

TODAY

Today is Saturday, July 31, the 212th day of 2021. There are 153 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On July 31, 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in Moscow.

ON THIS DATE

In 1715, a fleet of Spanish ships carrying gold, silver and jewelry sank during a hurricane off the east Florida coast; more than 1,000 crew members died.

In 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, was made a major-general in the American Continental Army.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was adopted by the republic's National Assembly.

In 1933, the radio series "Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy," made its debut on CBS radio station WBBM in Chicago.

In 1945, Pierre Laval, premier of the pro-Nazi Vichy government, surrendered to U.S. authorities in Austria; he was turned over to France, which later tried and executed him.

In 1954, Pakistan's K2 was conquered as two members of an Italian expedition, Achille Compagnoni and Lino Lacedelli, reached the summit.

In 1964, country singer-songwriter Jim Reeves, 40, and his manager, Dean Manuel, were killed when their plane crashed in bad weather near Nashville.

In 1970, "The Huntley-Brinkley Report" came to an end after nearly 14 years as co-anchor Chet Huntley signed off for the last time; the broadcast was renamed "NBC Nightly News."

In 1971, Apollo 15 crew members David Scott and James Irwin became the first astronauts to use a lunar rover on the surface of the moon.

In 1972, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric treatment.

In 2003, the Vatican launched a global campaign against gay marriages, warning Catholic politicians that support of same-sex unions was "gravely immoral" and urging non-Catholics to join the offensive.

In 2014, the death toll from the worst recorded Ebola outbreak in history surpassed 700 in West Africa.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama and congressional leaders announced an agreement on emergency legislation to avert the nation's first-ever financial default.

Five years ago: Pope Francis told young people who had flocked by the hundreds of thousands to a Catholic jamboree near Krakow, Poland, that they needed to "believe in a new humanity" stronger than evil, and cautioned against concluding that one religion is more violent than others.

One year ago: Mexico became the country with the third most COVID-19 deaths in the world, behind the U.S. and Brazil. Even as Florida reached a new daily high in coronavirus deaths, the imminent arrival of Hurricane Isaias forced the closure of some outdoor testing sites. With six Major League teams sidelined by the pandemic, Commissioner Rob Manfred spoke about the importance of players following the coronavirus protocols.

CORRECTION

In the Page B2 story "Local financial adviser honored with award," published Thursday, July 29, a photo accompanying the story misspelled the name of Gary Anger.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Megabucks

11-19-29-31-32-37

Jackpot: \$1.1 million

Lucky Lines

1-5-9-13-17-23-26-29

Estimated jackpot: \$41,000

Powerball

25-30-53-59-60

Powerball: 5

Power Play: 3

Jackpot: \$199 million

Win for Life

29-55-65-70

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 9-3-8-3

4 p.m.: 6-9-7-2

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

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

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Lucky Lines

3-7-10-13-17-23-26-29

Jackpot: \$42,000

Pick 4

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

4 p.m.: 5-0-6-4

7 p.m.: 3-1-0-8

10 p.m.: 0-8-3-1

Deadline passes, petition fails

Medical marijuana petition falls short of necessary signatures required

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**

The Observer

LA GRANDE — For weeks on end, petitioners stationed themselves with neon signs at local establishments around La Grande.

Derik Drake, a medical marijuana farmer from Nyssa, organized a petition to partially repeal Ordinance 3228 banning marijuana farming and distribution in La Grande. Needing 1,331 signatures to get the initiative on the November ballot, Drake and his team gathered 1,372 signatures by the deadline on Monday, July 26.

However, due to a sizeable portion of the signatures coming from unregistered voters and non-La Grande residents, the petition came up well short of the required total needed to make the ballot.

"It was a few weeks of volunteering in the hot, smoky outdoors, but we had a blast meeting and engaging with the community," Drake said.

Although Drake gained



Derik Drake, left, watches as Kevin McAllisters signs a petition to repeal Ordinance 3228, a city law that prevents new medical marijuana dispensaries from opening, on Tuesday, July 20, 2021.

enough signatures, the county clerk's office looked the results over carefully in order to approve the validity. The signatures must be from La Grande residents and any discrepancy or repeated signature can alter the official total. Through the first 414 signatures reviewed, nearly two thirds of those individuals were turned down since they were not registered to vote or residents of La Grande.

"We knew then that they weren't going to make it," said Union County Clerk Robin Church.

After inspecting the

first 414 signatures, the county was able to determine that Drake would not have enough signatures needed to make the ballot, even if all the remaining signatures were valid.

The petitioners frequented Safeway on Adams Avenue and Walmart on Island Avenue, as well as local events like Crazy Days and the La Grande Farmers Market.

The goal of the petition was to allow Drake to take over as owner of the medicinal marijuana dispensary HWY 30. Ordinance 3228 banned any new dispensaries in 2015,

but HWY 30 was grandfathered in and allowed to continue operations.

Looking to take over as the new owner at the same location, Drake would technically be opening a new dispensary by legal terms. The partial repeal would allow Drake to take over operations at the HWY 30 location and sell medicinal marijuana in La Grande.

Drake remains in the court of appeals attempting to overcome the legal obstacles, while his lawyers are attempting to negotiate with the city of La Grande.

Moderate air quality expected through weekend

Slight chance of rain, thunderstorms in forecast

By **CARLOS FUENTES**

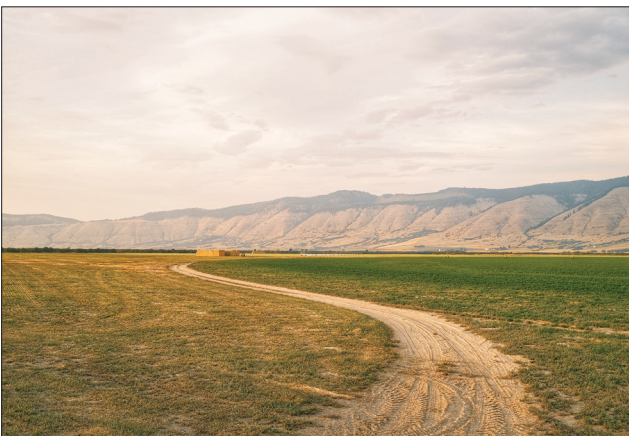
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The air quality forecast for La Grande has improved, with AQI levels expected to remain in the moderate category until Tuesday, Aug. 3, according to the air monitoring website +HQAir.

The AQI is expected to reach 74 on July 31, followed by 58 on Aug. 1 and 53 on Aug. 2.

On Aug. 3, the AQI is expected to lower to 27, in the "good" category.

"What we're expecting most days is light winds in the morning from the southwest, and then it



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Hazy evening light lands over a field near Cove on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Projections for air quality in the region, which was beset by wildfire smoke from the Bootleg Fire, are expected to improve over the weekend.

switches in the latter half of the day to more winds from the west and northwest," Ann Adams, a forecaster with the National Weather Service in Pendleton, said.

Winds through the first

few days of August are expected to stay light, generally under 10 miles per hour, according to Adams.

Adams added that smoke from the Bootleg Fire and other fires in northern California have

consistently entered the valley due to wind moving in the northeast direction.

In the forecast for the last weekend of July, there is a slight chance of rain and thunderstorms, particularly on the evenings of July 31 and Aug. 1.

The rain might help keep some of the smoke to a minimum, Adams said.

Temperatures are expected to stay warm, with an anticipated high of 92 degrees on July 31 and highs between 80 and 90 degrees for the next several days.

The potential lightning, combined with the expected high heat of the weekend, has prompted the National Weather Service to issue a Fire Weather Warning for Saturday evening, when temperatures are expected to reach a high of 92 degrees.

NEWS BRIEFS

Elbow Creek Fire now 57% contained

WALLOWA — The Elbow Creek Fire is now 57% contained and the 22,955-acre wildfire has not spread in the last 24 hours, according to a Friday, July 30, press release.

There are 971 personnel stationed at the fire in northern Wallowa County, stated the release. The 34 hand crews on site have fully transitioned to mop-up operations.

The statement emphasized that mop-up operations can require up to 300 feet of buffering work around the edge of the fire to avoid wind transport of burning embers.

A 10-person crew made progress along the bottom of the Grande Ronde River Canyon on July 29, using handheld infrared detection monitors to put out hot spots.

On the north side of the fire, crews continue to remove vegetation along roads to minimize further spread.

Blown tire causes rollover near Union

UNION — Emergency personnel responded to a car rollover on Highway 203 between Union and Medical Springs on Wednesday, July 28.

Liz Strou, of La Grande, was driving alone toward Union when her front left tire blew out around milepost 10, causing her to steer onto the hill on the right of the road, before the car slipped back down to the road and rolled over.

"I kind of got it corrected, and then something popped. I ended up in the ditch on the hillside," Strou said. "Then I got it back up on the road, and then it overcorrected and it rolled two times."

There were no other cars involved in the accident, which occurred



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Emergency personnel respond to a vehicle rollover on Highway 203, north of Union, on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. The driver lost control of the vehicle after one of the front tires blew out when traveling toward Union.

around 11 a.m., although Strou stated that there were several oncoming cars. Strou had no major injuries.

According to Oregon State Police Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Connor, who responded to the scene, there has been a rise in highway car accidents in recent weeks.

"We've had a lot of accidents on state route 237 recently, not so many on 203," Connor said. "The backroads have seen an increase here in the La Grande area over recent weeks for sure."

Wallowa Memorial Hospital receives donation for orthopedic department

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa Memorial Hospital has received a major financial boost to help fund its orthopedic surgery department.

The hospital received a \$100,000 donation from the Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation to invest in the new department, which is headed by orthopedic surgeon Bradley

Smith, who joined the staff in June.

The donation was made during the foundation's June board meeting.

"For years, our goal was to build our portfolio so we could make a substantial gift when a need arose," Foundation Board President David Smyth said in a press release. "Bringing orthopedic surgery to the county is something we are excited to support."

Smith became the first in-county orthopedic surgeon in a decade when he came to Wallowa County.

The money makes up about one-third of the more than \$300,000 needed to fund the new orthopedic surgery department, according to WMH Chief Nursing Officer Jenni Worn. The hospital will pay for the remainder from its capital budget.

Equipment, including a range of tools and instruments, an orthopedic table and protective equipment for support staff, is among what is being supplemented for the new department.

— EO Media Group

Pinkerton excited to step into new role

By **RONALD BOND**

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Erika Pinkerton is transitioning to a bigger school district after spending five years in Enterprise.

She isn't, however, heading too far away.

Pinkerton, who has been the superintendent of the Enterprise School District and the elementary school principal, will take over as



Pinkerton

the director of student services in the La Grande School District, she announced last week on the school district's Facebook page. Her final day in the district will be Aug. 30.

Part of the decision for Pinkerton was the opportunity to gain experience working in a larger school district.

A primary role she will have as the student services director is being responsible for providing leadership in the development, implementation and coordination of the district's special education, sections 504, and mental health programs.

"Basically, I'll be the district resource for special education teachers to consult with," she said. "Advocating for students with special needs, in addition to building relationships with families is a big part of this job."

She'll replace Landon Braden in the role. Braden, interestingly, recently became the high school counselor at EHS.

"It's a win-win for both districts," Pinkerton said.

She came to Enterprise after serving as an elementary school principal in the Winston-Dillard School District, a role she held for eight years.

The change, she said, will allow her to affect a group of students she has a big heart for.

"This is an opportunity for me to work closer with children (with special needs) and be able to give back and serve in a positive capacity," she said.

She called the move, though, bittersweet, as she said she has been in Enterprise as the district made several improvements. Most recently, the district received \$4 million from a school bond passed by voters in November, a bond that came with a \$4 million matching grant.

She also touted the district's position fiscally, work done within the special education program, moving the district from a targeted assisted Title I program to a school-wide Title I program, safety and security, and technology, among others.

"Bringing the district into the 21st century was huge. We moved from basically no technology to 1-on-1 technology," she said.

Also important, she said, was "making sure that equity was within our school system, whether realizing that we have ramps that are not ADA compliant, to making sure all students were able to access their curriculum."

She said she struggled with the decision to take the new job because of the relationships she has built with students, staff and parents in Enterprise.

"When you gain that trust, that's when you can be that more progressive," she said. "Change is hard, but the changes we made were pretty impressive in five years."

The school board has looked at hiring an interim superintendent from a pool of retired superintendents before beginning the search for a permanent hire, Pinkerton said.