

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Saturday, May 22, the 142nd day of 2021. There are 223 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On May 22, 2017, a suicide bomber set off an improvised explosive device that killed 22 people at the end of an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1915, the Lassen Peak volcano in Northern California exploded, devastating nearby areas but causing no deaths.

In 1939, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, signed a "Pact of Steel" committing the two countries to a military alliance.

In 1960, an earthquake of magnitude 9.5, the strongest ever measured, struck southern Chile, claiming some 1,655 lives.

In 1962, Continental Airlines Flight 11, en route from Chicago to Kansas City, Missouri, crashed after a bomb apparently brought on board by a passenger exploded, killing all 45 occupants of the Boeing 707.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking at the University of Michigan, outlined the goals of his "Great Society," saying that it "rests on abundance and liberty for all" and "demands an end to poverty and racial injustice."

In 1967, a fire at the L'Innovation department store in Brussels killed 322 people. Poet and playwright Langston Hughes died in New York at age 65.

In 1968, the nuclear-powered submarine USS Scorpion, with 99 men aboard, sank in the Atlantic Ocean. (The remains of the sub were later found on the ocean floor 400 miles southwest of the Azores.)

In 1969, the lunar module of Apollo 10, with Thomas P. Stafford and Eugene Cernan aboard, flew to within nine miles of the moon's surface in a dress rehearsal for the first lunar landing.

In 1992, after a reign lasting nearly 30 years, Johnny Carson hosted NBC's "Tonight Show" for the final time. Jay Leno took over 3 nights later.

In 2011, a tornado devastated Joplin, Missouri, with winds up to 250 mph, claiming at least 159 lives and destroying about 8,000 homes and businesses.

In 2018, Stacey Abrams won Georgia's Democratic gubernatorial primary, making her the first woman nominee for Georgia governor from either major party. (Abrams, seeking to become the nation's first Black female governor, was defeated in November by Republican Brian Kemp.)

Fresh front on the Liberty Theatre



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Dan Davenport (right) along with Dawson Gaertner and Jack Lind (not pictured) on Friday, May 21, 2021, put up the front-facing cover to the Liberty Theatre in downtown. The awning had been bare sheet metal prior to the restoration. Ashley O'Toole, the board chair for the Liberty Theatre Foundation, says the front-facing awning will include cast iron flowers just like it had in the theater's heyday.

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has new ranger

The Observer

JOSEPH — The Wallowa Mountains Office of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has a new district ranger.



Anderson

Brian Anderson steps into the role beginning late May, according to a press release from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Anderson serves as a deputy area ranger out of Stanley, Idaho, on the Sawtooth National Forest.

"The Wallowa-Whitman is fortunate to have a highly skilled leader joining our leadership team," Wallowa-Whitman Supervisor Tom Montoya said in the announcement. "Brian brings some great experience in working with

rural communities in Central Idaho and understands the impact that difficult resource decisions can have on local communities and agency employees."

A Forest Service employee of more than 20 years, Anderson has gained a broad palette of skills throughout his career. He offers a strong natural resources background, an understanding of complex recreation issues and fire management experience, according to the press release. He has worked closely with a variety of stakeholders, including partners, public, tribes and other federal agencies.

Anderson since 2017 has served as the Sawtooth National Recreation Area deputy area ranger on the Sawtooth National Forest. He is responsible for man-

aging a diverse landscape and high-use recreation area with numerous user groups and complex land management issues.

Anderson's past assignments in the Forest Service include serving as acting district ranger on the Payette National Forest, acting area ranger on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and as a wildland firefighter for the Idaho City Hotshots on the Boise National Forest.

Originally from Boise, Anderson received a bachelor's of science in environmental science from the University of Idaho and a master's of science in hydrology from Boise State University.

"I am extremely excited to join the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and become a part of the local community with my family,"

Anderson said in the press release. "I look forward to meeting stakeholders, hearing their perspectives, and working collaboratively to address a wide variety of land management issues across the Wallowa Valley and Eagle Cap Districts and the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area."

Anderson will move to the Joseph area with his spouse, Amanda, their two daughters, Josephine and Matilda, and their dog, Mogul, the press release stated. In his free time, Anderson enjoys family adventures or hitting the ski slopes. His other hobbies include mountain biking, river running, fishing and camping.

More information about the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is available at www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman.

NEWS BRIEFS

Wallowa County to seek drought declaration

ENTERPRISE — A resolution to declare Wallowa County in a state of drought is the sole agenda item for an emergency session of the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners when it meets at 3 p.m. Friday, May 21.

The declaration is actually a request for Gov. Kate Brown to make a declaration of drought for the county, as she has done for several other counties in the state, Commissioner Todd Nash said May 19.

Such a declaration will make federal funding available primarily for agricultural needs, Nash said. He said it wouldn't apply to any municipal water shortage in the county.

"We're pretty well set that way in Wallowa County," Nash said. "It gets the process started," he said of the declaration request, adding that he expects to hear the governor's response soon.

The meeting will be open to public comment after the declaration resolution is passed.

Hurricane Creek half-marathon is May 29

JOSEPH — Wallowa County is urged to get out and run or walk at a half-marathon event that will take place Saturday, May 29, starting at Joseph City Park, according to a press release.

The Hurricane Creek Half Marathon/5 Mile/5K starts at 8 a.m. and heads toward the Hurricane Creek Trailhead. This is for anyone from walkers to advanced runners.

The whole mission of the event is to encourage more active lifestyles and the goal is to get Wallowa County out and running.

Whisky Fest announces 2021 show; musical acts to be announced later

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Whisky Music Fest will be back in 2021, but it will look significantly different than past events.

A year after event organizers were forced to cancel the concert due to COVID-19, Whisky Fest announced it would come back on July 10, albeit with new headliners. Facing a 12,000-person capacity limit at the Round-Up Grounds, Whisky Fest is postponing previously announced headliners Macklemore and Eric Church to 2022 and bringing in a new slate of musicians.

Whisky Fest will announce its new headliners Friday, May 28.

Baker County proposes lodging tax review

BAKER CITY — Two of the three Baker County commissioners want to hire a consultant to coordinate a comprehensive review of how the county spends nearly half a million dollars in lodging taxes that guests at motels and other establishments pay annually. But that plan is contingent on attorney Drew Martin deeming it legally sound for the county to extend, for the fourth time in the past 15 months, the county's contract with the Baker County Chamber of Commerce to operate the visitor's center using lodging tax revenue.

Most recently, commissioners extended that contract, which is for about \$77,000 per year, through Aug. 31, 2021.

Commission Chair Bill Harvey abstained from voting on the motion.

— EO Media Group

Training to save lives



Union County Sheriff's Office/Contributed Photo

Union County sheriff's deputies spent Wednesday, May 19, in a scenario-based CPR/first aid training, the sheriff's office reported on its Facebook page. In between training sessions, deputies visited the Life Flight air ambulance service at the airport near La Grande and received a refresher course in setting up a scene for Life Flight. Deputies also learned about the equipment the emergency flight crews use.

Joseph Charter students question Wyden

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Views on education, the current unrest in the Middle East, the U.S. Capitol attack and taxes were all among questions Joseph Charter School students asked U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden during a "Listening to the Future" Zoom call Monday, May 17.

The afternoon virtual meeting gave seventh through 12th graders at JCS an ask the Democratic senator and chairman of the Committee on Finance anything they wanted.

One seventh-grade student asked Wyden about his thoughts on the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. The senior senator from Oregon called it "horrendous," and said his first thought on it was that the attack was something one would hear about happening in other countries,

but not America.

"This was, in my opinion, domestic terrorism, because domestic terrorism is when you are willing to resort to violence to obtain a political objective," he said. "In our country, the Founding Fathers said absolutely peaceful protest, but violence is absolutely out. That applies in Portland, Oregon, that applies in Washington, D.C., that applies in rural communities. Violence, out."

He was also asked about education. He brought up a bill he has proposed, the Retirement Parity for Student Loans Act (though he didn't state it by name) that would give employers an option to pay into their employees' retirement plans an amount equal to a percentage of that employee's monthly student loan payment.

When he was asked why education seems geared more toward college rather than trade school, he said he is

working to change that.

"I am spending a lot of time trying to reimagine education," he said. "A lot of trade schools are a much better fit for a lot of students. They can see there is a path to a job that pays good wages. For a lot of young people, you may decide you want to pursue a trade."

He said part of that would be aided by companies coming into schools to discuss their trades.

Sophomore Maleah Murray asked Wyden where he stood in the Israel/Palestine conflict, which has heated up again in recent weeks.

Wyden said in his opinion, the best option is a two-state solution.

"Right now we have got to have a cease fire. The Biden people should be hip deep in the middle of trying to tell people, 'We have to work together.'" he said. "This is doing enormous damage to everyone in the region."

He also was asked

La Grande to receive grant for planning corridors

BY DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande is a step closer to gaining additional walking and bicycling corridors.

The state has notified the city of La Grande it will receive a \$134,595 grant to fund the planning work for corridor projects that would make it possible for people to walk and bicycle through town with greater ease.

The grant will come from the new Oregon Community Paths Program, which is dedicated to helping build off-road walking and biking paths that connect communities and destinations. House Bill 2017, known as Keep Oregon Moving, funds the Oregon Department of Transportation program.

The Oregon Transportation Commission voted May 13 to award the \$134,595 grant to the city of La Grande after reviewing its application.

"This is very exciting. It will give us a chance to work on identifying new projects," said La Grande Public Works Director Kyle Carpenter.

The city will look at projects that would help make it easier for walkers and bikers to get from Eastern Oregon University to Gekeler Lane, a popular exercise route because of its paved pathways and sidewalks.

The city also might consider making it safer for La Grande School District students to walk or bike through the university campus while traveling to and from La Grande Middle School, La Grande High School and Central Elementary School. Those routes through Eastern's campus are not as safe as they could be because of traffic. La Grande students need a designated route, Carpenter said, and such a route could involve a paved pathway through campus.

Carpenter said the city will hire a civil engineering firm that specializes in community development and planning to study the city's options and determine how realistic they are.

"The study will look at what we can do," Carpenter said.

The city has until the end of 2022 to submit the grant-funded plans to ODOT.

Once the city has a plan, it also will be able to apply for construction grants from the Oregon Community Paths program or other sources.