

TODAY

Today is Saturday, June 26, the 177th day of 2021. There are 188 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On June 26, 2013, in deciding its first cases on the issue, the U.S. Supreme Court gave the nation's legally married gay couples equal federal footing with all other married Americans and also cleared the way for same-sex marriages to resume in California.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1483, Richard III began his reign as King of England.

In 1917, the first troops of the American Expeditionary Force deployed to France during World War I landed in St. Nazaire.

In 1919, the New York Daily News was first published.

In 1945, the charter of the United Nations was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco.

In 1948, the Berlin Airlift began in earnest after the Soviet Union cut off land and water routes to the isolated western sector of Berlin.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin, where he delivered his famous speech expressing solidarity with the city's residents, declaring: "Ich bin ein Berliner" (I am a Berliner).

In 1977, 42 people were killed when a fire sent toxic smoke pouring through the Maury County Jail in Columbia, Tennessee. Elvis Presley performed his last concert at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced the U.S. had launched missiles against Iraqi targets because of "compelling evidence" Iraq had plotted to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush.

In 1996, the Supreme Court ordered the Virginia Military Institute to admit women or forgo state support.

In 1997, the first Harry Potter novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J.K. Rowling, was published in the United Kingdom (it was later released in the United States under the title "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone").

In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a handgun ban in the District of Columbia as it affirmed, 5-4, that an individual right to gun ownership existed.

Ten years ago: New York City's gay pride parade turned into a carnival-like celebration of same-sex marriage as hundreds of thousands of revelers rejoiced at the state's new law giving gay couples the same marital rights as everyone else.

Five years ago: Fourteen people suffered stab wounds, cuts and bruises when fighting erupted outside the California state Capitol in Sacramento between more than 300 counter-protesters and about 30 members of the Traditionalist Worker Party, a white nationalist group. Fireworks exploded as a huge Chinese-owned container ship made the inaugural passage through the newly expanded Panama Canal.

One year ago: After protesters in Washington, D.C., attempted to pull down a statue of Andrew Jackson, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to protect monuments, memorials and statues. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan met with demonstrators who had thwarted the city's effort to dismantle an "occupied" protest zone. (The zone would be dismantled five days later.) Texas and Florida reversed course and clamped down on bars as the daily number of confirmed coronavirus infections in the U.S. surged to an all-time high of 40,000. Clemson said 37 football players had tested positive for the coronavirus since the school reopened facilities for workouts earlier in the month. A federal judge ordered the release of children held with parents in U.S. immigration jails.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Megabucks

01-04-19-27-30-37

Jackpot: \$4.5 million

Lucky Lines

02-07-12-13-19-22-28-30

Estimated jackpot: \$70,000

Powerball

13-20-40-51-63

Powerball: 1

Power Play: 3

Jackpot: \$75 million

Win for Life

04-07-48-67

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 8-0-5-2

4 p.m.: 5-0-3-1

7 p.m.: 7-5-5-1

10 p.m.: 0-2-2-2

Thursday, June 24, 2021

Lucky Lines

04-05-12-16-17-21-28-29

Jackpot: \$71,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 8-0-1-8

4 p.m.: 2-2-1-0

7 p.m.: 7-2-4-3

10 p.m.: 1-4-3-2

'A huge win for everybody'

La Grande Bike Blast promotes safe riding for kids

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Several lucky children took home their own bicycles thanks to La Grande Parks and Recreation.

Through the Safe Routes to School program, the department gave away bikes, helmets, safety advice and cotton candy to kids at the inaugural Bike Blast on Thursday, June 24. The event took place at Benton Park in La Grande.

"The goal is to get more bicycles into the community and get more education out to families," said Jessie Wilson, coordinator of Safe Routes to School.

La Grande Parks and Recreation lined up 10 bicycles to give away, along with adjustable helmets. Wilson and three other parks and recreation workers set up tents and tables to fit kids with their new helmets, teach safe riding techniques and serve cotton candy.

The bikes came from the Police Department after being impounded for more than 90 days. Mountain Works Bicycles in La Grande serviced and repaired the bikes to a like-new condition for the Bike Blast event.

Dozens of children and their family members came out to Benton Park to participate in cycling event.

Wilson and La Grande Parks and Recreation closed off a section of North Fourth Street at the corner of Division Street for the kids to test out their new bikes, as well as Bike Blast participants who brought their own.

"I've had two bikes before, but 10 days ago I learned how to ride



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Cousins Peyton and Jax Louden race through the street on their bikes during Bike Blast held at Benton Park in La Grande on Thursday, June 24, 2021. Dozens of kids and family members showed up to the event, hosted by La Grande Parks and Recreation's Safe Routes to School program, which promotes bike safety. During the event, volunteers gave away several helmets, instructional material, cotton candy and even bikes.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Jax Louden receives a stick of cotton candy at the Bike Blast event held at Benton Park in La Grande on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

without training wheels," La Grande youth Oliver Fry said.

Fry took home a bike and has a sibling who is looking forward to getting his own at the next Bike Blast on Thursday, July 8, at Candy Cane Park.

"I think it's really awesome because it offers

low-income families an opportunity to get their kids bikes," said Kaylin Fry, Oliver's mother.

"It's also just great to see things going on in the community again."

The new bicycle owners and La Grande Parks and Recreation both filled out registration and

buyer forms upon giving away the bikes, transferring ownership of the bikes to the children.

With summer picking up steam, Bike Blast served as a way to get kids active.

"If we can get more bikes on the road, then we're promoting physical wellness," Wilson said. "If we can get kids get active early on, it's a huge win for everybody."

Safe Routes to School promotes active and safe transportation for children on their way to school and other activities. The program aims to teach safe bicycle and pedestrian habits as well as supplying the necessary infrastructure through events like Bike Blast.

"I'm hoping that we can do larger events," Wilson said. "My main hope is to get helmets and bikes into the community and teach kids how to safely ride their bikes."

LG school board adopts budget for 20-21

\$44 million budget has no program cuts or layoffs

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — It's official, the La Grande School District has a solid budget in place for 2020-21.

The La Grande School Board voted Monday, June 21, to adopt a total 2021-22 budget of \$44.345 million, \$3.180 million more than its current year's budget.

The budget calls for

no program reductions or layoffs and a net increase of .55 of one full-time employee position.

The district's budget is stable despite the loss of 140 students since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school district receives about \$8,600 from the state for each student. The loss of the 140 students since the pandemic hit has cost the school district about \$1.2 million in state funding.

Typically, such a loss in funding would mean the school district would be forced to make cuts in staff and programs to balance its budget. This

year the school district's reserve fund is strong in part because of COVID-19 relief money.

The school district has \$7.01 million in federal funding available to it to offset the impact of the pandemic. This is funding the La Grande School District will be reimbursed for once it is spent, according to La Grande School District Budget Director Chris Panike.

A significant portion of the COVID-19 relief funding will be put in the school district's reserve fund, helping offset the money the school dis-

trict lost due to declining enrollment, Panike said.

The budget was built on the assumption that about 80 of the students lost will return in the fall. If the number is less, the school district will draw on its reserves to make up the difference, Panike said.

"The success of the budget moving forward largely depends on student enrollment in the fall," he said.

Panike said that will go a long way toward determining the level of funding the La Grande School District will have the next two or three years.

NEWS BRIEFS

'Shake the Lake' fireworks planned again

JOSEPH — A local businessman is partnering with the Joseph Chamber of Commerce to fund a bigger and better Fourth of July fireworks display over Wallowa Lake this year.

Gary Bethscheider, owner of the Stubborn Mule, said they are trying to raise about \$20,000 this year.

"I am trying to make it better this year than last year," Bethscheider said in a press release.

Donations can be brought to him at the Stubborn Mule, mailed to the chamber at P.O. Box 1001, Joseph 97846, or dropped off in donation boxes located around town.

Checks should be made out to the Joseph Chamber of Commerce.

The annual "Shake the Lake" fireworks display, which usually is put on from a raft floating in the north end of the lake, is scheduled to begin at 10 p.m. July 4.

Last year, because of the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing restrictions, the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners and the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce both canceled plans

to help fund the effort.

Bethscheider said the Wallowa County Chamber is donating \$1,000.

"So far, the county commissioners have allowed us access to the county docks and Sheriff Joel Fish said he will assist us with the county boat," and the board is donating \$2,000, Bethscheider said.

Oregon State Police partner in efforts to stop speeding

SALEM — The Oregon State Police Department is joining 11 other highway patrols, state patrols and police forces across 12 states to limit excessive speeding accidents.

The Western States Traffic Safety Coalition will conduct an excessive speed enforcement safety campaign June 25-27. The goal of the WSTSC campaign is to decrease roadway deaths related to speeding.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic on roadways decreased significantly. However, drivers who did take the roads frequently during the pandemic contributed to a significant increase in roadway deaths due to excessive speeding. The WSTSC is joining

forces to face this trend head-on and focus on educating the public about the risk involved in driving at an unsafe speed.

The WSTSC includes the Arizona Department of Public Safety, California Highway Patrol, Colorado State Patrol, Idaho State Police, Montana Highway Patrol, Nevada Highway Patrol, North Dakota Highway Patrol, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Utah Highway Patrol, Washington State Patrol, Wyoming Highway Patrol and Oregon State Police.

Excessive speeding reduces reaction times and a vehicle's stopping distance, causing hazards in the case of an accident. According to the National Safety Council, 26% of traffic fatalities in 2019 were related to excessive speeding.

The coalition is choosing to focus on the issue of excessive speeding at the beginning of the summer, when travel and tourism begin to increase significantly.

The WSTSC hopes that the focus on excessive speeding will eliminate deaths due to speeding, especially over the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

— The Observer

July 4 travel may be second busiest in history

Nearly 600,000 Oregonians expected to travel for holiday

By CARLOS FUENTES

The Observer

LA GRANDE — With 56% of all adult Americans now fully vaccinated, travelers are gearing up for Fourth of July weekend. According to the American Automobile Association, 597,000 Oregonians are expected to travel for the holiday, a 40% increase from 2020.

This will be the second highest number of travelers for Independence Day in Oregon, only slightly under the 2019 record of 609,000.

AAA says the easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions, increased vaccinations, and lower unemployment are giving Americans increased confidence to travel for vacations and fireworks this year.

"People are eager to travel this summer after staying close to home for the last year-and-a-half, Doreen Loofburrow, senior vice president of travel at AAA Oregon/Idaho, said in a press release. "With pandemic restrictions easing and more people getting vaccinated, we saw a strong kick-off to the summer travel season over Memorial Day and that trend continues for Independence Day."

Oregonians won't be traveling alone: 48 million Americans are expected to travel between July 1 and July 5 — 14.4% of the total population, according to AAA.

According to AAA, the most popular destinations for Oregonians include Central Oregon, national parks of Utah, Yellowstone, Hawaii, Disneyland and Las Vegas. With record numbers of travelers hitting the road, traffic is expected to cause major delays on highways and in metropolitan areas.

"With travelers eager to hit the road this summer, we're expecting nationwide traffic volumes to increase about 15% over normal this holiday weekend. Drivers around major metro areas must be prepared for more delay," Bob Pishue, transportation analyst at INRIX, said in a press release. "Knowing when and where congestion will build can help drivers avoid the stress of sitting in traffic."

To avoid major traffic delays, AAA recommends avoiding travel on Thursday and Friday afternoons and Monday mid-day.

More traffic will likely lead to more accidents and delays. AAA expects to rescue more than 468,000 motorists nationally and 8,000 in Oregon this Independence Day weekend, with the most common issues being dead batteries, lockouts and flat tires.

However, not all accidents are so minor.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Fourth of July weekend usually sees an increase in impaired driving crashes. According to their website, between 2015 and 2019, 1,339 drivers died in motor vehicle crashes over the holiday weekend — over a third of whom were drunk.

Nearly 3.5 million Americans are expected to use airline travel over the holiday weekend; 12% of Oregon travelers will be flying to their destinations, compared to the 86% of drivers who will pay for the highest gas prices on July 4 in seven years, according to AAA.