

TODAY

In 1811, George, the Prince of Wales, was named Prince Regent due to the mental illness of his father, Britain's King George III.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, an act severely curtailing Asian immigration.

In 1918, during World War I, the Cunard liner SS Tuscania, which was transporting about 2,000 American troops to Europe, was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Irish Sea with the loss of more than 200 people.

In 1922, the first edition of Reader's Digest was published.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices; the proposal, which failed in Congress, drew accusations that Roosevelt was attempting to "pack" the nation's highest court.

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

In 1973, services were held at Arlington National Cemetery for U.S. Army Col. William B. Nolde, the last official American combat casualty before the Vietnam cease-fire took effect.

In 1983, former Nazi Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, expelled from Bolivia, was brought to Lyon, France, to stand trial. (He was convicted and sentenced to life in prison — he died in 1991.)

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, granting workers up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for family emergencies.

In 1994, white separatist Byron De La Beckwith was convicted in Jackson, Mississippi, of murdering civil rights leader Medgar Evers in 1963, and was immediately sentenced to life in prison. (Beckwith died Jan. 21, 2001, at age 80.)

In 2008, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a guru to the Beatles who introduced the West to transcendental meditation, died at his home in the Dutch town of Vlodingen; he was believed to be about 90.

In 2014, CVS Caremark announced it would pull cigarettes and other tobacco products from its stores.

Today's Birthdays:

Tony-winning playwright John Guare (gwayr) is 84. Financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 83. Actor David Selby is 81. Singer-songwriter Barrett Strong is 81. Football Hall of Famer Roger Staubach is 80. Movie director Michael Mann is 79. Rock singer Al Kooper is 78. Actor Charlotte Rampling is 76. Racing Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip is 75. Actor Barbara Hershey is 74. Actor Christopher Guest is 74. Actor Tom Wilkinson is 74. U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm is 63. Actor-comedian Tim Meadows is 61. Actor Jennifer Jason Leigh is 60. Actor Laura Linney is 58. Rock musician Duff McKagan (Velvet Revolver) is 58. World Golf Hall of Famer Jose Maria Olazabal is 56. Actor-comedian Chris Parnell is 55. Rock singer Chris Barron (Spin Doctors) is 54. Singer Bobby Brown is 53. Actor Michael Sheen is 53. Actor David Chisum is 52. Country singer Sara Evans is 51. Country singer Tyler Farr is 38. Actor-singer Darren Criss is 35. Actor Alex Brightman is 35. Actor Henry Golding is 35. Rock musician Kyle Simmons (Bastille) is 34. Actor Jeremy Sumpter is 33. Drummer Graham Sierota (Echosmith) is 23.

EOU food drive reaches out to community

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Students at Eastern Oregon University are doing their part to help hungry Oregonians.

The 2022 EOU Food Drive is underway, part of a larger statewide effort organized in collaboration with Community Connection of Northeast Oregon with the goal of raising 1,000 pounds of nonperishables for the Union County food bank.

“The goal of the food drive is to raise money for the food bank and to increase awareness about food insecurity experienced in Union County,” Kate Gekeler, director of the food drive, said. “EOU and CCNO have seen that when the university and food bank team up, the people who benefit range from students to families in our community, and even employees who are going through a rough patch. Food insecurity is much more common than we think, and working together to prevent people from going hungry is our goal.”

From 2009 to 2020, the Food Drive collected more than 160,000 pounds of



Eastern Oregon University/Contributed Photo

Students walk to class at Eastern Oregon University in this undated photo. The 2022 EOU Food Drive is underway in collaboration with Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, with the goal of raising 1,000 pounds of nonperishable food for the Union County food bank.

food. Currently, the drive has eight primary staff members and five student volunteers, with more partners and volunteers being brought in as the project progresses.

Recently, the drive has shifted toward preference for direct cash donations over food and perishables, though all types of donations are still accepted. The 2022 drive also marks the first year students have been asked to volunteer in donation collection, according to Alexa Jamison, president of the Associated Students of

Eastern Oregon University. The drive has several donation methods. Firstly, EOU staff can have a portion of their paychecks automatically deducted by submitting a form.

Student volunteers will collect both cash and food donations during the men's and women's basketball games on Saturday, Feb. 12. All donations can be exchanged for raffle tickets at \$1 per ticket. Students looking to volunteer are encouraged to donate at the games, volunteer to help collect raffle tickets and food, or encourage friends

and family members to donate.

Remote donation pickup can be arranged by contacting Gekeler at kegekeler@eou.edu or Haven from Hunger. Donation bins will be available for food and cash drop-off around campus. Volunteers will collect donations outside of local grocery stores including Grocery Outlet and Safeway.

The food drive runs until March 2. Students or community members wanting to volunteer can contact the ASEOU president at aspres@eou.edu.

County will assist with planning for trail project

Trail would run from Elgin to Lookingglass Creek area

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The planning process for a proposed trail for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding that would follow railroad tracks for up to 15 miles from Elgin to the Lookingglass Creek area received a boost from the Union County Board of Commissioners.

The board of commissioners voted unanimously on Wednesday, Feb. 2, to have members of Union County's staff assist with the planning process. The planning work will be funded by a state Transportation Management Grant of about \$130,000 the city of Elgin has been awarded.

Elgin and the Joseph

Branch Trail Consortium, which will be managing the planning work the grant will fund, sought the county's help with at least a small portion of the project.

Gregg Kleiner, project coordinator for the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium, said Elgin and the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium will hire an engineering firm to do much of the planning work for the trail, so “it will not be a heavy lift for the county.”

Kleiner said that a concept plan for the trail project has been in place for years. The planning work the grant will fund will identify any issues involving the trail, including any environmental impacts that might have to be addressed if a trail is built. For example, if it is found the trail would pass through wetlands, steps would have to be taken to avoid damaging them.

He emphasized that money from the Transpor-

tation Management Grant will be spent exclusively on planning.

“Absolutely none of the grant money will be spent on construction,” Kleiner said.

The board of commissioners also agreed to document the hours of service provided, because the hours of service can be counted as part of a 12% match Elgin must provide for the grant.

“We are really excited to have the county support the planning project,” Kleiner said.

The planning grant is funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation and the state's Department of Land Conservation and Development. It is one of two the city of Elgin has received for the trail project. The other grant, \$142,000 from the Oregon State Parks' Recreational Trails Program, will fund construction of the trailhead, which also will serve as a pocket park for the

city. The trailhead-pocket park will be on a parcel of city-owned land directly across from the train depot in downtown Elgin, Kleiner said.

In addition to trail information, the trailhead-pocket park would include an electric vehicle charging station, an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant parking place and interpretive signage about the area's earliest inhabitants and more recent history.

The grant also will fund construction of the inaugural 0.6 mile of the trail that will be an ADA-compliant path running out of town along the railroad tracks. This first portion would be part of a proposed 63-mile trail between Elgin and Joseph that would follow tracks owned by the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority.

“It will provide a wonderful way to access the natural world and enjoy nature,” Kleiner said.

LG school district's COVID-19 numbers decrease

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District's COVID-19 picture is brightening.

The school district's latest weekly statistics show that 130 students and 26 staff members missed school during the week of Jan. 26-28 because of positive COVID-19 tests, COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with those who have COVID-19.

The new student figures are down from the week

of Jan. 18-21 (a four-day week due to Martin Luther King Day) when 153 students were absent from school due to COVID-19, the highest since the start of the school year. The staff total was up by one. The week of Jan. 26-28 was a three-day school week, with conferences Jan. 24-25.

“We are coming down from our surge,” said La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza, adding that the La Grande School District's dropping COVID-19

rate coincides with falling rates across the state.

The school district's Jan. 26-28 statistics indicate that 16 staff members — seven from Island City Elementary School, three from La Grande Middle School, two each from Central and Greenwood elementary schools and one each from La Grande High School and the school district — were absent during the week due to positive COVID-19 tests.

The same set of statistics indicate that 47 students missed school because of

positive COVID-19 tests, a decline of 11 from the previous week, with 15 from La Grande High School, nine each from Central and Island City, and seven each from Greenwood and LMS.

A total of 57 students missed school Jan. 26-28 because of close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive, with 16 from Central, 13 from LMS, 14 from Greenwood, eight from LHS and six from Island City. Two staff members from LMS missed school due to close contact.

NEWS BRIEFS

Imbler School Board names finalists for district's superintendent position

IMBLER — The Imbler School Board has released the names of the two finalists for its superintendent position.

The finalists are Louise “Lou” Lyon, the superintendent of the Burnt River School District since 2018, and RanDel Waite, who has been assistant principal with the Phoenix-Talent School District since 2020.

The school board will conduct background and reference checks for the finalists over the next week. Each finalist will be invited for a “day in the district” on Thursday, Feb. 10. At that time, staff and members of the community will have an opportunity to meet the candidates. Staff and community meet and greet events will be held in the afternoon and evening of Feb. 10, the time and location to be announced soon. Comment

cards will be provided for participants to share thoughts with the school board after the event.

The school board is seeking a successor for interim school district superintendent Doug Hislop, who has served as interim superintendent since July after Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell resigned.

Union County tallies one death, 36 cases in latest OHA COVID-19 report

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority's daily COVID-19 report on Thursday, Feb. 3, revealed one new death and 36 cases in Union County. Wallowa County totaled 14 cases in the report.

An 85-year-old man from Union County tested positive Jan. 17 and died Jan. 28 at his residence. OHA reported that the presence of underlying conditions is still being confirmed.

The new cases increased Union County's case count to 4,726 since the start of the pandemic, while Wallowa County's total increased to 1,159. There have been 67 COVID-19 deaths reported in Union County.

Across the state, 5,417 new COVID-19 cases were reported by OHA — Oregon's total case count since the start of the pandemic stands at 649,389. OHA reported 18 new deaths, increasing the state's death toll to 6,181.

The report showed that there are 1,087 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Oregon, which is a decrease of 17 patients from yesterday's report.

Out of 632 adult ICU beds in Oregon, 57 are open. There are 250 available adult non-ICU beds out of 4,141 in the state.

Oregon's seven-day running average of vaccine doses per day is 9,396.

— EO Media Group

Garbage rates to rise in La Grande

City council OKs increase in waste fees, grants social gaming permit

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande City Council approved a rate increase for residential garbage collection and collection of recyclable materials at its meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 2.

Waste-Pro, the city's provider, said it will implement the 12% increase to reflect a new landfill rate that went into effect on Jan. 1 and to meet rising costs associated with the company's recycling program. The increase in rates went into effect for La Grande customers starting at the beginning of February, according to Waste-Pro.

Waste-Pro last requested a rate increase in 2018 and previously asked for a fuel cost escalator in 2008, which remains in the company's current resolution. Darin Larvik, operator of Waste-Pro, spoke at the meeting and explained challenges associated with collecting glass separately from other recyclable items.

Larvik and several councilors discussed the idea of adjusting rates and fees more gradually over a yearly basis rather than every few years moving forward. The Waste-Pro operator said that potential state funding could be on its way for recycling programs in rural communities.

The new business item was approved unanimously by the council.

Another item of new businesses was the consideration of approval for a social gaming permit in La Grande. Jacob Brown, owner of La Grande Poker Room at 211 Fir St., sought approval of the social gaming permit ahead of the business' opening on Feb. 4.

La Grande Police Chief Gary Bell presented the item of new businesses, with Brown in attendance at the virtual meeting. Bell stated that he conducted a background check on Brown and that the business owner paid a nonrefundable fee for three poker tables. The city has the authority to approve the permit in the first year of the business' operation, while the city's police chief will approve or deny the permit in the following years.

The space can host up to 27 total players at once, with nine playing per table. The council previously voted to change the city's resolution and approve a new social games bet limit last September.

Councilors Gary Lillard and David Glabe each voiced concern over the implementation of a social gaming space in La Grande.

“Having been a drug and alcohol counselor among other things in my past, I have concerns about gambling and the addiction problems that come with it,” Lillard said.

“I'm not fond of promoting that industry here in town,” Glabe said.

Brown conversed with the council, stating that the La Grande Poker Room will focus more on a social entertainment aspect opposed to strictly gambling. He noted that some of the business' dealers are addiction recovery specialists who know what to look for to avoid gambling addiction among customers.

“I've done everything that I can above board and by the books so that we can open a place that's reputable and I think would be a huge benefit to La Grande,” Brown said at the meeting.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022

Megabucks

2-12-16-19-24-30

Jackpot: \$1.2 million

Lucky Lines

1-5-11-13-20-24-27-30

Estimated jackpot: \$14,000

Powerball

18-29-33-62-63

Powerball: 15

Power Play: 3

Jackpot: \$137 million

Win for Life

8-9-25-26

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 2-7-2-7

4 p.m.: 8-9-8-3

7 p.m.: 8-2-1-9

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

Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022

Lucky Lines

4-8-12-14-17-21-25-31

Jackpot: \$15,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 2-8-5-6

4 p.m.: 9-3-7-1

7 p.m.: 1-9-0-3

10 p.m.: 0-0-8-3