

TODAY

On Dec. 9, 2014, U.S. Senate investigators concluded the United States had brutalized scores of terror suspects with interrogation tactics that turned secret CIA prisons into chambers of suffering and did nothing to make Americans safer after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

In 1911, an explosion inside the Cross Mountain coal mine near Briceville, Tennessee, killed 84 workers. (Five were rescued.)

In 1917, British forces captured Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks.

In 1958, the anti-communist John Birch Society was formed in Indianapolis.

In 1962, the Petrified Forest in Arizona was designated a national park.

In 1965, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," the first animated TV special featuring characters from the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, premiered on CBS.

In 1987, the first Palestinian intifadah, or uprising, began as riots broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank, triggering a strong Israeli response.

In 1990, Solidarity founder Lech Walesa won Poland's presidential runoff by a landslide.

In 1992, Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced their separation. (The couple's divorce became final in August 1996.)

In 2000, the U-S Supreme Court ordered a temporary halt in the Florida vote count on which Al Gore pinned his best hopes of winning the White House.

In 2001, the United States disclosed the existence of a videotape in which Osama bin Laden said he was pleasantly surprised by the extent of damage from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In 2006, a fire broke out at a Moscow drug treatment hospital, killing 46 women trapped by barred windows and a locked gate.

In 2013, scientists revealed that NASA's Curiosity rover had uncovered signs of an ancient freshwater lake on Mars.

Ten years ago: The European Union said 26 of its 27 member countries were open to joining a new treaty tying their finances together to solve the euro crisis; Britain remained opposed. A jury in New Haven, Connecticut, condemned Joshua Komisarjevsky to death for killing a woman and her two daughters during a night of terror in their suburban Cheshire home. (The other defendant in the case, Steven Hayes, had also been condemned to death; both punishments were changed to life in prison after Connecticut abolished the death penalty in 2015.) A fire at a hospital in Kolkata, India, claimed the lives of at least 93 people.

Five years ago: The White House said President Barack Obama had ordered intelligence officials to conduct a broad review of election-season cyberattacks, including the email hacks that rattled the presidential campaign and raised fresh concerns about Russia's meddling in U.S. elections. South Korean lawmakers impeached President Park Geun-hye over an explosive corruption scandal, a stunning and swift fall for the country's first female leader.

CORRECTION

The Page A1 story "Senior center to reopen for in-person dining," published Tuesday, Dec. 7, misstated the date the Union County Senior Center would be serving meals again in its dining area. The meals will resume on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

LOTTERY

Monday, Dec. 6, 2021 Megabucks
3-18-25-31-35-40
Estimated jackpot: \$6.7 million
Lucky Lines
4-7-11-16-17-21-25-30
Estimated jackpot: \$38,000
Win for Life
44-45-49-50
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 0-4-5-4
4 p.m.: 4-3-8-8
7 p.m.: 9-4-7-4
10 p.m.: 6-3-9-7
Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021 Mega Millions
1-7-40-43-68
Mega Ball: 1
Megaplier: 2
Estimated jackpot: \$135 million
Lucky Lines
1-8-12-15-17-24-28-29
Estimated jackpot: \$39,000
Pick 4
1 p.m.: 6-5-9-3
4 p.m.: 2-2-5-8
7 p.m.: 5-8-9-5
10 p.m.: 9-7-2-8

November temps above normal

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Temperatures in November were warmer than normal in the La Grande area, according to preliminary data received by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service Office in Pendleton.

The average temperature during the month was 41.8 degrees, 3.8 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 51.8 degrees, 5.6 degrees above normal, according to the monthly climate summary.

The highest temperature was 63 degrees, recorded on Nov. 15.

Low temperatures averaged 31.8 degrees, 1.9 degrees above normal. The lowest temperature for the month was 20 degrees on Nov. 17, the report said.

There were 15 days in November when the low temperature dipped below 32 degrees in La Grande.

Precipitation for the month totaled 2.47 inches, which was 0.44 inches above normal. Measurable precipitation — at least 0.01 inch — was received on seven days, with the heaviest, 1.30 inches, reported on Nov. 16.

Precipitation for the year is 11.74 inches, which is 3.12 inches below normal, according to the weather service report. Since October, the water year precipitation at La Grande has been 3.56 inches, which is 0.24 inches above normal.

The outlook for December from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation in December. Normal highs for La Grande fall from 40 degrees at the start of the month to 37 degrees by the end of the month. Normal lows fall from 26 degrees to 23 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation for the month is 1.66 inches.

Temperatures slightly warmer than normal in Wallowa County

Wallowa County experienced slightly warmer than normal temperatures for the month of November, the report said.

The average temperature for Joseph during the month was 36.3 degrees, 1.6 degrees below normal. High temperatures averaged 45.8 degrees, 1.9 degrees above normal. The highest temperature was 64 degrees on Nov. 14.

Low temperatures averaged 26.8 degrees, 1.3 degrees above normal. The lowest temperature for the month was 16 degrees, recorded on Nov. 17. The low temperatures plunged below 32 degrees on 23 days in November.

Precipitation for the month in Wallowa County



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

The La Grande High School Marching Band makes its way in the rain down Adams Avenue during the annual Veterans Day parade on Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021. Precipitation in La Grande in November totaled 2.47 inches, 0.44 inches above normal.

totalled 0.91 inches, which was 0.27 inches below normal, the report said. Measurable precipitation — at least 0.01 inch — was received on 14 days during the month, with the heaviest, 0.34 inches, reported on Nov. 5. Precipitation for the year is 6.77 inches, 9.20 inches below normal.

Since October, the water year precipitation at Joseph has been 1.55 inches,

which is 1.08 inches below normal.

Wallowa County's outlook for December predicts near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation. Normal highs fall from 37 degrees at the start of the month to 33 degrees at the end of December. Normal lows fall from 21 degrees to 17 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.32 inches for the month.

Signs of trouble

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest installs more signs to alert people to roads blocked by snow

The Observer

BAKER CITY — The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has installed new, brightly colored signs at several road junctions to remind travelers that some routes are passable only to snowmobiles and other specialized vehicles during winter.

Although signs have been posted on these roads in the past, stating that they weren't maintained for winter travel, drivers have continued to get their vehicles mired in deep snow occasionally.

"The driving factor pushing us towards installing extra signage at these locations has been the recent uptick with search and rescues involving Wallowa, Union, Grant and Baker counties," said Dan Story, roads manager for the south zone of the WWNF. "We carefully considered the language, colors, and placement of these signs to help more people understand that wheeled vehicles cannot safely pass through these roads while they are covered with snow. Signs

are bright yellow or orange to get the driver's attention before entry."

Signs have been installed on the Wallowa Mountain Loop Road at 39 Road and Highway 86 junction and 39 Road and Salt Creek Summit; 3955 Road just north of the 39 Road junction on the Imnaha River; 73 Road (Anthony Lakes Highway) at the town of Granite, a four-way intersection, and Grant County Route 24 junction; and 73 Road (Anthony Lakes Highway) at the 43 Junction (the road to Grande Ronde Lake).

Story said an increase in search and rescue calls can be partially attributed to increased winter travel through the mountains, failures of GPS directions to account for winter conditions, improvements in snowmobile grooming technology, making snowmobile routes look passable when before they would have been buried under several feet of snow, more miles of groomed routes that connect with state highways, and, in many cases, a lack of



Wallowa-Whitman National Forest/Contributed Photo

To enhance public safety and reduce the pressure on local search & rescue teams, road managers with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest have installed additional warning signs at priority roads and snowmobile routes to deter unsafe entry by wheeled vehicles while those roads and routes are impassable due to snow cover.

preparation for backcountry winter travel by motorists.

The new signs will provide valuable and potentially life-saving information to motorists before they attempt to drive wheeled vehicles over impassable routes and roads on the way to popular destinations, Story said.

"We carefully considered the language, colors, and placement of these signs to help more people understand that wheeled vehicles

cannot safely pass through these roads while they are covered with snow," he said. "Signs are bright yellow or orange to get the driver's attention before entry.

Road managers will uncover these warning signs when snow conditions become impassable this winter, maximizing the time that roads remain open to wheeled vehicles. Signs will be removed or covered after snowmelt allows reopening of the roads.

NEWS BRIEFS

OHA reports five new COVID-19 cases in Union County

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority released its daily report on Tuesday, Dec. 7, revealing five new COVID-19 cases in Union County. The report showed two new cases in Wallowa County.

The following morning's update revealed one new COVID-19 death in Union County, bringing the county's total to 57 since the start of the pandemic.

A 60-year old man from Union County tested positive on Nov. 20 and died on Dec. 5 at St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center. The man reportedly had underlying conditions.

The new cases bring Union County's total to 3,419 since the start of the pandemic, while Wallowa County stands at 765. Over the last 30 days, Union County has only seen three reports where the COVID-19 case count was in double digits. In Wallowa County, six cases in one day is the highest mark in the last 30 days.

Across the state, 31 new COVID-19 deaths were reported — Oregon's death toll is now up to 5,299. The 945 new confirmed and presumptive cases in the report brought the state's total to 397,421 since the start of the

pandemic.

There are currently 405 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Oregon, which is a decrease of 13 individuals from yesterday's report. Out of 664 total adult ICU beds in the state, 63 are currently open. There are 307 available adult non-ICU beds out of 4,156.

The seven-day running average of vaccine doses per day in Oregon is 20,306.

Wallowa School Board backs bike park

WALLOWA — The Wallowa School Board expressed its full support Monday, Dec. 6, for a Bicycle Playground proposed by Ron Pickens to be constructed on school property.

"They were totally supportive," Superintendent Tammy Jones said. "They passed a motion to support it on the grounds of we will talk further of its location."

Pickens, who teaches at the Alternative School at Building Healthy Families in Enterprise, spearheaded the refurbishment of the Enterprise Skate Park this summer and is now proposing something similar for his home community of Wallowa.

"My hope with it is that when a kiddo pulls up and sees it that it's friendly, fun and inviting, very much

like a playground," he said in September. "(Kids can) utilize bikes, scooters, roller blades and skateboards. It's this colorful space that kids can play in."

He approached the Wallowa City Council and received its support — and a donation of \$1,000 — Nov. 16.

But the playground is planned for a site owned by the Wallowa School District. So Pickens took his proposal to the school board.

"We'll be looking where the best place will be," Jones said.

Pickens said he's not particular about the location, though he thinks the original site is a "great location."

"I'm open to anything as to the location as long as it's on the school grounds," he said.

Open house set for for new food distribution center

ISLAND CITY — An open house for the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank's new distribution center will be conducted from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 11, at 10213 N. McAlister Road, Island City.

The Northeast Oregon Food Bank and its distribution center are operated by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon.

— The Observer

Wallowa County groups land grants

Four organizations, receive funding from Roundhouse Foundation

Wallowa County Chieftain

SISTERS — Four Wallowa County beneficiaries were recipients of the Sisters-based Roundhouse Foundation's more than \$1.2 million distributed to over 70 rural nonprofits during its fall grant cycle, according to a press release.

Since 2002, the Roundhouse Foundation has worked with local and regional organizations to support creative problem solving.

Grants during the 2021 Fall Open Cycle were made to organizations across Oregon in four different program focus areas including arts and culture, education, social services and environmental stewardship.

The Wallowa Band Nez Perce Interpretive Center in Wallowa received a \$20,000 grant to expand capacity for planning, hosting and improving new and existing place-based tribal youth educational programming and to establish and renew partnerships with reservation-based youth programming.

This grant will build upon the success of the 2021 pilot outdoor education program, the Snake River School tribal youth float trip and establish and renew partnerships with reservation-based youth programming.

The center

Angela Bombaci, executive director of the interpretive center, said Monday, Dec. 6, the youth programming the grant will help support includes youths from the Lapwai, Idaho-based Nez Perce Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation based near Pendleton and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Northeast Washington where the Wallowa Band is located.

She said the interpretive center in Wallowa serves as a place to put on programs planned by the tribes, as well as programs that take place at other locations such as the Homeland Project outside of town or float trips. Other programs include "traditional skill-building" events such as a meat-cutting camp for tribal youths to learn from their elders the traditional ways to break down game that have always been a source of food for the tribes. Exploration of the tribal areas in the county also are programs the center provides.

The center also serves as a place to educate non-Indians about the tribes.

"It's a starting point for learning about the Nez Perce people," she said.

Getting the grant

She said the grant was no surprise, as the Roundhouse Foundation approached her seeking information on the center's activities to determine if a grant would be appropriate.

"They were really wonderful. ... They reached out to us," she said. "They said tell us about the work you do and" encouraged her to apply.

That there was a group eager to support the center, was "really exciting," she said. "They're more than a group that just wants to write a check."

Bombaci said the center has a year to spend the grant and report on it, so she doesn't expect to apply for another grant in the next round of funding in the spring.