEDD also urged the city to review Hood River's example. That city recognized the benefits both of visitor lodging and the downside of converting limited housing to visitor use.

McQuead said interest in Airbnbs hasn't subsided, and concerns over where the Airbnb owners would live was an issue.

## Cove City Council takes stand against Gov. Brown

Resolution also seeks reparations for businesses that were hurt by COVID-19 mandates

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

COVE — The Cove City Council is calling for Gov. Kate Brown to rein in many of her COVID-19 mandates.

The council on Tuesday, May 4, passed Resolution 2021-3, endorsing efforts to get Brown to roll back restrictions, which Cove Mayor Sherry Haeger said are becoming oppressive.

"We are in crisis — the situation has become an emergency," Haeger said. "There is a state of emergency created by the governor's office."

Haeger said the city council wants the people of Cove to have the opportunity to make logical decisions.

"We want a voice in determining how we rule ourselves," the mayor said. "We want to make common sense decisions instead of following Brown's shutdown orders, which don't make sense."

Haeger said Brown's mandates have hurt businesses enormously, and she wants to do everything she can to prevent more businesses from having to close.

The resolution the council approved asks that businesses

receive reparations for their losses.

The mayor said she believes it is important businesses have more autonomy. Haeger said business owners should have the authority to determine whether their customers wear masks.

Resolution 2021-3 is almost identical to what the Baker City City Council approved March 23. Haeger signed the Cove resolution on Tuesday, May 11, and will send it to Brown later this week.

The resolution's summation sentence reads: "Resolution declaring an economic, mental health and criminal activity crisis due to the current COVID-related state emergency declaration and relating OSHA mandates and guidance."

One of its final paragraphs contains a quote from Thomas Jefferson: "The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain instances that I wish it to be always kept alive."

In passing the resolution, Haeger said, the Cove City Council is becoming part of a grassroots movement she hopes other cities also will join.

## Legislators Hansell & Levy to direct stimulus funds to fire district

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

WESTON — Money from the American Rescue Plan could be a game changer for East Umatilla Fire & Rescue, according to Fire Chief David Baty.

As money from the federal stimulus package comes to Oregon, state senators are being given \$4 million to allocate to a project in their district and state representatives are given \$2 million. Baty said Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, are on board with allocating a portion of their funds to build a new fire station for the district.

The money should be enough to build the new station in Weston without going to taxpayers for more.

"It's going to be close, but I think if we keep a real sharp pencil, we'll be all right," Baty said.

The station would serve



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

East Umatilla Fire & Rescue Fire Chief David Baty explains issues with backing fire trucks into the district's Weston fire station on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. The primary issue is the steep angle of the driveway, which results in stress and twisting on the vehicles' chassis and has caused vehicles to scrape the concrete if not backed perfectly.

as headquarters for East Umatilla Fire & Rescue, which covers about 420 square miles in eastern Umatilla County after three

smaller districts merged in 2020. Baty said they already have the land to build it, a "shovel ready" parcel by the intersection

of Bannister Road and Mill Street. They also have a design, which they modified slightly from Heppner's fire station. It includes

a handful of offices, a kitchen, storage space, a few dorms for firefighters visiting from the Oregon Department of Forestry and other partners, and parking for about eight rigs.

"We're not trying to make the Taj Mahal," Baty said. "We just want to make it plain and simple."

The district's current station is a hodgepodge building, the oldest section of which is now a century old. In one part, old jail cells hold storage items.

Baty says it's embarrassing to show people around the station, given some of the accommodations. Firefighters don't have lockers to store their gear in, for example. Instead, they line them up in a section of a wall alcove behind a truck parking area. Baty has tried to protect the gear from the diesel fumes as much as possible by hanging clear plastic sheets

in front of them.

One of the biggest problems with the current building is its location on a steep hill. One of the bays is extremely difficult to back into, Baty said, showing where a fire truck has to line up just right in order to twist around a sharp, banked turn. A bent railing and some scraped-up areas on the pole between garage doors bear testament to how difficult getting rigs into the station can be — particularly when it's icy. It's also bad for the trucks.

"It twists the chassis," he said.

One thing Baty is proud of is the people serving the district.

Baty is the district's only paid firefighter and after a decades-long career working with paid firefighters, he said it has been humbling to come to Weston and work alongside a crew of volunteers.