

TODAY

Today is Thursday, July 29, the 210th day of 2021. There are 155 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On July 29, 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act, creating NASA.

ON THIS DATE

In 1856, German composer Robert Schumann died in Endenich at age 46.

In 1890, artist Vincent van Gogh, 37, died of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound in Auvers-sur-Oise, France.

In 1914, transcontinental telephone service in the U.S. became operational with the first test conversation between New York and San Francisco. Massachusetts' Cape Cod Canal, offering a shortcut across the base of the peninsula, was officially opened to shipping traffic.

In 1965, The Beatles' second feature film, "Help!," had its world premiere in London.

In 1967, an accidental rocket launch on the deck of the supercarrier USS Forrester in the Gulf of Tonkin resulted in a fire and explosions that killed 134 servicemen. (Among the survivors was future Arizona senator John McCain, a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander who narrowly escaped with his life.)

In 1968, Pope Paul the Sixth reaffirmed the Roman Catholic Church's stance against artificial methods of birth control.

In 1974, singer Cass Elliot died in a London hotel room at age 32.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford became the first U.S. president to visit the site of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz in Poland.

In 1980, a state funeral was held in Cairo, Egypt, for the deposed Shah of Iran, who had died two days earlier at age 60.

In 1981, Britain's Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer in a glittering ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

In 1986, a federal jury in New York found that the National Football League had committed an antitrust violation against the rival United States Football League. But in a hollow victory for the USFL, the jury ordered the NFL to pay token damages of only \$3.

In 1999, a former day trader, apparently upset over stock losses, opened fire in two Atlanta brokerage offices, killing nine people and wounding 13 before shooting himself to death; authorities said Mark O. Barton had also killed his wife and two children.

Ten years ago: Norway began burying the dead, a week after an anti-Muslim extremist killed 77 people in a bombing and shooting rampage. Delaware carried out its first execution since 2005, putting to death Robert Jackson III, who was convicted of killing a woman, Elizabeth Girardi, with an ax during a burglary.

Five years ago: Pope Francis visited the former Nazi death factory at Auschwitz and Birkenau in southern Poland, meeting with concentration camp survivors as well as aging saviors who helped Jews escape certain doom. Former suburban Chicago police officer Drew Peterson was given an additional 40 years in prison for trying to hire someone to kill the prosecutor who put him behind bars for killing his wife.

One year ago: The body of the Democratic congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis arrived in Atlanta; people lined the streets as the hearse carrying Lewis' body moved through downtown before a ceremony at the Capitol rotunda, where Lewis was lauded as a warrior and a hero. Both sides declared victory in a political fight over the deployment of federal agents to guard a U.S. courthouse that was targeted during violent protests in Portland, Oregon.

LOTTERY

Monday, July 26, 2021 Megabucks

16-19-21-23-25-27
Estimated jackpot: \$1 million

Lucky Lines

3-5-10-13-17-24-26-30
Estimated jackpot: \$39,000

Win for Life

3-18-44-71

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 1-8-8-2
4 p.m.: 9-0-2-3
7 p.m.: 3-9-4-9
10 p.m.: 4-4-6-6

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 Mega Millions

2-35-36-54-64
Mega Ball: 11
Megaplier: 3
Estimated jackpot: \$166 million

Lucky Lines

4-8-10-13-20-23-28-30
Estimated jackpot: \$40,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 5-3-6-6
4 p.m.: 4-5-9-9
7 p.m.: 5-0-5-9
10 p.m.: 1-5-9-4



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Construction of the Panda Express along Island Avenue continues on Tuesday, July 27, 2021. Project managers predict completion of the restaurant by late fall.

Construction on Panda Express to finish this fall

New fast food restaurant going up on Island Avenue

By CARLOS FUENTES

The Observer

ISLAND CITY — Construction on the Panda Express building on Island Avenue is expected to be completed by late fall this year.

Since starting con-

struction in May, there have been no major delays, according to Brad Lindsay, project superintendent with Millennium Construction Group, a California-based construction company hired to build the restaurant.

"Progress has been good. We are expecting to be finished by late October, early November," Lindsay said.

When finished, the 2,381-square-foot restau-

rant will feature a drive-thru, full kitchen and dining area.

Workers are setting up the framing of the building.

In the next few weeks, they will begin the roofing process before starting work on the inside.

As of now, there is no set opening date.

Panda Express is a Chinese American fast food restaurant with more than 2,100 locations nation-

wide, according to its website.

There are more than 30 in Oregon.

The Island City City Council approved the construction application in October 2020.

"It's always good to have a new employer in the city," Karen Howton, Island City's city recorder, said. "It means more opportunities for employment and should help out the economy."

Air quality will become unhealthy by weekend

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Air quality in La Grande and Enterprise may not be good on Friday, July 30.

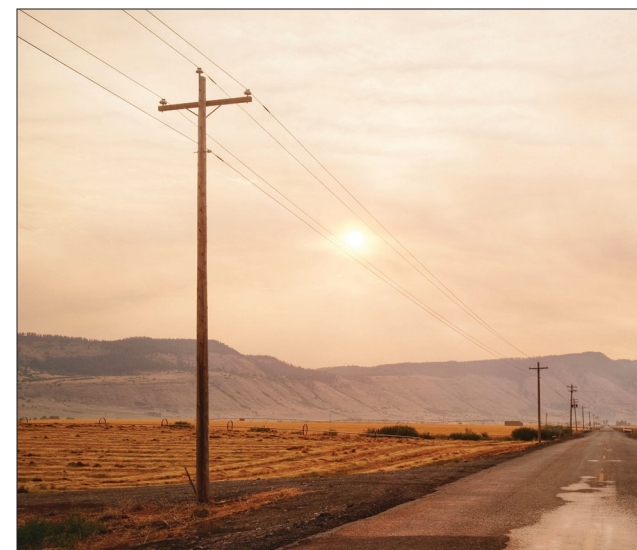
The air monitoring website +QAir is projecting that the two communities will both have air quality in the unhealthy category by the end of the week.

La Grande is projected to have a rating of 117, which would place it in the orange category, a level at which people in sensitive groups, including those with respiratory issues, will be impacted.

The air will be worse in Enterprise where +QAir is projecting it will be in the red category with a 151 rating.

Air quality falling to the red category can negatively impact members of the general public, according to AirNow.gov, a federal government website.

The good news is that air quality ratings for La Grande and Enterprise on July 29 will not be in the unhealthy category. +QAir is projecting both communities will have



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Smoke from the Bootleg Fire in south-central Oregon fills the sky above Booth Lane on Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

air quality in the moderate yellow category. La Grande's air quality rating is projected to be 64, and Enterprise's is forecast to be 82.

No haze is in the National Weather Service's forecast for the Grande Ronde and Wallowa valleys through Aug. 2. The reasons are twofold, according to Marilyn Lohman, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service office in Pendleton.

Lohman said Northeastern Oregon is

receiving less smoke from the large Bootleg Fire in south-central Oregon because of cooler weather there, more moisture and greater cloud cover. The cooler weather and increased moisture are preventing the blaze from generating as much smoke. The added cloud cover in south-central Oregon is also helping by limiting the amount of smoke that is traveling to Northeastern Oregon.

The lack of haze in the forecasts for the Grande Ronde and Wallowa val-

leys, though, can be misleading. Lohman said the Grande Ronde and Wallowa valleys have been receiving greater cloud cover, making haze less visible.

"Cloud cover obscures smoke," she said. The cloud cover is a reason why the National Weather Service is not including haze in its local forecasts, which it had been doing for much of the past month.

Lohman said she expects the haze will return in the near future, with the decline of cloud cover and more wind from the southwest carrying smoke from the Bootleg Fire back into our region.

"It will get more smokey later on," she said.

Smoke from the Bootleg Fire could be cleared out July 31 in Northeastern Oregon by rain, according to Robert Cramp, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

"It would wash it to the ground," he said.

The National Weather Service is forecasting a 40% chance of rain in the Grande Ronde Valley on July 31 and a 20% chance in the Wallowa Valley.

NEWS BRIEFS

Elbow Creek Fire up to 43% containment

WALLOWA — The Elbow Creek Fire is 43% contained, with backup firefighters and equipment still arriving to support the fire line on the 22,901-acre fire, according to a press release from the morning of Wednesday, July 28.

"Crews continued with burnouts in the east side of Elbow Creek and working grids to locate and suppress any spot fires in the area," the statement from the Oregon Department of Forestry said. "Work by firefighters is now transitioning to mop up and patrol along all Divisions, while ongoing work continues on known, scattered hot areas such as those discovered in dozer berms along fire lines."

As of the July 28 press release, there are 1,057 personnel working on the fire, which has destroyed two houses and four additional buildings. Handheld infrared detection cameras are being used to monitor hot spots.

According to the statement, stinging insects and poisonous snakes are adding to the risk that firefighters are experiencing. There

have been six minor injuries among fire personnel, although the causes are not known.

Within the incident command center and fire camp, strict COVID-19 restrictions are in place to reduce further health risks.

Landmarks Commission holds special session

LA GRANDE — The La Grande Landmarks Commission is holding a special session on Thursday, Aug. 5, to discuss proposals for the La Grande Downtown Historic District Standards update.

The commission will discuss a potential project that will involve renovations to the storefront at 1214 Adams Ave. The renovations include repainting the exterior, replacing tile bulkheads and installing wood trim in the entry.

Any renovations performed on the building would be subject to compliance with the city of La Grande's historic preservation requirements, because the structure is classified in the national register of historic places.

The Planning Division received three proposals, which it will

review at the meeting. The three proposals are from Cultural Reconnaissance, Sears Preservation Consulting and Peter Meijer Architect. Commission Chair Cassie Hibbert can move to choose a consultant for the City Downtown Historic District Standards or move that the discussion be continued at Thursday, Aug. 12.

The special session will take place at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers at La Grande City Hall.

Wallowa County sees spike in COVID cases

ENTERPRISE — There were 12 new coronavirus cases reported in Wallowa County in the past five days, the Oregon Health Authority reported Monday, July 26.

The largest single-day count came Thursday, July 22, when five were reported. Another seven cases were reported over the weekend, the OHA said in a press release.

There were no coronavirus-related deaths in the county during the reporting period.

— EO Media Group

WALLOWA COUNTY

Homes spared in path of Elbow Creek Fire

By RONALD BOND

Wallowa County Chieftain

EDEN BENCH — They were given the notice to evacuate within an hour of the Elbow Creek Fire starting.

Yet, Dick and Shirley Hone saw their home spared despite the blaze's quick-burning nature when it started the afternoon of Thursday, July 15, and almost immediately started moving east.

"They saved, I think, basically every structure," Shirley Hone said.

The Hones own the last home on Eden Bench, closest to Elbow Creek, Shirley Hone said.

"I think within two hours, it was burning hard right below our house," she said.

The couple heeded evacuation notices and were out of their home by about 6 p.m., she said.

"We left the first night, and my two brothers-in-law from Enterprise and Joseph came and stayed at the house," Hone said.

She added they brought a water truck and stayed at the house in case they could help.

The Hones stayed in Enterprise on July 15-16, but returned home within about 36 hours of evacuating.

"We just wanted to be there. We built this house ourselves, and it's not easy to leave a place like this," she said.

Hone said she hadn't measured how close the fire came to their home, but her brothers-in-law "said it was within 500 yards of our lowest property."

Hone had immense praise for the efforts put forth by firefighters who stopped the blaze before it reached their home.

"This state fire group did an outstanding job with this fire. It was moving very rapidly," she said. "The organization this group has was unbelievable, both aerial and ground."

Hone added that she and her husband never felt unsafe.

"These guys were right on top of it. What they did was totally amazing. And the ground personnel was unbelievable," she said, adding the aerial attack was key. "Without them, I think everybody would have burned."

Farther upriver, Gary and Pennie Rials were ready to evacuate but elected to wait it out.

The couple's home along the Grande Ronde River is about 3 miles southwest of Troy and a handful of miles away from Wildcat Creek, the easternmost point of the fire.

"We're 5 miles from Wildcat Creek. It was coming down our way," Pennie Rials said. "It was getting kind of close. It turned and went the other way."

She said the couple would have evacuated if they had seen the fire getting closer.

"If it would have come over the hill here called Peacock ... if we would have seen flames, we were leaving," she said.

Rials said her husband, Gary, was keeping their property wet throughout the duration in case the fire did close in.

With the fire now largely burning in the opposite direction of their home, the couple drove up Eden Bench to see the aftermath, and to inform residents who were not present that their homes had made it.

"I've been trying to keep people kind of alerted about what's going on," Rials said.