

**TODAY**

Today is Saturday, July 24, the 205th day of 2021. There are 160 days left in the year.

**TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY**

**On July 24, 1969**, the Apollo 11 astronauts — two of whom had been the first men to set foot on the moon — splashed down safely in the Pacific.

**ON THIS DATE**

**On July 24, 1567**, Mary, Queen of Scots was forced to abdicate by Scottish nobles in favor of her infant son James, who became King of Scotland at the age of one.

**In 1847**, Mormon leader Brigham Young and his followers arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah.

**In 1858**, Republican senatorial candidate Abraham Lincoln formally challenged Democrat Stephen A. Douglas to a series of political debates; the result was seven face-to-face encounters.

**In 1862**, Martin Van Buren, the eighth president of the United States, and the first to have been born a U.S. citizen, died at age 79 in Kinderhook, New York, the town where he was born in 1782.

**In 1866**, Tennessee became the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War.

**In 1915**, the SS Eastland, a passenger ship carrying more than 2,500 people, rolled onto its side while docked at the Clark Street Bridge on the Chicago River; an estimated 844 people died in the disaster.

**In 1937**, the state of Alabama dropped charges against four of the nine Black men accused of raping two white women in the "Scottsboro Case."

**In 1952**, the Gary Cooper western "High Noon" had its U.S. premiere in New York.

**In 1974**, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that President Richard Nixon had to turn over subpoenaed White House tape recordings to the Watergate special prosecutor.

**In 1975**, an Apollo spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific, completing a mission which included the first-ever docking with a Soyuz capsule from the Soviet Union.

**In 2010**, a stampede inside a tunnel crowded with techno music fans left 21 people dead and more than 500 injured at the famed Love Parade festival in western Germany.

**In 2019**, in a day of congressional testimony, Robert Mueller dismissed President Donald Trump's claim of "total exoneration" in Mueller's probe of Russia's 2016 election interference.

**Ten years ago:** Cadel Evans won the Tour de France, becoming the first Australian champion in cycling's greatest race.

**Five years ago:** Ken Griffey Jr. and Mike Piazza were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. British rider Chris Froome celebrated his third Tour de France title in four years.

**One year ago:** U.S. agents again used tear gas to try to disperse a crowd of protesters outside the federal courthouse in Portland, Oregon, after fire-works were shot toward the building amid demonstrations. A federal judge denied a request by Oregon's attorney general to restrict the actions of federal police who'd been deployed there amid weeks of protests.

# Taking a fall for the food bank

Grocery Outlet owners set up dunk tank to raise money for local food bank

By **CARLOS FUENTES**  
The Observer

ISLAND CITY — Usually, customers at Grocery Outlet head straight from their cars to the inside of the Island City store. But on Wednesday, July 21, most stopped to check out the large water dunk tank sitting in the parking lot, and many paid the \$5 to have a chance to submerge co-owner Randy Willson in the tank.

The event was part of Grocery Outlet's 11th annual Feed the Need event, which raises proceeds for local food banks in the area.

"We've never done the dunk tank before, but I thought of it this year," co-owner Michelle Willson said. "I thought a lot of people would like to dunk Randy."

Every year, Grocery Outlet partners with local businesses to hold fundraisers throughout July. Along with the dunk tank,



Carlos Fuentes/The Observer

**Grocery Outlet co-owner Randy Willson drops into the water tank in front of the store on Wednesday, July 21, 2021. Customers could pay \$5 for the chance to dunk Willson, part of Grocery Outlet's 11th annual Feed the Need fundraiser.**

customers could purchase hot dogs and refreshments and take part in a silent auction of donated items. Randy Willson said he looks forward to fundraising every summer.

"It's our opportunity to give back to the community that's been so nice to us," he said. "And it's an opportunity for customers to give back to our wonderful valley. It's a big blessing."

Grocery Outlet has been auctioning items

on its Facebook page throughout the month. Some of the items sold so far are a snowboard, a skateboard and an air conditioning unit.

The store had raised roughly \$11,000 by Wednesday, more than halfway to the owners' goal of \$20,000.

"We've grown every single year," Randy Willson said. "Last year was the most successful year so far — the store raised over \$17,000. People

were very generous last year during the pandemic."

All of the proceeds from this year's event are going to the Community Connection Food Bank. According to Michelle Willson, these types of events are crucial to help residents facing food insecurity.

"People always donate in the winter, but there's food insecurity in the summer as well, so that's why we chose to do our event every July," she said.

# Wildfire smoke to settle in valley

Smoky conditions may stay until at least July 28

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Grande Ronde and Wallowa valleys will feel the impact of wildfire smoke this weekend but not in dramatic fashion.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton is projecting that both locations will continue to have widespread haze at least through Wednesday, July 28.

The smoke helping to create the haze is coming from the Bootleg Fire in south-central Oregon and the Elbow Creek Fire burning in Wallowa County, according to Mary Wister, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's office in Pendleton.

Smoke from the Bootleg Fire is projected to continue to be blown into the Grande Ronde and Wallowa valleys by southwest winds, Wister said.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

**Shadowed by wildfire smoke, the sun still draws the attention of sunflowers growing near Alicel on Wednesday, July 21, 2021.**

The air quality monitoring website +iQAir is projecting that La Grande will have a good air quality rating of 50 on Saturday, July 24, and a moderate one of 67 on Sunday, July 25. The air quality outlook for Enterprise is not as positive. The air quality website is projecting Enterprise will have a moderate rating of 79 on July 24 and one of 105 on July 25, which is in the unhealthy category. A 105 rating means that people in the sensitive category, such as those with chronic breathing difficulties, could be bothered by the air quality.

The Bootleg Fire, which

is burning in the Fremont-Winema National Forest, is the largest blaze in the United States and is now at least 399,500 acres and 40% contained.

One reason for the fire's growth is that on July 19 the Bootleg and Log fires merged. All acreage reports now reflect the combined fire, according to InciWeb, the federal government's wildfire information website.

Wister said the National Weather Service's long-term forecast doesn't include haze after July 28 in the Grande Ronde and Wallowa valleys, but that's because it's difficult

to project air conditions a week in advance.

"New fires could pop up," she explained.

The meteorologist believes it is likely the widespread haze will continue.

"Do not rule it out," Wister said.

Conditions are expected to be a little hotter in La Grande and Enterprise starting July 25 because of a high pressure system now building in the Rocky Mountains that will extend to Northeastern Oregon.

The system will keep out clouds and other weather elements that cool the atmosphere, according to Rob Brooks, a meteorologist with the weather service.

La Grande is projected to have a high temperature of 96 degrees July 25. Enterprise is projected to have temperatures top out at 93 degrees July 24 and July 25, a little above its recent highs.

Brooks said the high pressure system will break up around July 27 when wind from the southwest carrying moisture will hit the region.

# Sheriff's office, corrections to get raises

Deal part of new contract for Union County Law Enforcement Association

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Non-management employees with the Union County Sheriff's Office and corrections department are set to receive pay raises of at least 3% each of the next three years.

The pay increases will be granted under the terms of a three-year deal with the Union County Law Enforcement Association ratified by the Union County Board of Commis-

sioners on Wednesday, July 21. The contract is retroactive to July 1 and runs through June 30, 2024.

"I'm very happy with the contract. It is fair to the employees and it is fair to the community," said Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage. "It took a lot of work to come up with a contract that is satisfactory to both parties."

Terms of the contract call for employees with the UCLEA to receive a base salary boost of 3% in 2021-

2022. They will receive a minimum pay increase of 3% and a maximum boost of 4.5% in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

The pay raises in the final two years of the contract will be based on the previous year's average consumer price index in United States cities.

The contract also boosts what UCLEA employees receive in incentive pay for having a bachelor of science or a bachelor of arts degree, an increase to 6%. Employees previously received a 5% pay increase for having such a degree.

Another new feature of the contract is a phys-

ical fitness incentive.

Employees who can complete the Oregon Physical Abilities Test in 5 minutes and 30 seconds or less will receive a \$500 bonus payment. The 5:30 objective is based upon the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training standard.

The Oregon Physical Abilities Test is used to evaluate whether entry level police officer candidates have the essential physical capacities to perform their duties.

The Union County Law Enforcement Association has 28 members. All are patrol officers or work at the Union County Jail.

**CORRECTION**

In the Page A2 story "EOU Head Start to receive additional federal funding," published Tuesday, July 13, the story misstated the program's total 2020-21 funds: \$1.06 million was the amount of extra funding the program received.

**LOTTERY**

**Wednesday, July 21, 2021**

**Megabucks**

5-6-7-13-19-25

Jackpot: \$5.7 million

**Lucky Lines**

1-7-9-13-19-24-27-31

Estimated jackpot: \$34,000

**Powerball**

27-28-44-67-68

Powerball: 11

Power Play: 2

Jackpot: \$174 million

**Win for Life**

4-11-42-55

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 9-9-0-4

4 p.m.: 2-1-5-3

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

10 p.m.: 0-3-3-2

**Thursday, July 22, 2021**

**Lucky Lines**

2-5-11-16-20-22-28-31

Jackpot: \$35,000

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 6-8-4-7

4 p.m.: 6-5-1-9

7 p.m.: 6-1-5-9

10 p.m.: 8-3-5-5

**NEWS BRIEF**

**District hires new director of student services**

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District has hired a new director of student services, according to a press release from the district.

Erika Pinkerton will step into the new role, pending the approval of the La Grande School Board, taking over for current director Landon Braden, who is leaving to take a position in the Enterprise School District.

Pinkerton served as superinten-

dent and elementary principal at the Enterprise School District for the past four years. Prior to moving to Enterprise she was an elementary principal in the Winston-Dillard School District in Winston.

She also served the Lebanon School District as an elementary teacher, a middle school literacy coach and an instruction/data/curriculum teacher on special assignment.

Before she worked for school districts Pinkerton was a residential and



Pinkerton

day treatment counselor for St. Mary's Home for Boys in Beaverton.

"Erika comes to our district with a wealth of experience as a truly student-centered educator," Superintendent George Mendoza said. "She is an advocate for incorporating trauma informed care into schools and is a champion of instruction for students in need of special services. We are pleased to have her on our administrative team."

— The Observer

# Joseph Council starts the road back

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The Joseph City Council began the road back from dysfunction, Tuesday, July 20, by voting in a new mayor pro-tem and taking other measures in the wake of the censure and resignation of one of its members.

Councilor Lisa Collier was elected by her peers to serve as mayor pro-tem, the position former Councilor Kathy Bingham was removed from June 30. Bingham also was removed from committee assignments for a year and banned from contacting city employees after several complaints against her were received by City Hall.

Although the council has a new pro-tem — who serves as mayor in the mayor's absence — filling Bingham's former committee assignments will have to wait. The same is true for applications for other committee assignments. Making such assignments is the mayor's job and Mayor Belinda Buswell was absent from the last council meeting. Pro-tem Administrator Brock Eckstein said she was home sick.

One other item from recent difficulties had to be postponed. A response to Parks Department Lead Dennis Welch's accusations against Public Works Lead Levi Tickner will have to wait for the Aug. 5 council meeting, since Welch was not present to rebut Tickner's statements. Welch, too, was home sick, Eckstein said.

But the council did accomplish one major chore from recent months — that of agreeing to a severance agreement with former Administrator/Recorder Larry Braden. Braden resigned April 11 citing harassment by members of the council.

The council went into executive session to discuss details of the agreement. Once back in open session, Eckstein said that after negotiating with Braden, they agreed the city will pay Braden \$25,000 and Braden will agree to make no further claims against the city. Braden worked for the city for just less than two years.

The council also approved new job descriptions for several city employees, but decided to hold off on details of the Parks Department lead, the position Welch now holds.

In other matters, the council:

- Heard a complaint about the cost of water and sewer hookups from resident John McColgan, who called the city's current rates "exorbitant." Tickner and Brad Baird, of Anderson Perry Engineers, explained the reasons for the high cost was largely about paying for infrastructure a property owner hadn't been paying for prior to building a new home. The council took no action on McColgan's complaint.

- Heard a complaint from Chuck Anderson, "alpenmeister" of the Oregon Alpenfest, who considers Joseph's \$475 fee for transient merchants too high. He requested that the council enact an exemption for nonprofit fees such as his Wurstwagen. It sells bratwurst sandwiches to raise money for the annual Alpenfest, which will be held at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo grounds this fall, and he'll have pay the \$475 fee, cutting deeply into funds for the Alpenfest. Anderson asked the council to consider a nonprofit fee for operations such as his. Collier said it was worth discussing and several councilors agreed.