

TODAY

On Oct. 9, 1967, Marxist revolutionary guerrilla leader Che Guevara, 39, was summarily executed by the Bolivian army a day after his capture.

In 1888, the public was first admitted to the Washington Monument.

In 1910, a coal dust explosion at the Starkville Mine in Colorado left 56 miners dead.

In 1936, the first generator at Boulder (later Hoover) Dam began transmitting electricity to Los Angeles.

In 1940, rock-and-roll legend John Lennon was born in Liverpool, England. (On this date in 1975, his son, Sean, was born in New York.)

In 1975, Soviet scientist Andrei Sakharov was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1985, the hijackers of the Achille Lauro cruise liner surrendered two days after seizing the vessel in the Mediterranean. (Passenger Leon Klinghoffer was killed by the hijackers during the standoff.)

In 2001, in the first daylight raids since the start of U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan, jets bombed the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. Letters postmarked in Trenton, N.J., were sent to Sens. Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy; the letters later tested positive for anthrax.

In 2004, a tour bus from the Chicago area flipped in Arkansas, killing 15 people headed to a Mississippi casino.

In 2006, Google Inc. announced it was snapping up YouTube Inc. for \$1.65 billion in a stock deal.

In 2009, President Barack Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize for what the Norwegian Nobel Committee called “his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”

In 2012, former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was sentenced to 30 to 60 years in prison following his conviction on 45 counts of sexual abuse of boys.

In 2014, six U.S. military planes arrived in the Ebola hot zone with more Marines as West African leaders pleaded for the world’s help in dealing with what Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma described as “a tragedy unforeseen in modern times.”

Today’s Birthdays: Retired MLB All-Star Joe Pepitone is 81. Former Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., is 80. C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb is 80. R&B singer Nona Hendryx is 77. Singer Jackson Browne is 73. Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams is 71. Actor Gary Frank is 71. Actor Richard Chaves is 70. Actor Robert Wuhl is 70. Actor-TV personality Sharon Osbourne is 69. Actor Tony Shalhoub is 68. Actor Scott Bakula is 67. Musician James Fearnley (The Pogues) is 67. Actor John O’Hurley is 67. Writer-producer-director-actor Linwood Boomer is 66. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Mike Singletary is 63. Actor Michael Paré is 63. Jazz musician Kenny Garrett is 61. Rock singer-musician Kurt Neumann (The BoDeans) is 60. Movie director Guillermo del Toro is 57. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron is 55. Singer P.J. Harvey is 52. Movie director Steve McQueen (Film: “12 Years a Slave”) is 52. World Golf Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam is 51. Actor Cocoa Brown is 49. Country singer Tommy Shane Steiner is 48. Actor Steve Burns is 48. Rock singer Sean Lennon is 46. Actor Randy Spelling is 43. Christian hip-hop artist Lecrae is 42. Actor Brandon Routh is 42. Actor Zachery Ty Bryan is 40. Actor Spencer Grammer is 38. Comedian Melissa Villaseñor (TV: “Saturday Night Live”) is 34. Actor Tyler James Williams is 29. Country singer Scotty McCreery (TV: “American Idol”) is 28. Actor Jharrel Jerome is 24.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2021 Megabucks
2-10-20-39-45-47
Jackpot: \$4.1 million
Lucky Lines
1-5-11-13-18-24-26-29
Estimated jackpot: \$20,000
Powerball
1-17-52-58-64
Powerball: 1
Power Play: 10
Jackpot: \$31 million
Win for Life
12-17-43-63
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 9-4-0-0
4 p.m.: 8-9-5-8
7 p.m.: 5-9-3-4
10 p.m.: 8-4-1-5
Thursday, Sept. 7, 2021 Lucky Lines
2-7-12-16-20-24-27-29
Jackpot: \$21,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 0-8-8-7
4 p.m.: 7-3-4-2
7 p.m.: 5-6-6-5
10 p.m.: 8-8-9-9

Eggs crack under pressure at Island City Elementary School



Photos by Dick Mason/The Observer

At left, Travis Smart, a lineman for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, drops eggs packed by Island City Elementary School fourth graders on Oct. 7, 2021. Smart was about 40 feet in the air outside the elementary school in a platform attached to the crane of his OTEC truck. The students, working in groups of two to three, had been challenged to design and build vessels that would allow eggs to survive the drop without cracking.

Below, Island City Elementary School fourth grade students on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, watch in eager anticipation to see if their egg-drop science experiments were successful. Would their design keep raw eggs from breaking after being tossed to the ground from a height of 40 feet?



UC commissioners oppose River Democracy Act

Trio OKs a letter that will be sent to Sen. Ron Wyden

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Union County Board of Commissioners wants no part of the River Democracy Act.

The trio voted Wednesday, Oct. 6, to send a letter to Oregon U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden asking him to remove all of the waterways in Union County that are included in the proposed federal River Democracy Act legislation. The letter was signed by Union County Commissioners Paul Anderes, Donna Beverage and Matt Scarfo.

The bill, co-sponsored by Wyden and fellow Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, would add 4,684 miles to the Wild and Scenic River system in Oregon, including

135 miles in Union County.

The 135 miles would be on 26 waterways, the largest of which is an 11.6-mile stretch of Beaver Creek and a 10.8-mile stretch of Five Points Creek.

In the letter to Wyden the commissioners wrote they are making their request based on a number of criteria. One, the commissioners claim, is that the traditional process for considering waterways for Wild and Scenic designation, one which includes extensive public input, has not been adhered to.

“This failure to follow the guidelines that have been in place since 1968 as a well-vetted system for designation is resulting in waterways that do not meet the criteria, spirit, intent or letter of the Wild and Scenic Act,” states the letter, which Anderes



Anderes



Beverage



Scarfo

read at the Oct. 6 meeting.

The commissioners’ letter also stated their concern that the federal government failed to hold public meetings in communities that would be impacted by the addition of the waterways to the Wild and Scenic designation. In lieu of such meetings, at least one Statewide People’s Town Hall was conducted virtually, which was not not a good substitute for localized

community meetings, according to the letter.

Another concern expressed by the Union County commissioners is the half-mile buffer zone each proposed waterway would have on both sides of its banks.

Restrictions on activities in the buffer zones, including logging to reduce fire hazards, might be imposed. This would

affect 86,000 acres of Union County land that would be in the buffer zones along the 26 waterways proposed for inclusion in the River Democracy Act.

“I do not want to put 86,000 acres under federal jurisdiction,” Beverage said.

The letter noted there are a number of projects now underway where the buffer zones would be, ones designed to protect and restore the waterways and their banks, which could be derailed by the River Democracy Act.

Beverage wants the process of selecting additional Oregon waterways for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Act to be started over in order to conduct it in a way that would include greater public input.

She said that if this is not done, the next best option would be for officials to delete all of the 26 Union County waterways proposed for inclusion in the River Democracy Act.

NEWS BRIEFS

OHA reports 3,033 new COVID-19 cases, 82 deaths

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority documented 1,453 new COVID-19 cases in its report Thursday, Oct. 7, and 1,580 on Friday, Oct. 8. The 59 deaths Thursday and 23 Friday increase Oregon’s death toll since the start of the pandemic to 3,982.

Union County tallied 14 new cases Thursday and 28 Friday, which brings the county’s total to 108 for October. The county has recorded 3,065 positive cases since the beginning of COVID-19.

Wallowa County’s six new cases Thursday and 11 Friday brings its monthly total to 61, while there have been 644 total cases since the start of the pandemic, per OHA.

Across the state, there are 48 available adult ICU beds out of 688 and 294 open adult non-ICU beds out of 4,229. The number of patients in Oregon hospitalized with COVID-19 stands at 656, which is a decrease of 43 patients from the Oct. 7 report.

In Union County, 55.8% of adults 18 or older are vaccinated. Wallowa County is currently at a 65.3% vaccination rate of adults 18 or older. The

current seven-day running average of vaccine doses administered per day in Oregon is 11,947.

Apply now for cultural trust grants in Wallowa County

JOSEPH — Grant applications for the Wallowa County Cultural Trust Coalition are due Nov. 10, according to a press release.

Eligible applicants must be Wallowa County residents and have a public component of their project that increases access to local culture. Successful applicants make access to culture more available, recover and preserve historic assets and achievements, support development of artists and cultural experiences and/or strengthen the capacity of cultural organizations in Wallowa County. Not-for-profit entities will be prioritized.

The coalition supports local, cultural endeavors and promotes participation in arts, heritage and humanities through disseminating Oregon Cultural Trust grant money.

Applications for the grants are currently available online at <https://josephy.org/arts-council/wcctc> or can be requested by email at WCCTC-coalition@gmail.com. Coalition grants are typically awarded in amounts from \$250-\$1,000.

For more information about the state trust, or to donate, visit www.culturaltrust.org.

Elbow Creek Fire cost more than \$25M to suppress

ENTERPRISE — The Elbow Creek Fire cost more than \$25 million to suppress, according to a spokesperson for the Umatilla National Forest on Monday, Oct. 4.

“Our records show the cost-to-date is \$25.3 million,” said Darcy Weseman, public affairs officer for the forest.

The fire started on the afternoon of July 15 in an area along the Grande Ronde River near Troy. At one point, the fire was burning nearly 23,000 acres in northern Wallowa County. More than 1,000 firefighters were mustered to fight the blaze in steep terrain as it covered the county with smoke for weeks. As of Aug. 2, the fire was 95% contained, and it was extinguished not long after.

Weseman said the cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

— EO Media Group

Council approves project bid La Grande City Council OKs \$141K HVAC upgrade to city hall

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande City Council met virtually for its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 6, discussing a limited agenda.

The lone topic of new business considered was awarding the bid for an HVAC upgrade and replacement project at city hall. The bid was awarded to Valley Metal & Heating in Baker City for \$141,872. The new system will replace the current infrastructure that is roughly 20 years old.

The project was part of the 2021-22 fiscal year building maintenance budget, with the projected cost at \$100,000. Due to the rise in material prices, the project ended up more than \$40,000 over budget.

The city’s \$300,000 in undesignated general reserve can be used to cover the additional price of the project. The city previously hired an engineer to evaluate the building’s needs in order to best fit the upgraded system.

According to La Grande Community Development Director Mike Boquist, the goal for a date of completion is by the end of December. The city hall building currently has several units that are unlikely to make it through the winter without costly repairs.

City Councilor David Glabe voiced his concern that both the bids came from HVAC companies outside of Union County. Boquist informed the council that no bids were received from any local businesses after the city contacted nearly every HVAC company in the county.

The motion was passed by City Councilor Gary Lillard and unanimously approved by the council members in attendance.

Prior to discussing the new business, La Grande Mayor Steve Clements made a personal statement on COVID-19 vaccines, following the city’s town hall on vaccines on Sept. 27.

“I understand the desire for personal freedom, but what about the responsibility that comes with that freedom?” Clements asked. “With rights come responsibilities to act not only in your own best interest, but in the interest of the community that you are a part of.”

Urban Renewal Agency extends agreement with Liberty Theatre

Following the city council meeting, the La Grande Urban Renewal Agency met to discuss an extension to a loan agreement with the Liberty Theatre Foundation, the group working on the restoration of the local venue.

City Manager Robert Strope explained that a \$150,000 loan to the foundation will convert to a grant if certain criteria are met. Due to delays from COVID-19, the Liberty Theatre Foundation asked for an extension of the deadline for completion from this past June to June of 2023.

Jeff Clark, vice chair of the Liberty Theatre Foundation, provided an update on the project ahead of the agency’s vote.

“We’re approximately three quarters completed with the overall project and we were recently awarded \$250,000 from the Murdock Charitable Trust, which really takes us over the final hump,” Clark said.