

# THE OBSERVER

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## New mayor has legacy of public service

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

**NORTH POWDER** — New North Powder Mayor John Frieboes is new to the North Powder City Council but not to public service.

Frieboes, who was voted mayor by the city's council on Monday, Nov. 1, was the chief of the North Powder Fire Department for eight years starting in the late 1980s through much of the 1990s. He took the department's reins after serving as a volunteer firefighter for the department for two years.

The new mayor headed the fire department during the time North Powder became part of Union County's 911 emergency dispatch system. Frieboes said the 911 system has greatly sped up and simplified the process of alerting first responders of emergencies.

He said that before there was a 911 system in North Powder, people had to dial a number that went to the North Powder Fire Department or a North Powder motel connected to the city's emergency communication system.

"The motel was part of the system because it was always open," Frieboes said.

The North Powder resident was also fire chief while the rural city's first responder system was being created. Emergency medical personnel who volunteer as first responders provide patient care before ambulances from the La Grande, La Grande Rural or Baker City fire departments arrive. Frieboes said the first responder system is helping patients receive critical emergency care more quickly.

Frieboes said that although he helped with the development of the first responder and the local 911 systems, his role was minor.

"Many other people did more than I did," he said.

It is fitting that Frieboes is a former North Powder fire chief since as mayor he is helping the city plan a move into the old fire department building in which he once worked. The city is preparing to relocate its library and city hall at the former fire station at 340 E St.

The moves are needed, Frieboes said, because North Powder's city hall and its library are in buildings that are many decades old and are deteriorating.

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Kristen Hunter, an Oregon Health & Science University student pursuing a nursing degree, folds blankets as she volunteers at the Union County Warming Station in La Grande on Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021. The shelter will open this winter when there are enough volunteers.

# Keeping warm

### Lack of volunteers could delay opening of Union County Warming Station

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — With winter weather on the horizon, the Union County Warming Station is set to open its doors. Plans for the start of operations come with a caveat, though. The warming station's debut, originally planned for Sunday, Nov. 21, may be delayed because of a lack of volunteers, said Lisa Ladendorff, a member of the Union County Warming Station Board.

Ladendorff said three volunteers are needed for it to open Nov. 21 and a total of 10 more are needed for it to be open through its first week.

The facility, on Third Street in La Grande, needs a total of five people to work each evening and morning session. The staff works rotating shifts between 6 p.m. and 7:30 a.m., in addition to the volunteers who bring in dinner each night for the warming station's guests.

People who want to volunteer or make donations to the warming station may call 541-786-8779 or visit its Facebook page.

Ladendorff said the



Tanner VanLeuven, a nursing student at Oregon Health & Science University, places clothes and stuffed animals on a shelf at the Union County Warming Station in La Grande on Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021.

warming station's operations will be on more solid ground once a manager is hired. The individual will be the first paid staff the shelter has had in its five-year history. The position is being funded by grants from the Oregon Community Foundation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization.

Ladendorff said having a paid staff person will strengthen the warming station.

"It will bring us a lot more stability," she said. "It will be a huge help."

Ladendorff noted that having a manager for the facility will take stress off of volunteers, who in the past have been responsible for multiple duties, including setting up for each shift.

"This means everything will be ready when volunteers come in," she said. "Volunteers will be able to focus on interacting with guests."

The Union County

Warming Station is being run this season with major assistance from the Northeast Oregon Network, which has its offices in the building that houses the winter-weather shelter.

Ladendorff said NEON wants to help the warming station maintain its stability, which can be difficult with only volunteers.

"Making the transition to a paid staff is a big leap for an all-volunteer organization," Ladendorff said.

The Union County Warming Station operates out of the third home it has had in its five-year existence. The shelter was first at the Zion Lutheran Church in 2017-18 and in a Willow Street building in 2018-19. The warming station did not operate in 2019-20 because of issues related to the move to its Third Street location but was able to open its doors there in 2020-21.

The Union County Warming Station's current site offers much more space than it had at its previous locations. This allows it to provide

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# Holiday turkey will make it to the table

### Local grocery owners optimistic about this year's Thanksgiving

By ALEX WITTWER  
and DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — Supply chain issues gripping the nation have led to shortages in everything from semiconductors to paper trays at school cafeterias, but Thanksgiving looks to be running smoothly and on time, according to grocery stores

in rural Oregon cities.

Marco Rennie, owner of Market Place Fresh Foods, La Grande, said hangups in the supply chain have affected grocers across the board, but his store is ready to help customers meet holiday meal needs.

"It has been more difficult," Rennie said, but he added, "We've been fortunate that we secured turkeys in advance."

Rennie and Market Place Fresh Foods has ordered its share of turkeys as well as reaching out locally in order to fill any potential shortages. The store is partnering with Bellamy Family Farm in Summer-ville to provide locally sourced turkeys ahead of Thanksgiving.

"We've been really

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Janine Thomas selects a turkey at Grocery Outlet in Island City on Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021. Local grocery stores have well-stocked shelves as Thanksgiving approaches despite supply chain woes.

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#### WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	<b>Tonight</b> 28 LOW Partly cloudy		<b>Sunday</b> 46/30 Mostly sunny
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#### CONTACT US

541-963-3161  
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La Grande, Oregon  
Email story ideas to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com).  
More contact info on Page A4.

