

TODAY

Today is Thursday, Aug. 26, the 238th day of 2021. There are 127 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing American women's right to vote, was certified in effect by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby.

ON THIS DATE

In 1817, the University of Michigan was founded.
In 1883, the island volcano Krakatoa began cataclysmic eruptions, leading to a massive explosion the following day.
In 1939, the first televised major league baseball games were shown on experimental station W2XBS: a double-header between the Cincinnati Reds and the Brooklyn Dodgers at Ebbets Field.
In 1944, French Gen. Charles de Gaulle braved the threat of German snipers as he led a victory march in Paris, which had just been liberated by the Allies from Nazi occupation.
In 1957, the Soviet Union announced it had successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile.
In 1968, the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago; the four-day event that resulted in the nomination of Hubert H. Humphrey for president was marked by a bloody police crackdown on antiwar protesters in the streets.
In 1972, the summer Olympics opened in Munich, West Germany.
In 1985, 13-year-old AIDS patient Ryan White began "attending" classes at Western Middle School in Kokomo, Indiana, via a telephone hook-up at his home — school officials had barred Ryan from attending classes in person.
In 2004, the nation's supply of vaccine for the impending flu season took a big hit when Chiron Corp. announced it had found tainted doses in its factory, and would hold up shipment of about 50 million shots.
In 2017, Hurricane Harvey spun into Texas, unloading extraordinary amounts of rain. (The hurricane killed nearly 70 people, damaged more than 300,000 structures and caused an estimated \$125 billion in damage.)
In 2015, Alison Parker, a reporter for WDBJ-TV in Roanoke, Virginia, and her cameraman, Adam Ward, were shot to death during a live broadcast by a disgruntled former station employee who fatally shot himself while being pursued by police.
In 2018, a gunman opened fire on fellow gamers at a video game tournament in Jacksonville, Fla., killing two men and wounding 10 others before taking his own life. Playwright Neil Simon, whose comedies included "The Odd Couple" and "Barefoot in the Park," died at the age of 91.

Ten years ago: More than 2 million people along the Eastern Seaboard were ordered to move to safer ground as Hurricane Irene approached the coast. A Boko Haram sect member detonated a car loaded with explosives at the United Nations headquarters in Nigeria's capital Abuja, killing 25 people and wounding more than 100 others.

Five years ago: San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick remained seated on the team's bench rather than standing for the national anthem before the Niners played host to the Green Bay Packers in an exhibition game, saying he believed the United States was oppressing African Americans and other minorities.

One year ago: Seventeen-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse was arrested in Illinois in the shooting deaths of two people and the wounding of another during a third night of protests in Kenosha, Wisconsin, over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake.

LOTTERY

Monday, Aug. 23, 2021
Megabucks
1-9-25-35-38-46
Estimated jackpot: \$2.2 million
Lucky Lines
1-6-11-16-19-24-25-29
Estimated jackpot: \$67,000
Win for Life
5-39-40-67
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 5-3-0-6
4 p.m.: 5-9-0-8
7 p.m.: 5-1-4-4
10 p.m.: 6-3-6-6
Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021
Mega Millions
17-18-26-52-67
Mega Ball: 19
Megaplier: 2
Estimated jackpot: \$288 million
Lucky Lines
3-8-12-14-20-22-27-30
Estimated jackpot: \$68,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 9-8-2-3
4 p.m.: 4-1-7-7
7 p.m.: 3-9-5-3

Fire in Union damages home

By ALEX WITTWER

The Observer

UNION — Home-owners Roger and Debbie Clark were enjoying breakfast Tuesday, Aug. 24, when they heard a loud noise coming from outside. The couple opened their patio door to see flames spewing out from their outdoor barbecue cabana and catching their home, at 986 N. First St., on fire. “We were inside, just finishing up breakfast and heard this rushing sound — like standing next to a jet airplane — and the whole house was engulfed,” Roger Clark said.

As he was fighting the fire with a garden hose, a propane tank exploded, sending the tank across the yard and setting fires in a field adjacent to the house. Neighbors reported seeing their windows shake from the blast.

“It was already so big and so hot, I could feel my skin burn from out there. We tried to call 911 but our cell service wasn’t working. So I ran over to the neighbors and they had already called,” Debbie Clark said. “The neighbors all ran over and grabbed hoses and started. We were all out, us with a dog and the cats were all out.”

Until the Union Rural Fire Protection District arrived, the homeowners and their neighbors fought the fire with garden hoses as the flames engulfed the patio and the home’s garage. The La Grande Fire Department also responded to help mop up the fire.

“All the flames when we got there were right up the side of the house.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Firefighters with La Grande and Union fire departments prepare to enter a residential garage to check for hot spots during mop up at a fire at 986 N. First St. in Union on Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Union Fire Chief Tod Hull on Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021, douses a residential fire on First Street in Union.

Another few minutes and it might have been a different story,” said Union Fire Chief Tod Hull. “We arrived right on time and got it out.”

Union Engine 72 arrived on scene with Hull and volunteers Frank Macstas, Brandon Coon and Casey George.

“It was the hottest, nastiest fire I’d ever seen, but when they got here, it didn’t take them long to get it out at all,” Debbie Clark said.

The flames damaged the outdoor patio area and significantly damaged a garage wall. The rest of the home was spared from the

fire, which started shortly before 9 a.m. The intensity of the heat had caused the license plate and driver’s side headlight of the homeowners’ truck that was parked several feet away to melt. Small grass fires were also started in the adjacent lot, caused by the burning propane tank that had flown after it exploded.

“It’s a hell of a way to get to know your neighbors,” Debbie Clark said.

The couple have had the home for more than 20 years. It is unclear what caused the fire. There were no reported injuries, and the homeowners have insurance to cover the damages.

“I think my barbecue season is over for the season,” Roger Clark said.

Hull said that the public should be sure to properly store their propane tanks when not in use, and to turn them off after each use.

Oregon’s Alpenfest, Juniper Jam canceled

The Observer

JOSEPH — For the second year in a row, Oregon’s Alpenfest has been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Directors of Oregon’s Alpenfest, a Swiss-Bavarian variation on the typical Oktoberfest, have canceled the festival for the second straight year because of the dramatic increase in COVID-19 case counts in Wallowa County and statewide. The county, as of Wednesday, Aug. 25, has reported 357 cases of coronavirus, but more than 100 of those have been reported in the month of August.

The festival was to have featured Mollie B & SqueezeBox, one of the most in-demand bands in the polka industry, on Sept 23-26 at the Harley Tucker Rodeo Grounds in Joseph. Since 1975, Alpenfest has been the last major Wallowa County event of the tourist season.

Advance ticket holders will receive refunds, according to Chuck Anderson, Alpenmeister of the festival and president of



Oregon's Alpenfest/Contributed Photo

Directors of Oregon’s Alpenfest have canceled the festival for the second straight year because of the dramatic increase in COVID-19 case counts in Wallowa County and statewide.

its nonprofit organization, Alpenfest.

“We regret having to do this, but we were anticipating record attendance because of Mollie B and that would have meant hundreds of guests gathered in an enclosed space,” Anderson said. “Even with face masks, we couldn’t risk the health any of our loyal fans, volunteers or performers.”

The festival has endured ups and downs during its 46-year history. In its first incarnation, “Alpenfest,” it ran from 1975 to 2008, when it was discontinued due to declining

attendance.

A new organization revived it as Oregon’s Alpenfest in 2012. Then it was threatened financially in 2019 when it lost its longtime home at the Wallowa Lake Tramway and a giant rented tent proved to be burdensome due to weather, logistical problems and the tent’s rental cost. The setback was averted thanks to assistance from Community Bank.

The 2020 festival was canceled because Oregon banned large gatherings during an earlier stage of the pandemic. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown hadn’t

yet taken that step during the current surge in cases, but Anderson said Alpenfest’s board of directors concluded that the risk to attendees was too great.

“There’s no question that we will survive,” Anderson said. “In the early 20th century, despite tough odds, Swiss and German immigrants helped settle Oregon. We aren’t any different.”

The 2022 festival is scheduled for Sept. 22-25.

The recent coronavirus spike also claimed another event, as Juniper Jam was canceled, organizers announced Wednesday, Aug. 18.

“The recent spike in COVID-19 cases in our region has led us to this heartbreaking decision, and we urge folks to get vaccinated and help stop the spread of this awful virus,” the Wallowa Valley Music Alliance said.

Online ticket sales will be refunded, and those who purchased tickets from local outlets are encouraged to return to those locations for their refund.

Next year’s event is set for Sept. 3, 2022.

Wolves kill calf north of Durkee

ODFW green-lights killing of additional Lookout Mountain Pack wolves

By JAYSON JACOBY

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Lookout Mountain Pack in eastern Baker County killed a 3-month-old calf on a private grazing pasture last week. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in response extended for three weeks the permit allowing the killing of two more wolves from the pack.

ODFW confirmed the wolf attack on a calf after an investigation Thursday, Aug. 19.

Lookout Mountain wolves have killed three head of cattle and injured two others over the past month northeast of Durkee, according to Fish and Wildlife reports.

Attacks during the second half of July, in which wolves killed two animals and injured two others, prompted Mark Bennett, Baker County commissioner and chair of the county’s wolf committee, to send a letter to ODFW Director Curt Melcher seeking a permit allowing the rancher who owns or manages the cattle herds that have been attacked to kill some of the wolves.

Oregon’s wolf management plan allows ranchers to kill wolves that are in the act of attacking livestock or working dogs, but a lethal take permit gives ranchers, or their designated agents or ODFW employees, authority to kill wolves that are in a certain area, even if they’re not directly threatening livestock.

Melcher approved the lethal take permit on July 29, the first issued in Oregon since 2018.

The permit allowed ranchers Deward and Kathy Thompson, their agents or Fish and Wildlife employees to kill up to four subadult wolves from the Lookout Mountain Pack.

On Aug. 1, ODFW employees, firing rifles from a helicopter, killed two 3½-month-old pups from the pack, part of the litter of seven pups born to the pack’s breeding female this spring.

No other wolves were killed before the lethal take permit expired Aug. 21, according to Fish and Wildlife.

But in response to the most recent wolf attack on cattle — the first since the state workers killed the two wolf pups Aug. 1 — ODFW extended the lethal take permit through Sept. 14.

The new permit allows the Thompsons, two other local ranchers whose animals have been attacked by wolves, their agents or ODFW employees to kill up to two subadult wolves from the pack.

The extended permit does not increase the number of wolves that can be killed — the maximum is four, the same as with the original permit.

The extended permit, as was the case with the original, does not allow the killing of the Lookout Mountain Pack’s breeding female and male.

Michelle Dennehy, a spokesperson for ODFW, said earlier this month that the agency’s goal was not to eliminate the pack — which could happen if the breeding pair was killed — but to stop chronic attacks on livestock “by reducing the pack’s food needs and disrupting the pack’s behavior so they don’t associate livestock with an easy meal.”

— The Observer

NEWS BRIEFS

Grande Ronde Hospital announces community testing events

LA GRANDE — The Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics announced the activation of its Hospital Incident Command System on Tuesday, Aug. 24, as a result of the recent COVID-19 surge.

The hospital will be holding several free community-wide testing events in the wake of hospital bed capacity concerns and shortages in testing supplies across the state. As of OHA’s report on Aug. 24, there are 45 ICU beds available out of 667 in Oregon.

Grande Ronde Hospital is partnering with the Union County Emergency Management Services and the Public Health Department for assistance from OHA to host community testing events in Union County.

The first testing event is scheduled

for Aug. 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of Bi-Mart, 2510 Adams Ave., La Grande. The hospital will host the testing event every Tuesday starting on Aug. 31, and extending through September. The free event is aimed for asymptomatic and symptomatic people who will be tested with the polymerase chain reaction viral test.

Grande Ronde Hospital recommends preregistering, but it is not required to be tested at the event. Registration for the testing event can be found at www.doineedacovid-19test.com.

Union County adds 15 new COVID-19 cases Tuesday, 30 Wednesday, OHA reports

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority reported 15 new COVID-19 cases in Union County on Tuesday, Aug. 24, alongside four

positive tests in Wallowa County. On Wednesday, Aug. 25, there were an additional 30 cases in Union County and five in Wallowa County.

The state recorded 2,804 new confirmed and presumptive cases on Tuesday, adding 30 new deaths due to COVID-19, and 2,777 new cases and 20 deaths on Wednesday.

Union County’s total case count is up to 2,224 since the beginning of the pandemic, while Wallowa County is at 357. Union County has recorded 491 cases of COVID-19 this month as of Aug. 25, making it the most cases in a month since the beginning of the pandemic.

Statewide, 1,080 remain hospitalized due to COVID-19, with 295 patients in ICU beds. There are currently 44 adult ICU beds available out of 662 total in Oregon, while 320 adult non-ICU beds remain open out of 4,256.