

# THE OBSERVER

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June 1, 2021

TUESDAY EDITION

\$1.50

LA GRANDE

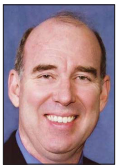
## Council set to pass budgets

Urban renewal general fund is \$1.8 million, city general fund is more than \$14 million

By PHIL WRIGHT  
For The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande City Council meets Wednesday evening, June 2, to consider passing the 2021-22 budgets for the urban renewal district and the city.

The La Grande Urban Renewal Agency general fund is approximately \$1.8, which includes a little more than \$1 million for capital project programs, according to city budget documents, while the city's overall budget for 2021-22 tops \$53 million, including a general fund of \$14.55 million. The La Grande City Council also serves as the La Grande Urban Renewal Agency.



Strope

The budget committees for the city and urban renewal program held public hearings May 10 and 11 to go over the budgets and approve them. Now it's up to the city council to put its seal on the budget proposals.

City Manager Robert Strope in his budget message noted the city kept a close eye on three revenue streams due to the pandemic: the transient room tax; parks, recreation and aquatics program fees; and state money for streets.

"City staff has been extra diligent this year and made adjustments as we saw the impacts to revenues," he stated in the budget message.

Strope also reported the city council reinforced the desire to act upon the recommendations of the fiscal committee, including not reducing service or staffing levels and pushing to increase revenues in the general fund. The budget, then, maintains staff at 110 full-time employees, with a couple of exceptions.

Cook Memorial Library is adding two part-time positions, but staffing there remains essentially the same.

The city police department, however, is adding one full-time clerk to help manage the increasing number and complexity of records requests, releases and sealing cases to meet legal requirements. But the

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## INSIDE • NORTHEASTERN OREGON ARTISANS



# HONORING OUR FALLEN

Annual La Grande event remembers area's fallen veterans



ABOVE: An American flag flies at half-mast during the Avenue of Flags event at Grandview Cemetery's Veteran's Circle in La Grande on Monday, May 31, 2021. After the Memorial Day ceremony, the flag was raised to full mast. RIGHT: Derrick Erickson, a U.S. Army veteran, hugs Bobbie Dalgliesh following a speech by Roger Cochran. Alex Wittwer/The Observer



## Soap box derby rolls in Cove

Best in the West competition draws crowd

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

COVE — Soap box derbies might be a relic of a different era, but don't tell anyone in Cove.

The small Union County community hosted Oregon Soap Box Derby's 25th annual Best in the West competition on Saturday, May 29, with participants from across Oregon and out of state taking part.

"(Soap box derby) really teaches the kids sportsmanship, being a gracious loser as well as

a good winner and cheering on your fellow drivers," said race director Jim Youngers.

Oregon Soap Box Derby is based out of Salem and this is the third year the Best of the West event has been held in Cove. The event was held right outside of downtown Cove, on Haefler Lane between Conklin Lane and Jasper Street.

Races started midday and went through the afternoon as the tournament commenced. Families and local fans lined up along Haefler Lane in lawn chairs and tents. With the Cove High School

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Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Racers competing in the 2021 Best of the West soap box derby ready their cars for action prior to their races. Nearly 20 racers took part in the event on Saturday, May 29, 2021, in Cove.

## Dogs rescued from house fire

Neighbors, firefighters save family's dogs from La Grande house fire

By ALEX WITTWER  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Neighbors in La Grande rushed Saturday, May 29, to save two dogs from a burning mobile home.

The fire broke out at approximately 6 p.m. at a mobile home at 22 Willow St. The La Grande Fire Department responded, but neighbors responded first, breaking doors and windows to attempt to get the dogs out while the owners were away.

With merely a garden hose, neighbors Will Curtiss Jr. and Brent Houston began battling the blaze moments after they noticed smoke coming from the home, even entering the home to look for the dogs trapped inside.

"We just grabbed the hoses and went over there. We knew there were animals inside. We didn't think about anything else," Curtiss said.

Curtiss sustained minor lacerations to his arm, and his eyes were still stinging nearly 30 minutes after he went into the house.

"It was intense. It was terrible," Curtiss said about being inside the burning home. "I was just thinking about that dog."

Jon Weyant, a longtime neighbor to the residents, was able to save one of the family pets immediately, Gemma, 6.

"I tried going in as far as I could go in, but I couldn't breathe — I have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. I broke that lock, broke that door," he said. "Little guy was just standing there at the door. I got him, but I couldn't (go farther in) — there was just so much smoke."

The dog was uninjured. But Weyant was unable to find the second dog, Hunter, 13.

That's when the homeowner, Jenifer McCraw, along with her youngest son, JD Little, arrived to see their home on fire.

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight  
55 Low  
Clear and mild



Wednesday  
95/62  
Mostly sunny; hot

CONTACT US

541-963-3161  
Issue 63  
2 sections, 16 pages  
La Grande, Oregon

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



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TUESDAY

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