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Local leaders note firing

Superintendents reflect on removal of Adrian School District superintendent

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — The firing of Adrian School District Superintendent Kevin Purnell by his school board on Monday, Aug. 30, dismayed area school leaders.

Purnell was fired for not following board directives, Adrian School Board chair Eddie Kincade told the Malheur Enterprise. Kincade declined to elaborate but there are many indications, the Malheur Enterprise reported, that the board wanted Purnell to take a stand against Gov. Kate Brown's COVID-19 mask and vaccination mandates for schools. Purnell, though, insisted on following the rules and this is believed to be the reason the board fired him.

“It was very shocking that something like that happened so close to home,” said Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells. “It would be horrific if that happened in this valley.”

North Powder School District Superintendent Lance Dixon said he is disturbed that a superintendent could be dismissed for following state rules. Purnell was with the Adrian School District for 14 years and had been its superintendent for three years.

“I know Kevin. He is a great guy,” the North Powder superintendent said.

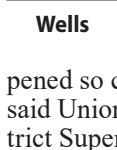
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Hislop



Pettit



Wells

Still going strong



Dorothy Trice, center, pauses for a photo with members of her family at her home in La Grande on Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021. Standing from left are her great-grandson Isaiiah Trice-Collette, grandson Jordan Trice and son Lafayette Trice.

Dick Mason/The Observer

Dorothy Trice, 95, continues to be a vibrant part of the community

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Dorothy Trice does not know exactly when she first heard the song “Near the Cross” played on a piano, but she does know this — the experience ignited a passion that has yet to dim many decades later.

“I wanted to learn how to play the song right after I heard it,” said Trice, who was about 17 at the time, lived in Florida and did not know how to play the piano.

Trice then began taking piano lessons and teaching herself, putting herself on the road toward becoming a skilled pianist. Today, Trice, who celebrated her 95th birthday on Sunday, Sept. 12, is still playing. She can be heard almost every Sunday at Amazing Grace Fellowship church in La Grande, where she plays songs before Sunday morning services.

Trice is a popular and familiar face at the church, just as she is in La Grande, where she has lived since 1945 after moving from Florida. She smiles broadly when asked what inspired her to move here.

“I fell in love with a handsome soldier,” said Trice, referring to her future husband, Lucky Trice, whom she met when he was stationed in Florida while with the U.S. Army.

Lucky, who grew up in Northeastern Oregon, and Dorothy were married in the 1940s. Lucky operated many businesses in La Grande before he died in 1985 at the age of 82. The businesses he owned included a shoeshine service, a furnace cleaning firm and a janitorial service. All which he operated with the help of his wife, Dorothy, and their five sons and two daughters.

The Trices’ shoeshine business was run on the 1200 block of Adams Avenue. Dorothy said shining shoes was tiring and diffi-

cult but it became much less so when electric shoe polishers became available.

“They made it so much easier,” she said.

The furnace cleaning work was also challenging, and unlike shoe shining, it posed some risks. Dorothy Trice will never forget the time one of her sons was cleaning a furnace when it unexpectedly came on. He jumped out quickly.

“He was not hurt but it was frightening,” she said.

Trice was able to attend school only through seventh grade while growing up. She worried after her husband died in the 1980s that she might need to apply for work and was told her applications may not be considered if she did not have a high school diploma. This inspired Trice, at age 62, to begin taking classes for her GED, a high school equivalency certificate.

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Forest owners’ group revived

Local chapter of Oregon Small Woodlands Association now includes Baker, Grant, Union, Wallowa counties

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Private forest owners in Baker County are reviving an organization that helps members better manage their timber ground, and this version has expanded its geographic bound-

aries considerably. The newly constituted Northeast Oregon chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association covers four counties, said Jacob Putney, extension forester for the Oregon State University Extension Service in Baker and Grant counties.

Besides those two adjoining counties, the new chapter includes members in Union and Wallowa counties.

“We all share the Blue Mountains, and although there are differences, for the most part the forest

See, **Revived/Page A5**



Baker City Herald, File

Lyle Defrees looks over his family's forested property in Sumpter Valley, about 20 miles southwest of Baker City.

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
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THURSDAY GETTING READY FOR WINTER

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