

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, June 1, the 152nd day of 2021. There are 213 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On June 1, 2009, General Motors filed for Chapter 11, becoming the largest U.S. industrial company to enter bankruptcy protection.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1792, Kentucky became the 15th state.

In 1796, Tennessee became the 16th state.

In 1812, President James Madison, in a message to Congress, recounted what he called Britain's "series of acts hostile to the United States as an independent and neutral nation"; Congress ended up declaring war.

In 1958, Charles de Gaulle became premier of France, marking the beginning of the end of the Fourth Republic.

In 2003, leaders of the world's seven wealthiest nations and Russia pledged billions of dollars to fight AIDS and hunger on the opening day of their summit in Evian, France.

In 2009, Air France Flight 447, an Airbus A330 carrying 228 people from Rio de Janeiro to Paris, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean with the loss of everyone on board.

In 2015, Vanity Fair released its cover photo featuring the former Bruce Jenner with the headline, "Call Me Caitlyn" as the Olympic gold medalist publicly completed a gender transition.

In 2017, President Donald Trump declared he would pull the U.S. from the landmark Paris climate agreement. (President Joe Biden signed an order returning the U.S. to that accord on his first day in office.)

Ten years ago: In a face-to-face meeting, GOP leaders complained to President Barack Obama that he had not produced a detailed plan of spending cuts and accused him of playing politics over Medicare; the White House said Obama had in fact led on the issue, and accused Republicans of trying to destroy the popular health care program for seniors. Space shuttle Endeavour and its six astronauts returned to Earth, closing out the next-to-last mission in NASA's 30-year program.

Five years ago: Ken Starr resigned as Baylor University's chancellor, a week after the former prosecutor who'd led the investigation of the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky scandal was removed as the school's president over its handling of sexual assault complaints against football players.

One year ago: Police violently broke up a peaceful and legal protest by several thousand people in Lafayette Park across from the White House, using chemical agents, clubs and punches to send protesters fleeing; the protesters had gathered following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis a week earlier. President Donald Trump, after declaring himself "the president of law and order" and threatening to deploy the U.S. military in a Rose Garden speech, then walked across the empty park to be photographed holding a Bible in front of St. John's Church, which had been damaged a night earlier in a protest fire. A curfew failed to prevent another night of destruction in New York City; Macy's flagship store was among those targeted when crowds smashed windows and looted businesses. A Minneapolis medical examiner classified George Floyd's death as a homicide, saying his heart stopped as police restrained him and compressed his neck.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.3 million

5-9-14-15-18-44

Powerball: \$252 million

11-13-22-27-46 — PB 20 x2

Mega Millions: \$22 million

10-14-20-47-70 — MB 15 x2

Win for Life: May 29

1-15-21-22

Pick 4: May 30

• 1 p.m.: 3-6-4-7

• 4 p.m.: 6-5-6-8

• 7 p.m.: 4-7-6-9

• 10 p.m.: 7-8-6-1

Pick 4: May 29

• 1 p.m.: 7-7-3-2

• 4 p.m.: 4-6-0-4

• 7 p.m.: 4-7-5-7

• 10 p.m.: 3-3-2-4

Pick 4: May 28

• 1 p.m.: 8-6-0-9

• 4 p.m.: 2-8-6-4

• 7 p.m.: 1-5-1-7

• 10 p.m.: 3-4-3-3

Imbler, Cove seniors graduate



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Twenty Imbler High School seniors graduated in the school's gym on Friday, May 28, 2021, cheered on by family and friends.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Cove High School graduates mark the end of the commencement ceremony at Cove High School on Saturday, May 29, 2021.

Joseph council's issues linger

Another executive session to be held June 3

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — No names were named regarding accusations of harassment during the Joseph City Council's most recent emergency meeting and executive session, Thursday, May 27, and another executive session was scheduled for June 3.

Interim City Administrator Brock Eckstein had said May 20 he expected to be able to identify those responsible and conclude investigations into allegations of harassment of city employees, but he was unable to



Baum



Eckstein

Thursday because of procedural problems. He requested the added executive session to allow for proper procedures to be followed in the complaints of harassment aired by city officials, employees or staff members, as specified under Oregon law that allows for such sessions.

During the executive session, Eckstein and the council received advice from the city's attorney, Wyatt Baum, which led to a request during open session for the next executive session.

Mayor Pro-tem Kathy Bingham — who was filling in for the absent Mayor Belinda Buswell — said the executive session will take place at 6:30 p.m. June 3 following a budget hearing and preceding the regular June council meeting.

Also during the open portion of the May 27 meeting, Eckstein presented a letter to the council submitted by local merchant Robert Lamb. After getting the council's assent, Eckstein read it into the record.

Lamb's letter stated, in part, "I specifically would like to praise the work by city Parks Director Dennis Welch. Please listen carefully to all comments related to the subject at this meeting."

Welch went on leave March 22, saying he'd been subject to stress and "gaslighting" resulting from harassment he'd experienced. He returned to work May 16 after meeting with Eckstein.

In another matter that was discussed during the executive session, the council during the open session directed Eckstein and Baum to negotiate a separation agreement with the prior Administrator/Recorder Larry Braden.

Braden resigned April 16 citing "harassment by members of the current City Council." He has declined to specify the nature of the harassment or by whom he alleges it occurred. After meeting with Braden May 20, Eckstein said Braden didn't want to be more specific than he was in his resignation letter.

Worker shortage forces closure of Grande Ronde hospice program

Hospital coordinating patient care with local hospice care centers

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics announced Friday, May 28, it will be shutting down its hospice care program in June 2021.

The board of trustees made the decision at its May 2021 meeting, according to a press release from Grande Ronde Hospital.

"Our community is not exempt from the serious national shortage on health care workers," said Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics President and Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Davis. "Over the past year, it has become increasingly dif-



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Grande Ronde Hospital on Sunset Drive in La Grande announced its hospice program will be shut down in June 2021 due to the workforce shortage in the medical field.

ficult to find nursing staff to support our hospice program."

The hospital is coordinating with local hospice care centers to create a smooth transition for the patients. There are two alternative hospice care centers

in La Grande following the shutdown of Grande Ronde Hospital's program.

The stoppage comes in the wake of workforce shortages in the health care industry that have been escalated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Selina Shaffer, director of GRH's Home Care Services, said the hospice program has been in service since the 1980s. The workforce shortage over the last year led Shaffer and the program to look at long-term options for hospice care at the hospital.

"The fallout from COVID-19 has changed the workforce landscape and we are no longer immune to that reality in Union County," she said.

Prior to its closure, the hospice care program was run jointly with the home health program. The hospital will now focus that department's attention fully on the Home Health Care program, with the current hospice employees being transitioned into home health.

The home health care service will continue to operate at full capacity.

UC votes to recommend spending plan

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Union County's proposed 2021-22 budget, which doesn't call for personnel or program cuts and adds five law enforcement officers, is now one step from being adopted.

The Union County Budget Committee unanimously voted Wednesday, May 26, to recommend that a total budget of \$50.01 million be adopted for 2021-22. The vote came after the second day of meetings by the Union

County Budget Committee, where department heads discussed the operation and funding of departments.

The budget committee did not recommend any changes in the proposed spending plan.

The \$50.01 million budget is about \$1 million less than the current year's budget. The primary reason is that a number of grant-funded projects have been completed in 2020-21, such as work at the La Grande/

Union County Airport.

The five law enforcement officers who would be added under the proposed budget include four corrections officers who are needed because the Union County Jail is understaffed, according to Union County Sheriff Cody Bowen.

The Union County Board of Commissioners will vote on adoption of the proposed budget at its next meeting. It must adopt a 2021-22 budget by June 30. Alex McHaddad, chair



McHaddad

of the Union County Budget Committee, said Union County is in solid financial condition, and he credits its staff with doing a good job of putting the budget together.

"I feel very good," he said.

McHaddad also said the budget indicates the elected officials who helped put the spending plan together kept their campaign promises because the programs they voiced support for prior to being elected are set to receive solid funding.

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