

TODAY

On Dec. 14, 2020, the Electoral College decisively confirmed Joe Biden as the nation's next president, ratifying his November victory in a state-by-state repudiation of President Donald Trump's refusal to concede he had lost; electors gave Biden 306 votes to Trump's 232. Speaking from Delaware, Biden accused Trump of threatening core principles of democracy, but told Americans that their form of self-government had "prevailed." A divided Wisconsin Supreme Court rejected Trump's lawsuit seeking to overturn his loss in the battleground state about an hour before the Electoral College cast Wisconsin's 10 votes for Biden.

In 1799, the first president of the United States, George Washington, died at his Mount Vernon, Virginia, home at age 67.

In 1819, Alabama joined the Union as the 22nd state.

In 1861, Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, died at Windsor Castle at age 42.

In 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen and his team became the first men to reach the South Pole, beating out a British expedition led by Robert F. Scott.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson vetoed an immigration measure aimed at preventing "undesirables" and anyone born in the "Asiatic Barred Zone" from entering the U.S. (Congress overrode Wilson's veto in February 1917.)

In 1939, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations for invading Finland.

In 1961, a school bus was hit by a passenger train at a crossing near Greeley, Colorado, killing 20 students.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States*, ruled that Congress was within its authority to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against racial discrimination by private businesses (in this case, a motel that refused to cater to Blacks).

In 1981, Israel annexed the Golan Heights, which it had seized from Syria in 1967.

In 1985, former New York Yankees outfielder Roger Maris, who'd hit 61 home runs during the 1961 season, died in Houston at age 51.

In 2005, President George W. Bush defended his decision to wage the Iraq war, even as he acknowledged that "much of the intelligence turned out to be wrong."

In 2012, a gunman with a semi-automatic rifle killed 20 first-graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, then took his own life as police arrived; the 20-year-old had also fatally shot his mother at their home before carrying out the attack on the school.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama, visiting Fort Bragg in North Carolina, saluted troops returning from Iraq, asserting that the nearly nine-year conflict was ending honorably.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump convened a summit at Trump Tower for nearly a dozen tech leaders whose industry had largely supported Democrat Hillary Clinton; the CEOs included Apple's Tim Cook, Google's Eric Schmidt, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Tesla's Elon Musk. Trump announced his selection of former campaign rival Rick Perry to be secretary of energy. Yahoo said it believed hackers had stolen data from more than one billion user accounts in Aug. 2013 (in Oct. 2017, Yahoo raised that figure to 3 billion).



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Snow accumulates at La Grande City Hall on Monday, Feb. 15, 2021. The National Weather Service is forecasting a 20% chance of snow in La Grande the morning of Tuesday, Dec. 14, a 20% chance on Dec. 15 and a 40% chance on Dec. 16.

Snow in forecast this week

Accumulations will not be significant except in mountains

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — More snow is on the horizon for the Grande Ronde Valley.

The National Weather Service is forecasting a 20% chance of snow in La Grande the morning of Tuesday, Dec. 14, a 20% chance on Dec. 15 and a 40% chance on Dec. 16.

Most of the snow in the next three days will fall Dec. 15-16, according to Camden Plunkett, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, Pendleton. Plunkett said La Grande is expected to receive just under half an inch in snow accumulation during this period, and Elgin will receive about half an inch.

Enterprise will have a 40% chance of receiving snow on Dec. 14, a 10% chance on Dec. 15 and a 20% chance on Dec. 16.

The local mountains, unlike the Grande Ronde and Willowa valleys, will receive significant snow accumulations. The Willows is expected to get 6 inches in total snowfall from Dec. 15 through early Dec. 16, and Anthony Lakes will likely receive about 2 inches during

the same period, Plunkett said.

The National Weather Service's precipitation records indicate that from Dec. 5-9 La Grande received three-tenths of an inch of precipitation.

Plunkett said that, overall, it appears Northeastern Oregon's winter season has been a little drier than normal compared to the same late-fall period in previous years.

La Grande and Enterprise will generally see temperatures in the high 20s and the low 30s through Dec. 17. The low temperatures will generally be in the high teens and low 20s.

COVID-19 vaccination rates for those from Marshall Islands are rising in La Grande

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The COVID-19 vaccination rate among Union County residents who are from the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific is experiencing an uptick.

More than 40 people from the Marshall Islands in Union County have received COVID-19 vaccination shots since November, according to Lowell Alik of Salem, chair of the board of Marshallese American Network for Interacting Together, an Oregon organization.

Alik credits the rising rate to a vaccination drive targeting Marshall Islanders in Union County. It started on Saturday, Nov. 13, with a clinic in La Grande and will continue with additional clinics, including one being planned for this winter. A clinic had been scheduled for Dec. 11

in La Grande but it was canceled due to poor driving conditions that prevented Alik and others from the Marshall American Network for Interacting Together in the Willamette Valley from making the trip to La Grande.

Alik said a make-up clinic will be conducted in January or February in La Grande if weather conditions for driving allow. At that clinic first, second and third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be given, plus booster shots, just as they were at the November clinic.

La Grande is one of about six cities in Oregon where MANIT is conducting COVID-19 clinics targeting the Marshallese. The others are in Salem, Tigard, Corvallis, Eugene and Southern Oregon, all locations that have concentrations of people from the Marshall Islands.

Alik said it is not known how many many people from the Marshall Islands are in La Grande but

the number is significant.

"La Grande is an important place to us," he said.

Alik said he hopes to later to conduct a Marshallese population survey in the La Grande area.

Population data from Portland State University's census center indicates that as of 2018 2.5% of La Grande's population of about 13,000 was composed of Pacific Islanders. Most of this group of 350 are believed to be from the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

Alik said providing vaccination clinics for the Marshallese is critical because of a language barrier. The native language of those from the Marshall Islands is Marshallese, which is spoken by few in the United States.

"They have hesitancy to come to clinics," he said. "They do not understand what people are saying. They feel more comfortable coming to clinics where their language and culture is understood."



Alik

NEWS BRIEFS

Union School Board to meet Dec. 14

UNION — The Union School Board will meet Tuesday, Dec. 14. The in-person meeting will start at 6 p.m. at the Union High School athletic complex.

A vacancy of the school board will be one of the subjects discussed at the meeting.

Union County Board of Commissioners to meet Dec. 15

LA GRANDE — The Union County Board of Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

The meeting is open to the public but people cannot attend it in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The public can participate in the meeting through Zoom or by phone.

To listen to the meeting or participate in the public comment opportunity, call 253-215-8782 or 301-715-8592 and enter meeting ID number: 814 2000 6863. If you do not get through the first time, try again.

To join the meeting online, go to us02web.zoom.us/j/81420006863.

Comments, which will be read at the meeting, can be submitted by email to amooore@union-county.org. All comments must be received by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 14.

Nobody injured in late-night Dec. 11 crash in Ladd Canyon

LA GRANDE — Nobody was injured in a one-vehicle nighttime crash on Saturday, Dec. 11, in Ladd Canyon on Interstate 84 about 3 miles east of the Reynolds Rest Area.

The crash involved a white Volvo truck pulling a white and blue semi trailer. The driver, Kulwinder Singh Rangdhu, 46, of Abbotsford, British Columbia, was westbound and attempting to change lanes on a wet road when his truck and trailer lost traction and hit a guardrail on the south side of I-84. The truck and trailer continued traveling while in touch with the guardrail before they crossed both lanes of traffic, struck a center concrete divider and came to an uncontrolled stop. The truck was badly damaged in the crash and the trailer sustained minor damage. Both were towed from the scene, according to the Oregon State Police.

Rangdhu did not have passengers in his truck and no citations were issued by police.

The crash forced the westbound lanes of I-84 to be closed at Baker City for regular cars and at Ontario for trucks from 9:30 p.m. Saturday until 3:49 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 12.

Single vehicle crash in Baker County leaves one dead

BAKER CITY — One person was killed Saturday, Dec. 11, in a single vehicle crash on Highway 26 in Baker County, according to the Oregon State Police.

Maureen Welsh, 69, of Harper, was eastbound on Highway 26 when she failed to negotiate a corner and her Ford Excursion left the roadway and crashed into a tree. Welsh sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced dead, police said.

The crash occurred around 11:30 a.m. and closed Highway 26 for approximately seven hours.

Deputies from the Grant County Sheriff's Office, John Day Ambulance and Oregon Department of Transportation assisted state police at the scene.

— The Observer

Housing complex marks grand opening

Veterans Village sets standard for potential cottage-style homes

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — A one-of-a-kind neighborhood is officially up and running in La Grande.

Veterans Village Union County hosted a virtual ribbon-cutting event on Thursday, Dec. 9, which acknowledged the many entities that contributed to the village. The 10-house neighborhood is designed specifically for veterans who otherwise might not have a home.

"Through this amazing collaboration of efforts, we created something wonderful — permanent, well-built and energy-efficient homes for many veterans who would not likely get this opportunity without help," said Gust Tsiatsos, owner of GCT Land Management, who coordinated the project.

Tsiatsos and Veterans Village Advisory Council Committee Chair Lindsey Freeland hosted the event, which was attended via Zoom by about 40 people. Attendees included La Grande Planning Commission members and county commissioners from Union County as well as other surrounding counties.

The Veterans Village, 0.83 acres at the corner of Russell Avenue and N. Pine Street, features fully furnished homes for veterans. Each unit is a cottage-style small home that includes a bedroom, living room, fireplace, fenced-in backyard and amenities. The 10-house village also has a community center that can serve as a gathering space for fellow veterans to interact.

Tsiatsos recognized many individuals and organizations that assisted along the way in developing the village, among them Kevin Reed; Ace Hardware; Bob Haley, job site superintendent; Terri Bradley, marketing consultant; Seder Architecture; and Angel Smith, social worker.

"Through all the local group and individual support, the State of Oregon also recognized the project as a frontrunner at the state level and a worthy partner through the Oregon Housing and Community Services program," Tsiatsos said.

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program through Veterans Affairs finds individuals who meet the guidelines to live in the village, while the Northeast Oregon Housing Authority manages the property. After the La Grande Planning Commission amended its codes to allow for tiny homes and cottage-style houses, the Veterans Village serves as the first example of what can be done to ease the city's tight housing market.

"I think the concept works well in many applications, not just veterans housing," Tsiatsos said. "I hope to see other smaller units popping up here and there where we can get some more housing here."

Veterans Village Baker County is currently under development, a neighborhood with nine one-bedroom units and three two-bedroom homes. According to Tsiatsos, there is room for another eight units that could be for sale in Baker City. Several visiting county commissioners such as Court Boice of Curry County attended the meeting and asked questions to gauge the possibility of a similar development.

Gus Bedwell, a veteran's service officer with the State of Oregon, worked with Veterans Village Union County during its development. He noted that the neighborhood can be a blueprint for other communities.

"What Gust and his team has done in La Grande could be done in every single county in the state of Oregon," Bedwell said.

He said having just 10 to 15 similar units in each county in Oregon could go a long way in addressing homelessness among veterans. It is estimated that there are more than 1,300 veterans in Oregon who lack housing.

The virtual gathering concluded with the raising of the United States flag by the veteran residents of the La Grande neighborhood.

"It's for a very small amount of money too, so we could make a huge impact," Bedwell said. "I can't speak highly enough of it."

LOTTERY

Friday, Dec. 10, 2021

Megamillions

23-25-40-42-60

Megaball: 8

Megaplier: 2

Jackpot: \$148 million

Lucky Lines

1-8-12-14-18-22-26-30

Jackpot: \$42,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 7-9-6-7

4 p.m.: 4-5-5-2

7 p.m.: 5-0-1-3

10 p.m.: 8-2-8-6

Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021

Powerball

3-25-44-53-64

Powerball: 10

Power Play: 2

Jackpot: \$320 million

Megabucks

9-12-14-18-20-34

Jackpot: \$6.9 million

Lucky Lines

3-6-12-14-20-24-25-29

Jackpot: \$43,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 6-3-0-3

4 p.m.: 1-4-7-9

7 p.m.: 2-8-3-3

10 p.m.: 2-0-1-2

Win for Life

8-11-35-55

Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021

Lucky Lines

2-6-10-15-17-23-27-31

Estimated jackpot: \$44,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 8-1-6-5

4 p.m.: 7-0-7-2

7 p.m.: 7-4-9-3

10 p.m.: 5-5-0-6