

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 24, the 236th day of 2021. There are 129 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812, British forces invaded Washington, D.C., setting fire to the Capitol and the White House, as well as other public buildings.

ON THIS DATE

In A.D. 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in volcanic ash; an estimated 20,000 people died.
In 1932, Amelia Earhart embarked on a 19-hour flight from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, making her the first woman to fly solo, non-stop, from coast to coast.
In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Communist Control Act, outlawing the Communist Party in the U.S.
In 1968, France became the world's fifth thermonuclear power as it exploded a hydrogen bomb in the South Pacific.
In 1981, Mark David Chapman was sentenced in New York to 20 years to life in prison for murdering John Lennon. (Chapman remains imprisoned.)
In 1989, Baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti banned Pete Rose from the game for betting on his own team, the Cincinnati Reds.
In 1992, Hurricane Andrew smashed into Florida, causing \$30 billion in damage; 43 U.S. deaths were blamed on the storm.
In 2001, Tom Green, a Mormon fundamentalist with five wives and 30 children, was sentenced by a court in Provo, Utah, to five years in prison for his conviction on four counts of bigamy and one count of failure to pay child support.
In 2008, on the final day of the Beijing Games, Kobe Bryant hit two 3-pointers in a big fourth quarter to help the United States defeat Spain 118-107 and win the men's basketball gold medal for the first time since 2000.
In 2019, police in Aurora, Colorado, responding to a report of a suspicious person, used a chokehold to subdue Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man; he suffered cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital and was later declared brain dead and taken off life support. (Three officers were placed on leave but returned to the force after prosecutors found insufficient evidence to charge them.)

Ten years ago: A defiant Moammar Gadhafi vowed from hiding to fight on "until victory or martyrdom" and called on residents of the Libyan capital and loyal tribesmen across his North African nation to free Tripoli from the "devils and traitors" who had overrun it.
Five years ago: A 6.2 magnitude earthquake reduced three central Italian towns to rubble and killed nearly 300 people.
One year ago: Anger over the shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, by police spilled into the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin for a second night. Authorities in Portland, Oregon, said protesters set fire to a police union headquarters building. Citing "significant errors" in jury selection, California's Supreme Court overturned the death sentence for Scott Peterson but let his murder conviction stand in the killing of his pregnant wife.

LOTTERY

Friday, Aug. 20, 2021
Megamillions
41-43-51-57-70
Megaball: 1
Megaplier: 2
Jackpot: \$270 million
Lucky Lines
1-7-12-13-18-21-28-30
Jackpot: \$64,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 5-5-4-6
4 p.m.: 9-4-8-1
7 p.m.: 6-3-3-3
10 p.m.: 8-8-9-0
Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021
Powerball
16-28-36-39-59
Powerball: 4
Power Play: 2
Jackpot: \$293 million
Megabucks
1-18-19-21-39-44
Jackpot: \$2.1 million
Lucky Lines
4-6-9-15-19-22-25-30
Jackpot: \$65,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 3-7-8-9
4 p.m.: 2-8-3-3
7 p.m.: 4-4-3-6
10 p.m.: 9-5-9-8
Win for Life
8-9-13-45
Sunday, Aug. 22, 2021
Lucky Lines
1-18-10-14-19-22-28-29
Estimated jackpot: \$66,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 4-7-1-0
4 p.m.: 3-9-4-0
7 p.m.: 3-8-4-9
10 p.m.: 0-7-1-1

Cove offers a well-mannered race

Contestants brave soggy conditions at Cherry Fair polite pie-eating contest

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

COVE — It was a battle of etiquette at the Cove Cherry Fair polite pie-eating contest. Contestants braved the wet conditions to take part in one of the more unique competitions at the annual Cherry Fair on Saturday, Aug. 21. During the festival's full day of vendors, yard sales, live music and other festivities, the cherry pie eaters competed for the title of most polite. "It's good pie," contestant Stephen Hendrickson said. "I really want to exhibit what I practice and put to value in life, but the pie is also delicious." The polite pie-eating event preceded the hands-free pie-eating contest and the cherry pit-spitting contest. The objective was for the approximately 20 contestants of varying ages to finish their slices of pie, not the quickest, but in the most polite manner. Those taking part pulled out all the stops in order to be the most courteous. Hendrickson, the winner of the "most adorable pie eater" category, relished the chance to



Stephen Hendrickson reacts as contest facilitator John Silveira asks the audience to applaud for Hendrickson's performance in the polite pie-eating contest. Hendrickson won "most adorable pie-eater" during the event at the Cove Cherry Fair on Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021.

enjoy the sportsmanship of the contest. With a rain-storm delaying the start of the event, the competitors gave their best effort to remain amiable. "The conditions were tough," Hendrickson said. "We have some wet bottoms, but I'm not complaining." Several high school students elevated their politeness, handing out

plates and silverware to the other contestants. The onlooking judges made note of those efforts while other contestants conversed and got to know one another. Despite their efforts, the group finished as runner-ups in every category. "We got robbed, but we'll get it next time," Ryan Jackson said. "At the end of the day, what

can you do?" At the conclusion of the contest, youngster Cayden Sandberg was named most refined pie eater, and Arie Tromp van Holst was awarded best dressed. "The pie is absolutely wonderful," contestant Scott Stevenson said. "It's a combination of all parts of the experience, from the nature of the pie itself to the wonderful company."

Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Local school boards between rock and hard place

Union County school boards prepare back-to-school plans amid COVID-19 spike

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — It has been a tumultuous end to the summer for the county's school boards. Following a statewide mask mandate from Gov. Kate Brown in late July, school boards in the area faced mixed reviews from parents and staff. On top of the mask mandate, Brown announced Thursday, Aug. 19, that teachers and staff will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by Oct. 18. School boards in the county all expressed the notion that their backs are against the wall, with potential repercussions coming from not following the recent mandates. Violation of the mask mandate can result in a \$500 fine per

student not wearing a mask, while teachers who do not enforce the protocol can lose their teaching license. The La Grande School Board was one of the first to meet and discuss the mandates, drawing a crowd of several hundred at the Central Elementary School gymnasium on Aug. 4. With a large outcry from community members, the La Grande School Board decision preceded a number of tense meetings across the county. Among all the school districts, the potential for teachers losing their jobs was a major concern. North Powder School District Superintendent Lance Dixon noted that the district's decision was based heavily on being conscientious toward the jobs of teachers. He noted that upward of 90% of the teachers in North Powder School District are already vaccinated. As far as mask mandates go, Dixon plans to meet once a month to look at the back-to-school plan and make any changes necessary as COVID-19

numbers fluctuate. Elgin Superintendent Dianne Greif echoed a similar sentiment, noting that their plans are subject to change based on state mandates. Elgin is moving forward with the district's plan to require masks this school year, but Greif was uncertain if the new vaccine mandate will impact the protocols in the future. Cove School District Superintendent Earl Pettit noted that the district's efforts to continue in-person schooling last year has made it easier for students and parents to get behind the mandates this year. Pettit emphasized that Cove's decision was made on a local basis, and that the in-person learning experience is the district's the top priority. Pettit also stated there was outcry against the mandates this past year, which the district plans to deal with by working with the families to come up with a solution. The superintendent is confident that the biggest battles were fought last year and that

the school community will come together to keep the focus on the kids and their education. Union and Imbler school districts both decided to move forward with the state's mask mandate amid mixed feedback from parents and community members. Imbler Superintendent Doug Hislop gave a number of suggestions to avoid mask usage to appease the community's reaction, but ultimately the school board chose to require masks. The mindset among school board members and teachers is a feeling of being between a rock and a hard place. Even with several board members voicing their own personal opposition to the mandate, following the state's mask mandate is unavoidable, and the repercussions could prove detrimental to the school districts. With school set to start in the coming weeks, the COVID-19 numbers across the country will continue to play a part in how the county's students receive their education.

Temps to remain cooler than average

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Relatively cool weather is in the forecast for Union and Wallowa counties over the next three days. The National Weather Service is forecasting highs in La Grande of 78 degrees on Tuesday, Aug. 24, followed by 79 degrees on Aug. 25 and 76 degrees on Aug. 26. All of the forecast highs are solidly below the averages for this time of year in La Grande. The average high on Aug. 24 is 83.6 degrees, the average for Aug. 25 is 83 degrees and the average for Aug. 26 is 84.3 degrees, according to the National Weather Service.

The low temperatures forecast for La Grande is 49 degrees on Aug. 24, 51 degrees on Aug. 25 and 50 degrees on Aug. 26. The average low temperature is 49 degrees in La Grande for Aug. 24, 51 degrees on Aug. 25 and 50 degrees on Aug. 26. The forecast highs for Enterprise are 75 degrees on Aug. 24, 76 degrees on Aug. 25 and 73 degrees on Aug. 26. The projected low temperatures for Enterprise are 40 degrees on Aug. 24, 41 degrees on Aug. 25 and 76 degrees on Aug. 26. The cool weather is due to a low pressure system over Northeastern Oregon that is drawing in colder air from the east Pacific Ocean, said Rob Brooks, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in

Pendleton. Smoke from wildfires is expected to continue to be blown out of the region by winds that are predicted to continue sweeping over Northeastern Oregon the next few days. "They are helping to scour the smoke out," Brooks said. The meteorologist stressed there is no guarantee that new smoke from wildfires won't be blown into this corner of the state over the next three days due to the unpredictable nature of fire activity. "We can not forecast wildfires," he said. IQAir, a website that monitors air quality, is projecting that La Grande and Enterprise will have good air quality on Aug. 24 and Aug. 25.

NEWS BRIEFS

Union County reports 78 new COVID-19 cases over the weekend
LA GRANDE — Union County had 78 new cases of COVID-19 that came in over the weekend, the Oregon Health Authority reported Monday, Aug. 23, bringing the county's overall total to 2,180. There were no new deaths reported by the OHA, with the county total of COVID-19 related deaths currently at 30. Wallowa County had 16 new cases of COVID-19, and is currently at 348 since the start of the pandemic. More than 100 of those cases have come

during the month of August. Statewide, there were 4,701 new cases and 24 deaths reported over the weekend, according to the OHA. Hospitalizations also continued to rise, with 937 patients hospitalized, including 253 in intensive care units. In Region 9, which includes Union and Wallowa counties, there were 25 patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 at the last report. Morgan Lake Park to reopen Tuesday
LA GRANDE — Morgan Lake Park is set to reopen Tuesday, Aug.

24, after the Oregon Department of Forestry announced fire restrictions have slightly decreased, La Grande Parks and Recreation announced. The ODF on Monday, Aug. 23, reduced the regulated-use closure restrictions on forestlands protected by the Northeast Oregon District. This was done due to moderating weather and seasonal temperatures. Morgan Lake's reopening doesn't mean a full lifting of restrictions, as the fire ban is still in place. Day-use and camping will be allowed, but with propane stoves only. For more information, call 541-962-1348. — The Observer

Ex-school leaders mixed on mandates

By DICK MASON
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Five former members of school boards in Union County have differing views on Gov. Kate Brown's school mask mandate. The governor's mandate, now in effect, requires students at all schools in Oregon to wear masks almost all of the time they are indoors at school as a safety precaution during the current spike in cases of COVID-19. The mandate took full effect on Thursday, Aug. 12, and since that point school districts not complying with the mandate can be fined \$500 per violation. Michael Frasier, who served on the La Grande School Board from 2007 to 2015, does not hesitate when asked about the mask mandate. "If I were on the board I would vote to mask up," said Frasier, a retired LHS choir teacher. Frasier said some people think that because school boards have local control that they can do almost anything with regard to their school district. This is far from true since school boards must adhere to state mandates. The La Grande School Board, at its Aug. 4 meeting, voted to follow Brown's mask mandate, a move Frasier lauded. "The La Grande School Board made the right decision," he said. Bud Scoubes, a former member of the Elgin School Board, is not a supporter of the mask mandate. "I think it should be a parental decision," said Scoubes, who served on the Elgin School Board for about 20 years before stepping down about a decade ago. Scoubes believes that putting a mandate in place was the wrong thing to do. "There will be many, many unforeseen ramifications with this mandate," he said. Steve Oliver, who previously was a member of the Union-Baker Education Service Board, shares a belief similar to Scoubes regarding the mask mandate. "I think it should be up to the parents," said Oliver, who served as Union County Sheriff for about 12 years through early 2005. Oliver believes Brown is overstepping her bounds by imposing the mask mandate. Former Cove School Board member Meg Moore also opposes the mask mandate. Moore believes school districts should decide if masks are required because they could tailor their COVID-19 safety rules to conform to their mask policy. For example, if a district were free to make masks optional and did so, it might keep students in smaller cohorts during the school day. Moore, who drives a school bus for Mid Columbia Bus Company in the Cove School District, served on the school board for five years though about 2015. Matt McElligott, who served on the North Powder School Board for eight years through mid-2017, is another foe of the mask mandate. "I am definitely against it," he said. McElligott said science points to the negative impacts of mask wearing, physically and mentally. McElligott also said he believes that requiring children to wear masks could harm their development by inhibiting them during formative years when they should feel free to venture out and explore.