

TODAY

On Dec. 23, 1783, George Washington resigned as commander in chief of the Continental Army and retired to his home at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

In 1788, Maryland passed an act to cede an area "not exceeding ten miles square" for the seat of the national government; about two-thirds of the area became the District of Columbia.

In 1928, the National Broadcasting Company set up a permanent, coast-to-coast network.

In 1941, during World War II, American forces on Wake Island surrendered to the Japanese.

In 1948, former Japanese premier Hideki Tojo and six other Japanese war leaders were executed in Tokyo.

In 1954, the first successful human kidney transplant took place at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston as a surgical team removed a kidney from 23-year-old Ronald Herrick and implanted it in Herrick's twin brother, Richard.

In 1962, Cuba began releasing prisoners from the failed Bay of Pigs invasion under an agreement in which Cuba received more than \$50 million worth of food and medical supplies.

In 1968, 82 crew members of the U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo were released by North Korea, 11 months after they had been captured.

In 1972, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake struck Nicaragua; the disaster claimed some 5,000 lives.

In 1986, the experimental airplane Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager, completed the first non-stop, non-refueled round-the-world flight as it returned safely to Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1997, a federal jury in Denver convicted Terry Nichols of involuntary manslaughter and conspiracy for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing, declining to find him guilty of murder. (Nichols was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

In 2001, Time magazine named New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani its Person of the Year for his steadfast response to the 9/11 terrorist attack.

In 2003, a jury in Chesapeake, Virginia, sentenced teen sniper Lee Boyd Malvo to life in prison, sparing him the death penalty.

Ten years ago: After days of stalemate and rancor, Congress approved a two-month renewal of payroll tax cuts for 160 million workers and unemployment benefits for millions; President Barack Obama immediately signed the bill into law. Two car bombers blew themselves up in Damascus outside the heavily guarded compounds of Syria's intelligence agencies, killing at least 44 people and wounding dozens more in a brazen attack on the powerful security directorates.

Five years ago: The United States allowed the U.N. Security Council to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation" of international law; the decision to abstain from the council's 14-0 vote was one of the biggest American rebukes of its longstanding ally in recent memory. Actor and writer Carrie Fisher was transported to a Los Angeles hospital after suffering a severe medical emergency on an international flight; she died four days later at age 60.

One year ago: Pfizer said it would supply the U.S. government with an additional 100 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine under a new agreement between the pharmaceutical giant and the Trump administration. Two new studies provided encouraging evidence that having had COVID-19 may offer some protection against future infections. After months of fighting the coronavirus, the Fire Department of New York began vaccinating its own members, starting with the front-line EMTs who had responded to more than 1 million emergency medical calls throughout New York City in 2020.

LOTTERY

Monday, Dec. 20, 2021

Megabucks
10-15-16-22-36-42
Estimated jackpot: \$7.3 million

Lucky Lines
2-6-12-13-20-22-26-29
Estimated jackpot: \$52,000

Win for Life
2-14-37-53

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 4-2-7-1
4 p.m.: 2-2-6-7
7 p.m.: 3-2-0-3
10 p.m.: 2-7-5-9

Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021

Mega Millions
25-31-58-64-67
Mega Ball: 24
Megaplier: 3
Estimated jackpot: \$187 million

Lucky Lines
2-7-10-13-19-23-27-31
Estimated jackpot: \$53,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 0-8-2-9
4 p.m.: 2-5-5-2
7 p.m.: 0-1-7-5
10 p.m.: 7-8-5-7

Winners of Union County's holiday decorating competition announced

The Observer

LA GRANDE — This year's Union County holiday decorating competition received nearly 200 entries, lighting up the county with holiday spirit.

The Union County Chamber of Commerce partnered with John J. Howard and Associates and Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative to judge the entries and provide awards in four categories, according to a press release announcing the winners of the third annual contest.

"It felt like the whole county came together to really up the holiday spirit this year," Suzannah Moore-Hemann, the chamber's chief executive officer, said.

Categories were judged based on theme, creativity, overall showmanship and energy efficiency — including LED lights and nonenergy decorations. Winners received a combination of award certificates, energy credit certificates from OTEC and custom yard trophies.

The release from the chamber announced the Scrooge's Best Business Award was given to The Potter's House, 1601 Sixth St., La Grande, for its "combination of classic and fun decor (make sure to check out Santa with his custom mug)." Runner-up was Falk's Mini Mart, 363



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Bob and Judy Jensen pose for a photo outside The Potter's House at 1601 Sixth St., La Grande, on Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021. The Potter's House won the first-place Scrooge's Best Business Award in the county-wide holiday decorations contest.

N. Main St., Union, "an excellent commitment to lighting up the night."

The Candy Cane Lane Neighborhood Award was given to the houses of South 20th Street,

Grinch's Spirit — given to the house with unique, clever or just plain impressive decorations — was presented to 10203 Leonard Lane, Island City, for its layers

The "Cowboy Christmas" display has grown each year of the homeowners' 17 years of marriage.

Also considered for the top Santa's Choice were 755 Fifth St., North Powder; last year's winner, 516 E. Fulton, Union; 10715 S. McAlister, Island City; and 1307 ½ Hall St., La Grande.

A map of the nominated houses and businesses — which were visited Saturday, Dec. 18, by participants of the Light Up the Night Holiday Lights Caravan, a joint event co-hosted by La Grande Main Street Downtown and the Union County Chamber — is available at the chamber's office, 207 Depot St. La Grande, and at www.visitunion-county.org.

"It felt like the whole county came together to really up the holiday spirit this year."

— Suzannah Moore-Hemann, Union County Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer

La Grande, including a close neighbor on Foothill Road. It was a difficult choice, reported the chamber, among several La Grande neighborhoods, including last year's winners on G Avenue and new nominees on Modelaire Drive and Ridge Road.

upon layers of lights. Following closely was 1511 T Ave., La Grande, for "visual stimulation in every direction," as reported in the press release.

The 2021 Santa's Choice Award for best house went to 70408 Valley View Road, Elgin.

Ronald Lee murder trial set for early January

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ronald Lee, an accused murderer, is heading to face a Union County Jury on Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022.

Lee was accused by the state of Oregon of killing his wife, Loretta Williams, in November 2018 at her home in Cove. The two were in the midst of a divorce.

The 73-year-old is facing charges for murder and conspiracy to commit murder while

being held without bond. Lee has pleaded not guilty to the charges. Co-defendant Steve Hamilton, of La Grande, is also being charged with murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Hamilton is being held at the Union County Correctional Facility.

Lee is represented by Craig Russell, of Russell Law Group, LLC.

The trial was previously delayed after Lee

suffered a stroke while in custody at the Union County Correctional Facility in January 2020. The trial was postponed when Lee was found to be unfit to assist in his own defense and sent to the Oregon State Hospital in Salem. Portland

psychiatrist Dr. Michael Saul Ferris found Lee to be a danger to himself and others after a mental evaluation in October 2020.



McDaniel

Lee was found fit to proceed in late June 2021 and the defense has since filed a slew of pre-trial motions. One of the motions was to exclude media from pre-trial hearings, which Union County District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel filed a motion to oppose.

A hearing is set for 9 a.m. Dec. 23 with Judge Thomas Powers residing in which all pre-trial motions will be heard. The 12-person jury trial is set to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 6.

NEWS BRIEFS

Volunteers sought for Union County committees

LA GRANDE — The Union County Board of Commissioners is accepting applications from qualified volunteers to serve on several Union County committees that now have openings.

Interested citizens are invited to submit a completed Advisory Committee Application, which are available at the Union County Administrative Office, 1106 K. Ave., La Grande.

Committee members are needed for the following advisory committees: Ambulance District, Health and Human Services, Mount Emily Recreation Area Motorized and Mount Emily Recreation Area Non-Motorized. Other committees seeking members are the Northeast Oregon Economic Development Board of Directors, the Wallowa-Union Railroad Authority and the Wolf Depredation Compensation Committee.

All appointments must be approved by a vote of the Union County Board of Commissioners.

Chamber offers ag business training

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County CowBells Farm and Ranch Business Training is being sponsored by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce in January, according to a press release.

The session will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 21, at the Tomas Conference Room, 309 S. River St. in Enterprise.

Cassi Johnson, of Pacific Inter-mountain Mortgage Co., will kick off the day with a QuickBooks training session. She will cover data

entry (such as entering checks and deposits), creating custom invoices and using the invoicing feature, setting up a chart of accounts, reports and customizing reports, using the payroll feature and more. Both QuickBooks Desktop and QuickBooks Online will be discussed.

The afternoon will feature a panel of local experts who have success in direct sales of their products. Learn about processing, storage, delivery and marketing challenges and how to overcome them.

Because this class is sponsored by the chamber, 50% of the class fee has been covered to help keep costs low. Cost of the class is \$50, with a \$3 transaction fee. Register at www.tickettailor.com/events/3barconsulting/625702#.

While this training will have a focus on the agricultural industry, anyone interested in learning more about QuickBooks and running a small business will benefit.

Enterprise eyes site by park for pump track

ENTERPRISE — The original preferred location proposed for a pump track site near the Enterprise City Park is now being seriously considered after members of the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club recently met with incoming Public Works Director Shawn Young.

But there are a couple of hitches, Young said, as the site is in a riparian area.

"We've got to get a hold of FEMA and see what the setbacks would be," he said.

Young said City Administrator Lacey McQuead has contacts with the Federal Emergency Manage-

ment Agency and would begin reaching out. Young said issues of fencing and public safety also must be addressed.

Young met with Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club President Angela Mart and Vice President Zeb Burke, who have proposed the pump track. A pump track is a looped sequence of rollers and berms (swoopy, banked turns) for bike riders. It's designed to maximize momentum, so the rider can ride with minimal pedaling, according to www.bicycling.com.

Another possible location under consideration was at the baseball fields near the Wallowa County Fairgrounds. He said Donnie Rynearson, a member of the Wallowa Valley Little League, sent a letter that, while approving of the concept of a pump track in town, opposed using baseball field land for it.

"When they hold tournaments, that's a very valuable space," Young said.

He said the league hopes to host a tournament in Enterprise next year and would be using the space for warmups and other activities.

Young said Mart and Burke were pleased that the site by the park could be selected, but they recognized the hoops that have to be jumped through.

"They understand we've got to go through FEMA," he said. "It's still a waiting game."

GRH selected as 2021 Health Quality Innovator of the Year

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics has been named a 2021 Health Quality

Near-record snow falls in Joseph

By RONALD BOND

Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — One of snowiest days on record in Joseph occurred last week, according to data from the National Weather Service's Pendleton office.

While totals of up to 2 feet of snow were reported in some areas around the town on Tuesday, Dec. 14, the NWS officially recorded 14 inches of snow. It marks not only the most snow ever recorded on Dec. 14, but the most anytime in December and ties for the second-highest one-day snowfall amount recorded in Joseph in at least 128 years, per data from the NWS.

Only one other day, according to NWS data, has seen more snowfall in Joseph. That was on Jan. 21, 1894, when a whopping 16 inches of snow was recorded.

Fourteen inches of snow also fell on March 12, 1906.

It also is the wettest December day on record in Joseph, with the 14 inches of snow translating to 1.04 inches of precipitation.

The previous snowfall record on Dec. 14 was more than 100 years ago, when 8 inches of snow fell on Dec. 14, 1915, according to NWS data. Only one other December day in Joseph has seen at least 10 inches of snowfall, when 10 inches came down on Dec. 22, 2002.

The last time at least 10 inches of snow fell in Joseph was more than a decade ago, when 12 inches came down on Jan. 28, 2008.

While it would likely take another large dumping of snow, December 2021 is also within striking distance of being the snowiest on record in Joseph. NWS data as of Monday, Dec. 20, had 20.3 inches of snow recorded in the town this month. The record for December is 32 inches in December 1916. The month is already well above the 30-year snowfall average of 8.2 inches.

Joseph snowfall records kept by the NWS date back to 1893, though the website does not have snowfall data for the town from about 1955 to 1995.

While near-record snow fell in Joseph, other areas of the county, even if heavily impacted, did not reach the snowfall level Joseph did. Readings taken just south of Flora showed 5 inches there on Dec. 14, while 4 inches fell just south of Lostine and 2.7 inches fell in Wallowa. Over two days, from Dec. 13-14, a total of 15.5 inches fell in Joseph, 11.5 inches in Flora, 5.5 inches in Lostine and 4.9 inches in Wallowa, according to maps.cocorahs.org.

Innovator of the Year.

The annual Health Quality Innovator Award program was created by HQI to recognize and celebrate organizations that are using successful, evidence-based approaches to quality improvement, according to a press release. This award recognizes rural health care facilities that have made outstanding contributions to improving the quality of rural health care services.

"We're incredibly humbled and proud to be recognized as a Health Quality Innovator of the Year," GRH President and CEO Jeremy Davis said. "While we did not implement these programs and processes to win awards, it is gratifying to know that the work we do here in Union County to serve our community is recognized at this level. This is an ongoing collaborative effort among an incredible team of people all working together to improve the overall health of our community."

Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics was selected as the winner in the Rural Health category for implementing strategies and processes to improve access to care and support better outcomes for patients and families, including employing additional primary care providers, pediatricians, a psychiatrist and behavioral health practitioners; implementing daily huddles involving the hospital and clinics; and transitioning three separate electronic medical record systems to a single system across the GRH care continuum. As a result, the hospital achieved low rates for readmissions of complex and chronic patients, as well as behavioral health patients.

— EO Media Group