

TODAY

Today is Saturday, Sept. 11, the 254th day of 2021. There are 111 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

On Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were killed as 19 al-Qaida hijackers seized control of four jetliners, sending two of the planes into New York's World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and the fourth into a field in western Pennsylvania.

ON THIS DATE

In 1789, Alexander Hamilton was appointed the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

In 1814, an American fleet scored a decisive victory over the British in the Battle of Lake Champlain in the War of 1812.

In 1936, Boulder Dam (now Hoover Dam) began operation as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed a key in Washington to signal the startup of the dam's first hydroelectric generator.

In 1941, groundbreaking took place for the Pentagon. In a speech that drew accusations of anti-Semitism, Charles A. Lindbergh told an America First rally in Des Moines, Iowa, that "the British, the Jewish and the Roosevelt administration" were pushing the United States toward war.

In 1967, the comedy-variety program "The Carol Burnett Show" premiered on CBS.

In 1973, Chilean President Salvador Allende died during a violent military coup.

In 1985, Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds cracked career hit number 4,192 off Eric Show of the San Diego Padres, eclipsing the record held by Ty Cobb. (The Reds won the game, 2-0).

In 2003, actor John Ritter died six days before his 55th birthday at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, California — the same hospital where he was born in 1948.

In 2006, in a prime-time address, President George W. Bush invoked the memory of the victims of the 9/11 attacks as he staunchly defended the war in Iraq, though he acknowledged that Saddam Hussein was not responsible for the attacks.

In 2008, presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama put aside politics as they visited ground zero together on the anniversary of 9/11 to honor its victims.

In 2012, a mob armed with guns and grenades launched a fiery nightlong attack on a U.S. diplomatic outpost and a CIA annex in Benghazi, Libya, killing U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

In 2015, a crane collapsed onto the Grand Mosque in Mecca, killing 111 people ahead of the annual hajj pilgrimage. Roberta Vinci stunned Serena Williams to end her Grand Slam bid in one of the greatest upsets in tennis history; the 43rd-ranked Italian won 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the U.S. Open semifinals.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Earl Holliman is 93. Comedian Tom Dreesen is 82. Movie director Brian De Palma is 81. Singer-actor-dancer Lola Falana is 79. Rock musician Mickey Hart (The Dead) is 78. Guitarist Leo Kottke is 76. Actor Phillip Alford is 73. Actor Amy Madigan is 71. Rock singer-musician Tommy Shaw (Styx) is 68. Sports reporter Lesley Visser is 68. Actor Reed Birney is 67. Former Homeland Security Secretary Jeh (Jay) Johnson is 64. Musician Jon Moss (Culture Club) is 64. Actor Scott Patterson is 63. Rock musician Mick Talbot (The Style Council) is 63. Actor/director Roxann Dawson is 63. Actor John Hawkes is 62. Actor Anne Ramsay is 61. Actor Virginia Madsen is 60. Actor Kristy McNichol is 59. Musician-composer Moby is 56. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is 56. Business reporter Maria Bartiromo is 54. Singer Harry Connick Jr. is 54. Actor Taraji P. Henson is 51. Actor Laura Wright is 51. Rock musician Jeremy Popoff (Lit) is 50. Blogger Markos Moulitsas is 50. Singer Brad Fischetti (LFO) is 46. Rock musician Jon Buckland (Coldplay) is 44. Rapper Ludacris is 44. Rock singer Ben Lee is 43. Actor Ryan Slattery is 43. Actor Ariana Richards is 42. Country singer Charles Kelley (Lady A) is 40. Actor Elizabeth Henstridge is 34. Actor Tyler Hoechlin is 34. Actor Mackenzie Aladjem is 20.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2021
Megabucks
19-23-23-29-42-44
Jackpot: \$2.9 million
Lucky Lines
1-6-10-15-18-22-28-30
Estimated jackpot: \$14,000
Powerball
9-22-41-47-61
Powerball: 21
Power Play: 2
Jackpot: \$409 million
Win for Life
16-17-18-42
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 3-6-9-8
4 p.m.: 1-8-9-5
7 p.m.: 7-2-2-3
10 p.m.: 3-7-6-1
Thursday, Sept. 9, 2021
Lucky Lines
3-8-11-15-17-22-27-32
Jackpot: \$15,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 1-6-4-7
4 p.m.: 3-8-1-8
7 p.m.: 6-9-2-3
10 p.m.: 7-6-5-8

Good weather in the forecast for region

Temperatures will slowly drop after Sept. 12 in Union, Wallowa counties

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Union and Wallowa counties, after being hit by rain showers and thunderstorm activity on Thursday, Sept. 9, and Friday, Sept. 10, can expect mild weather this weekend.

A weak high-pressure system is set to move into the region this weekend, allowing for clearer skies and no precipitation, according to Matt Callihan, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service.

“It should stay dry,” he said.

No thunderstorm activity is forecast for Union and Wallowa counties this weekend. Thunderstorms, however, rattled portions of the two counties early in the eve-



Brady Cutler/For The Observer

Smoke lingers over the Grande Ronde Valley on Thursday, Sept. 9, 2021.

ning of Sept. 9 with high winds. The La Grande/Union County Airport had a peak wind gust of 47 miles per hour at 6:26 p.m. and the Joseph Airport had a top gust of 39 miles per hour at about 6:30 p.m., according to the National Weather Service. Temperatures will be

warmer on Sept. 11 and Sept. 12 because of the high-pressure system. La Grande is projected to have high temperatures in the mid-70s over the weekend. Forecasts call for Enterprise high temperatures to be in the low 70s. The short-lived

high-pressure system will move east and out of the region on Sept. 12, according to the National Weather Service.

Weather overall will be cooler after Sept. 12. La Grande is projected to have high temperatures of 71 degrees on Sept. 13, 76 degrees on Sept. 14, 71 degrees on Sept. 15 and 69 degrees on Sept. 16.

Forecasts for Enterprise call for high temperatures of 69 degrees on Sept. 13, 73 degrees on Sept. 14, 69 degrees on Sept. 15 and 65 degrees on Sept. 16.

No smoke or haze is in the National Weather Service's forecast for La Grande or Enterprise through Sept. 16. Air quality is projected to be good on Sept. 11 and Sept. 12 in La Grande and Enterprise, according to IQAir, an air quality monitoring service.

Callihan said no rainfall is likely in Northeastern Oregon through Friday, Sept. 17, but there will be a chance of precipitation next weekend.

Commissioners discuss suggestions for project list

The suggestions will be formalized at commission's Sept. 15 meeting

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Union County Board of Commissioners is a step closer to submitting a short major project list to state Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo.

The board of commissioners on Wednesday, Sept. 8, reviewed a list of five projects they may ask Levy to push to get state funding for during the 2022 Legislative Session.

The commissioners each discussed their lists of three projects they would like Levy to seek funding for. Because some projects were duplicated on lists, the end result is that five, the total number of projects listed, are under consideration. Levy earlier asked the Union County Board of Commissioners for a list of projects it would like for her to consider seeking funding for.

The board of commissioners will decide at its Sept. 15 meeting



Levy

what step to take next. The commissioners have several options, including submitting all five project requests to Levy and asking her to select one to campaign for, or giving her a prioritized list and asking her to pick one based on its standing and what she believes her chances of succeeding in getting funding for it are.

The projects the commissioners are considering include:

- The creation of a child care center that would be designed to help working parents in Union County and address a shortage of day care centers, according to Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage.
- The building of a new justice center. It was added to the list at the encouragement of Union County Sheriff Cody Bowen. The sheriff told the commissioners the justice center is needed for a number of reasons, including a shortage of jail space. Bowen said he would like such a center to have room for a mental health facility. He said this would allow law enforcement officers in some instances to

take people who are experiencing a mental health crisis to a place they could receive help rather than to jail.

• Renovation and expansion of the La Grande/Union County Airport, including increasing fuel storage capacity, adding a multi-use hangar for equipment, maintenance work and space to better protect helicopters. Airport work could also include adding hangars for the public. Commissioner Paul Anderes said there is presently a waiting list of 20 people who want hangar space at the airport.

• Upgrade work at the Union County Fairgrounds. Funds could be used for steps like badly needed water and sewer system upgrades, Anderes said.

• The creation of a truck route that would allow truck drivers to circumvent the portion of McAlister Road that runs through a residential and school zone in Island City. The project might involve enlarging part of Pierce Road so that it could accommodate heavy truck traffic. Beverage said the route would improve access to Baum Industrial Park and the La Grande/Union County Airport.

Union County averaging 15 COVID cases per day

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — Union County has reported nearly 200 COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks, showing signs that cases are beginning to lull slightly from peak totals in mid-August.

That's an average of roughly 15 cases per day, according to data from the Oregon Health Authority.

Meanwhile, the county has also reported four more COVID-19 deaths, raising

its overall death toll to 35 since the pandemic started.

Like other Eastern Oregon counties, its test positivity rate has remained stubbornly high compared to counties in Western Oregon, which overwhelmingly have higher vaccination rates. Less than 44% of Union County residents have been vaccinated against COVID-19, according to state data.

Cases have waned slightly in many parts of Eastern Oregon over the

past week after the delta variant tore through the region in August and rocked Oregon's health care system. At Union County's Grande Ronde Hospital, every one of the 30 COVID-19 patients admitted in July and August was unvaccinated, according to hospital data.

In the week ending Aug. 15, Union County reported a case rate that was more than four times higher than Washington County and a test positivity rate that was twice as high. The Port-

land metro county has over 574,000 more people than Union County.

Since then, Union County's case rate, and total weekly cases, have more than halved. Neighboring counties, like Umatilla and Baker, continue to report higher case rates and positive test rates.

Nearly 10% of all Union County residents have contracted COVID-19 since the pandemic started in March 2020, according to state data.

NEWS BRIEFS

Anderes, Scarfo file for reelection to county commission

LA GRANDE — Two first-term members of the Union County Board of Commissioners, Paul Anderes and Matt Scarfo, filed for reelection Thursday, Sept. 9.

Anderes filed for reelection to Position 1 and Scarfo filed for reelection to Position 2. Sept. 9 was the first day candidates could file for the May 17, 2022, election.

Anderes, a retired La Grande High School agricultural science teacher, said he decided to run for reelection in part because the COVID-19 pandemic stalled some of the work he wanted to do during

his first term as commissioner to help Union County. Anderes also said he is running because he wants to continue help Union County better deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is important to do everything we can to keep the people of Union County safe,” Anderes said.

Scarfo, a La Grande business owner, expressed a similar sentiment in a statement.

“The past few years have been eventful due to the number of issues, but most importantly the coronavirus. I will continue to work hard to coordinate the protection and safety of our community. I do however look forward to the day that our county returns to a normal, familiar status in which more efforts can be directed towards issues not related to COVID-19,” the statement read.

McDaniel announces intent to run for reelection

LA GRANDE — Union County District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel has announced her intent to run for reelection on the 2022 May primary ballot.

“I have been honored to serve in this position since 2014 and look forward to the opportunity to continue the hard work of seeking justice for the citizens of Union County,” McDaniel said in a press release announcing her reelection campaign. McDaniel, the first female dis-

trict attorney in Union County, has served as the Union County District Attorney since 2014, replacing Tim Thompson. McDaniel was promoted from deputy district attorney, a role she had held since June 2010.

Prior to coming to Union County, McDaniel worked in the Morrow County District Attorney's Office.

McDaniel serves on the Oregon District Attorneys Association Board of Directors and the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force. She and her husband, Kyle, have lived in North Powder for more than 10 years where they are raising their two children.

Union County Clerk Robin Church said if there are three or more candidates on the ballot to run for district attorney and no one receives 51% of the vote in May, the top two finishers would advance to a runoff in the November 2022 election.

The Union County district attorney serves four-year terms.

Church said no one else had yet filed to oppose McDaniel as of Thursday, Sept. 9. The filing deadline for the May primary is March 8, 2022, and Election Day is May 17, 2022.

— The Observer

District explores need for fill-ins

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The COVID-19 pandemic has La Grande School District officials worried about the possibility of needing significantly more substitute staff later this school year.

The school district, according to its latest data, has five staff members out due to COVID-19. The total consists of two staff members who have contracted COVID-19 and three others who cannot work because they must be quarantined after exposure to a positive case.

The loss of the five employees has boosted the school district's need for substitute staff to an average of about 16 a day, close to the school district's pre-pandemic average range of 10-15 substitutes a day.

La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza fears that if the pandemic continues at its current level, there could be such a need for substitute staff that the school district's operations could suffer. He said the district can continue operating well as long as the need for substitute staff does not exceed 30 per day.

Once more than 30 per day are needed, school district operations will be hurt but remain manageable. Mendoza said though that the school district would be in a world of hurt if the need for substitute staff ever reaches 40 or more and continues.

“If we have 40-45 staff out, we will be in trouble,” Mendoza said.

The school district has a fund of about \$500,000 for substitute costs for the entire school year. Mendoza said if the fund is depleted, the school district will also be able to draw upon federal COVID-19 relief funds to cover the expense.

The likelihood of staff contracting COVID-19 could be elevated by the growing number of students with COVID-19. As of Sept. 3, the latest data available, a total of 15 students are out of school after contracting COVID-19. In addition, 29 students are out because of close contact to a COVID-19 case, and 13 are out due to primary COVID-19 symptoms.

The student numbers are noteworthy because in 2020-2021 there were virtually no student COVID-19 cases in the school district, Mendoza said. The reason for the increases in student cases, Mendoza said, may be because the much more contagious delta variant of COVID-19 is now present.

La Grande High School has the most students out with COVID-19 with six, followed by La Grande Middle School with four cases, Central and Island City elementary schools each with two cases and Greenwood Elementary School with one.

Mendoza also addressed Gov. Kate Brown's vaccination mandate. Brown has mandated that all teachers and school staff at schools for students in kindergarten through 12th grade must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 18.

Exemptions will be granted for those who cannot take the vaccine because of their religious beliefs or medical reasons. Mendoza said the school district will be offering to help people filing for exemptions.



Mendoza