

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 31, the 243rd day of 2021. There are 122 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On Aug. 31, 1980, Poland's Solidarity labor movement was born with an agreement signed in Gdansk that ended a 17-day-old strike.

ON THIS DATE

In 1886, an earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 7.3 devastated Charleston, South Carolina, killing at least 60 people.

In 1939, the first issue of Marvel Comics, featuring the Human Torch, was published by Timely Publications in New York.

In 1972, at the Munich Summer Olympics, American swimmer Mark Spitz won his fourth and fifth gold medals in the 100-meter butterfly and 800-meter freestyle relay; Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut won gold medals in floor exercise and the balance beam.

In 1992, white separatist Randy Weaver surrendered to authorities in Naples, Idaho, ending an 11-day siege by federal agents that had claimed the lives of Weaver's wife, son and a deputy U.S. marshal.

In 1997, Prince Charles brought Princess Diana home for the last time, escorting the body of his former wife to a Britain that was shocked, grief-stricken and angered by her death in a Paris traffic accident earlier that day.

In 2005, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin reported "a significant number of dead bodies in the water" following Hurricane Katrina; Nagin ordered virtually the entire police force to abandon search-and-rescue efforts and to instead stop increasingly hostile thieves.

In 2010, President Barack Obama ended the U.S. combat mission in Iraq, declaring no victory after seven years of bloodshed and telling those divided over the war in his country and around the world: "It is time to turn the page."

In 2018, Aretha Franklin, the "Queen of Soul," was laid to rest after an eight-hour funeral at a Detroit church, where guests included Bill and Hillary Clinton, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson.

In 2019, a gunman carried out a shooting rampage that stretched ten miles between the Texas communities of Midland and Odessa, leaving seven people dead before police killed the gunman in Odessa.

Ten years ago: The Wartime Contracting Commission issued a report saying the U.S. had lost billions of dollars to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan and stood to repeat that in future wars without big changes in how the government awarded and managed contracts for battlefield support and reconstruction projects.

Five years ago: The first commercial flight between the United States and Cuba in more than a half century, a JetBlue Airbus A320, landed in the central city of Santa Clara, re-establishing regular air service severed at the height of the Cold War.

One year ago: At a rally in Pittsburgh, Democrat Joe Biden condemned violent protesters and called for their prosecution; he accused President Donald Trump of causing the divisions that had ignited the violence. Trump blamed radical troublemakers who he said were stirred up and backed by Biden.

LOTTERY

Friday, Aug. 27, 2021

Megamillions

1-10-44-47-56

Megaball: 23

Megaplier: 3

Jackpot: \$306 million

Lucky Lines

2-7-12-16-19-21-27-29

Jackpot: \$71,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 4-9-4-7

4 p.m.: 2-5-4-8

7 p.m.: 3-2-7-6

10 p.m.: 5-5-0-1

Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021

Powerball

12-22-26-46-59

Powerball: 26

Power Play: 2

Jackpot: \$332 million

Megabucks

8-9-13-15-26-41

Jackpot: \$2.4 million

Lucky Lines

4-7-12-13-18-22-28-29

Jackpot: \$72,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 2-9-8-0

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

7 p.m.: 6-9-1-0

10 p.m.: 3-1-2-2

Win for Life

32-36-51-60

Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021

Lucky Lines

1-8-11-13-18-24-28-29

Estimated jackpot: \$73,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 3-4-7-1

4 p.m.: 8-5-3-2

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

10 p.m.: 4-1-2-6



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Giavonna LaMiller, under the direction of volunteer Catherine Parks, self-administers a COVID-19 test in the Bi-Mart parking lot, the site of a mass testing event in La Grande on Friday, Aug. 27, 2021. Testing will be available at no cost every week on Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., starting Aug. 31 and extending through September.

Vaccinations rise in Union County

By ALEX WITTWER

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Vaccination rates across most Eastern Oregon rose nearly 3% as the delta variant of COVID-19 surges in the nation. According to Oregon Health Authority data, more than 98% of all new COVID-19 infections are from the delta variant.

Umatilla County saw the largest increase in vaccination rates, climbing 4.1% to a total of 47.9% of the population having received their first dose since Aug. 1. Both Union and Morrow County recorded a 3.6% increase during the same time period. Wallowa County increased its vaccination rate by 3.1%, giving it the highest vaccination rate out of all of the Eastern Oregon counties at 62% through Friday. Baker saw a modest 2.5% increase in vaccination rates, while Grant County recorded the lowest increase at only 1.9% over the month of August.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 3,207 new and presumptive cases of COVID-19 in Oregon on Aug. 26, and on Monday, Aug. 29, reported 5,545 cases over the weekend. As well the total number of



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Alynn Lambert, a volunteer, takes information from residents as they prepare to get tested for COVID-19 at a mass testing site in the Bi-Mart parking lot, in La Grande on Friday, Aug. 27, 2021.

hospitalizations across the state is at 1,120.

Union County added 15 new reported cases of COVID-19, bringing its two-week total to 345 cases. The two-week total corresponds to an infection rate of 1,317 cases per 100,000 residents. Earlier in the year, any county that saw more than 200 cases per 100,000 residents would fall under extreme risk and would be subjected to restrictions.

The Monday report added 62 more cases in Union County over the weekend, to bring the total to 2,312 and the two-week

infection rate to 1401 cases per 100,000 residents. The 31st death was also reported, an 85-year-old woman who died Saturday, Aug. 28, and had underlying conditions.

"We are far exceeding the hospitalization numbers we saw during the pre-vaccination surges of last fall and winter. This is putting an unprecedented strain on our local hospitals," said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state health officer in a press release. "This affects every Oregon family and it is not sustainable."

On Monday, Aug. 23, the Food and Drug Administra-

tion announced the Pfizer vaccine had received full approval for use for patients 16 and older, making it the first vaccine to be approved beyond emergency use in the United States.

The Pfizer vaccine, named Comirnaty, remains under emergency use authorization for individuals under the age of 16.

Vaccination rates have increased after months of stalling due to vaccine hesitancy and rising infection rates, a surge that led Gov. Kate Brown to impose vaccine mandates on state workers, medical workers and school faculty.

Coastal air will keep Northeast Oregon cool

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Cooler air from the Pacific Ocean will keep temperatures lower than average for the next three days in Northeastern Oregon.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton is forecasting that La Grande will have high a temperature of 71 degrees on Tuesday, Aug. 31, 73 degrees on Sept. 1, and 77 degrees on Sept. 2, all below average for this time of year. La Grande's average temperature for Aug. 31 is 82 degrees, and both Sept. 1 and Sept. 2 average 81 degrees,

according to the National Weather Service

Enterprise's forecast calls for highs of 70 degrees on Aug. 31, 71 degrees on Sept. 1, and 73 degrees on Sept. 2.

The relatively cool weather in Northeastern Oregon is due to westerly winds from the Pacific Ocean that should be blowing colder air into the Northwest, according to Jim Smith, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Temperatures are projected to warm up at the end of the week and early in the weekend. The National Western Service is forecasting that La

Grande will have high temperatures of 81 degrees on Sept. 3 and 84 degrees on Sept. 4. Enterprise is expected to have highs of near 78 degrees on Sept. 3 and near 80 degrees on Sept. 4.

A weak high pressure system that will block westerly winds will cause the rise in temperatures, Smith said. The high pressure system will move out around Sept. 5.

"It will be short lived," he said, adding westerly winds will return Sept. 6.

Low temperatures in La Grande's are forecast to be 42 degrees on Aug. 31, 44 degrees on Sept. 1, and 47 degrees on Sept. 2.

Enterprise is projected to have significantly colder lows of 32 degrees on Aug. 31, 34 degrees on Sept. 1, and 36 degrees on Sept. 2. The sub 40-degree temperatures will help develop frost in the Enterprise area each of the next three days, according to Smith.

"There will be frost in areas where there are cooler air pockets protected from wind," he said.

No frost is forecast in La Grande at least through Sept. 5.

Air quality is projected to be strong at least until Sept. 1 in both La Grande and Enterprise, according to IQAir, an air quality monitoring website.

NEWS BRIEFS

Light agenda awaits commissioners

ENTERPRISE — A light schedule awaits the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners as they start the month, Wednesday, Sept. 1.

The meeting begins at 9 a.m. in the courthouse.

Todd Rodgers is scheduled to speak on government-ordered mask mandates issued because of a surge in the number of coronavirus cases. In addition, county counsel Paige Sully will discuss training on mandatory reporting.

Also on the agenda are three employee-related items: Wes Garth is being hired as a new Wallowa County deputy; Hailey Collier is resigning from the 911 dispatch service; and Amy Stangel is resigning from the county's Department of Youth Services.

The public is invited to attend in

person or via Zoom. To get Zoom's browser client, visit <https://zoom.us/signup>.

Then enter the meeting ID 842 06009 7022 and the passcode 246617. If no microphone or camera is available, members of the public may participate by phone by calling 1-253-215-8782.

Also, the public is reminded that a public input session will be held 6-8 p.m. Wednesday at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise on the East Moraine Forest Management Plan.

For more information, call 426-4543, x1130.

Joseph Center cancels appreciation event

JOSEPH — The donor-appreciation event planned at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture has been postponed, according to a press release on Thursday, Aug. 26.

Given current restrictions on gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic, organizers felt unable to hold the event indoors, where it seemed more appropriate.

"This certainly won't be the last event held in honor of our supporters," Kellee Sheehy, development director, said in the release. "And while it's definitely disappointing, a celebration of the purchase of our building will feel much more celebratory when we're able to hold it in the building."

The event was to be held in September to thank donors and other supporters for their help in the purchase of the center's building that was accomplished June 23.

She reminds those who appreciate art, culture and each other, that "This too shall pass."

The center will provide notice when the event can be rescheduled.

— Wallowa County Chieftain

A cow, a missing tongue, and a mystery

By JAYSON JACOBY

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Brian Ratliff has sliced open and probed the innards of quite a number of cows, but he's never come across a case as confounding as the missing tongue.

"This is a stumper," Ratliff said on Thursday, Aug. 26. "I don't have an answer."

The mystery started the day before for Ratliff, the district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Baker City office.

A ranch manager found the carcass of a 3-year-old cow that morning on a public grazing allotment near the head of Fox Creek. That's near Lookout Mountain, about 14 miles north of Huntington.

Ratliff investigated the case as a possible wolf attack.

Wolves from the Lookout Mountain Pack have killed three head of cattle, and injured three others, this summer several miles to the west. Wolves didn't kill the cow at Fox Creek — Ratliff is sure about that.

He's also confident in his conclusion about why the cow died. Almost the whole of the cow's tongue — at least a couple pounds of flesh — was missing.

The wound severed two arteries at the base of the tongue, and Ratliff said a veterinarian told him that a cow with that injury would bleed to death relatively rapidly.

That was the only injury which happened prior to the cow's death, Ratliff said. The carcass was undisturbed with one exception — birds had pecked out one eyeball.

He estimated the cow died either late on Aug. 24 or early on Aug. 25.

Ratliff said tracking conditions were "phenomenal," with a large area of dry, soft dirt around the carcass.

He didn't find any predator tracks, but there were tracks from deer, elk, mice, squirrels and birds. There were also human boot tracks — presumably from the ranch manager who found the carcass.

The carcass was near the upper Fox Creek road, east of Lookout Mountain in eastern Baker County.

But Ratliff said the evidence suggests that the cow sustained the fatal injury on or near the road, about 100 yards from where the carcass was found. That evidence, in the main, is blood.

"Buckets," Ratliff said.

There were multiple large patches of bloody ground, splashes of blood as high as five feet up in nearby trees, and a blood trail between the road and the carcass. Ratliff surmises that the blood was splashed onto the trees when the cow whipped her head from side to side after the injury.

Tracking conditions were also good at the road, which was dry and dusty. Ratliff found ATV tracks on the road, but, as at the carcass site, no predator tracks.

Ratliff said that as he cut open and examined the carcass, he considered, and in turn discarded, multiple theories about the cow's demise.

He initially thought the cow might have been shot.

But there was no bullet wound — no wound at all in the hide, come to that.

The mystery deepened when Ratliff examined the jaw and, for the first time, saw that most of the tongue was gone. The wound was jagged, not the clean cut that a knife or other sharp implement would make, he said. There were no tooth marks or other evidence of a predator.