

## TODAY

**In 1815**, the United States and Britain exchanged the instruments of ratification for the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812.

**In 1863**, the International Red Cross was founded in Geneva.

**In 1864**, during the Civil War, the Union ship USS Housatonic was rammed and sunk in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, by the Confederate hand-cranked submarine HL Hunley in the first naval attack of its kind; the Hunley also sank.

**In 1897**, the forerunner of the National PTA, the National Congress of Mothers, convened its first meeting in Washington.

**In 1944**, during World War II, U.S. forces invaded Eniwetok Atoll, encountering little initial resistance from Imperial Japanese troops. (The Americans secured the atoll less than a week later.)

**In 1959**, the United States launched Vanguard 2, a satellite that carried meteorological equipment.

**In 1964**, the Supreme Court, in *Wesberry v. Sanders*, ruled that congressional districts within each state had to be roughly equal in population.

**In 1972**, President Richard M. Nixon departed the White House with his wife, Pat, on a historic trip to China.

**In 1988**, Lt. Col. William Higgins, a Marine Corps officer serving with a United Nations truce monitoring group, was kidnapped in southern Lebanon by Iranian-backed terrorists (he was later slain by his captors).

**In 1995**, Colin Ferguson was convicted of six counts of murder in the December 1993 Long Island Rail Road shootings (he was later sentenced to a minimum of 200 years in prison).

**In 2014**, Jimmy Fallon made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

**In 2015**, Vice President Joe Biden opened a White House summit on countering extremism and radicalization, saying the United States needed to ensure that immigrants were fully included in the fabric of American society to prevent violent ideologies from taking root at home.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor-comedian Barry Humphries (aka "Dame Edna") is 88. Actor Christina Pickles is 87. Football Hall of Famer Jim Brown is 86. Actor Brenda Fricker is 77. Actor Becky Ann Baker is 69. Actor Rene Russo is 68. Actor Richard Karn is 66. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips is 60. Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is 59. Actor-comedian Larry, the Cable Guy is 59. TV personality Rene Syler is 59. Movie director Michael Bay is 58. Singer Chante Moore is 55. Rock musician Timothy J. Mahoney (311) is 52. Actor Dominic Purcell is 52. Olympic gold and silver medal skier Tommy Moe is 52. Actor Denise Richards is 51. Rock singer-musician Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) is 50. Rock musician Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters) is 50. Actor Jerry O'Connell is 48. Country singer Bryan White is 48. Actor Kelly Carlson is 46. Actor Ashton Holmes is 44. Actor Conrad Ricamora is 43. Actor Jason Ritter is 42. TV personality Paris Hilton is 41. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt is 41. TV host Daphne Oz is 36. Actor Chord Overstreet is 33. Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is 31. Actor Meaghan Martin is 30. Actor Sasha Pieterse is 26.

## LOTTERY

**Monday, Feb. 14, 2022**

**Megabucks**

3-15-22-24-26-35

Estimated jackpot: \$1.7 million

**Lucky Lines**

4-7-9-16-19-22-27-32

Estimated jackpot: \$26,000

**Win for Life**

32-55-68-72

**Pick 4**

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

4 p.m.: 8-1-2-0

7 p.m.: 0-1-8-4

10 p.m.: 9-2-0-1

**Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022**

**Mega Millions**

2-4-15-21-63

Mega Ball: 19

Megaplier: 3

Estimated jackpot: \$64 million

**Lucky Lines**

3-8-12-16-20-23-25-30

Estimated jackpot: \$27,000

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 8-2-0-9

4 p.m.: 7-8-0-4

7 p.m.: 2-7-9-6

10 p.m.: 8-0-8-7



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

**A Life Flight Network helicopter lands at Grande Ronde Hospital on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. The La Grande-based medical facility in February was named one of the top-100 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation by the Chartis Center for Rural Health for the second year in a row and the sixth time since 2011.**

# Grande Ronde Hospital is nationally recognized again

## Hospital among the top-100 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation

By **DICK MASON**

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital is in the national health spotlight again.

The La Grande-based medical facility has been named one of the top-100 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation by the Chartis Center for Rural Health for the second year in a row and the sixth time since 2011.

Only two other of Oregon's 25 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation made the 2022 list. There are only 1,353 CAHs in the nation, which places the hospital in the top 7.4% of performance when compared to peers across the country, according to a GRH press release.

The Chartis Center for Rural Health creates

its list of outstanding Critical Access Hospitals based on the results of the Hospital Strength INDEX, which uses a set of criteria to evaluate rural health care centers throughout the United States including hospitals.

GRH was also rated as a top-10 Critical Access Hospital in 2011, 2015, 2016 2017 and 2021.

Jeremy Davis, GRH's CEO and president since 2018, said the news of the hospital's high standing is encouraging in light of the challenges the hospital has faced because of COVID-19 over the past two years.

"We celebrate this encouraging news, as it comes at a time when our entire community needs some encouragement," he said. "While I am extremely proud of

this honor and what the achievement means for us as an organization, I have also realized that it feels much more personal this time. And I am humbled by it. We thought 2020 was tough, but 2021 has been an incredibly difficult year for all of us. To maintain the superior level of performance necessary to achieve this honor is a testament to the resolve, strength, courage and resiliency of our staff under severe pressure and hardship."

Michael Topchik, national leader of the Chartis Center for Rural Health, speaks highly of the job hospitals like GRH are doing.

"Despite unprecedented adversity rural providers continue to display resiliency and a steadfast commitment to their communities," he said.

Mike Barry, chief of the Imbler Rural Fire Department, said the

recognition is richly deserved.

"Grande Ronde Hospital is a critical link to emergency health care. Our job would be a lot harder without them," he said. "I am happy to have Grande Ronde Hospital here. I am glad that it is being recognized."

City of La Grande's manager Robert Strope echoed Barry's sentiments.

"When you receive that type of recognition, it is a testament to a tremendous staff," he said.

Strope praised the hospital for continuing to provide excellent health care in the face of challenges posed by COVID-19. He said the award should not come as a surprise to many people here.

"Anytime you are nationally recognized for excellence it affirms what people in the community already know," he said.

# COVID-19 cases continue to decline

## La Grande School District reports 60 missed school last week due to virus

By **DICK MASON**

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District's COVID-19 numbers continue to decline.

The school district's latest weekly statistics show that 60 students and three staff members missed school during the week of Feb. 7-11 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. 31-Feb. 4 when 71 students and three staff members were absent from school due to COVID-19. They

are down even more significantly from the week of Jan. 18-21 when 153 students missed school due to COVID-19.

The school district's Feb. 7-11 statistics indicate that two staff members — one each from Central and Island City elementary schools — were absent due to positive COVID-19 tests.

The same set of statistics indicate that 22 students missed school because of positive COVID-19 tests, a decline of eight from the previous week, with 12 from La Grande High School, five from Central, four from La Grande Middle School and one from Greenwood Elementary School.

A total of 40 students missed

school Feb. 7-11 because of close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive, with 11 from Greenwood, nine each from Central and Island City, eight from the high school and three from the middle school. One staff member, an individual who works at the high school, was out due to a close contact.

The La Grande School District's statistics for Feb. 7-11 also indicated that three students had close contacts but were able to stay in school under the state's test-to-stay program, because they tested negative for COVID-19 or because they were fully vaccinated. All three of the students were from Central. The total was down 17 from the week of Jan. 31-Feb. 4.

# Bike playground fundraising reaches halfway mark

By **BILL BRADSHAW**

Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — The supporters of the Wallowa Bicycle Playground project have about half of their funding committed and are working on a variety of fundraisers to acquire the rest, said chief proponent Ron Pickens.

"We've got a lot of great forward momentum," he said.

Pickens, a prevention coordinator at the alternative school with Building Healthy Families in Enterprise, spearheaded last year's project to refurbish the Enterprise Skate Park. Since then, he became interested in seeing a similar project built in Wallowa, where he lives.

The project is expected to accommodate bikes, scooters, roller blades and skateboards in a colorful space that kids can play in, Pickens said.

He approached the Wallowa City Council and received its support — and a donation of \$1,000 — Nov. 16, 2021.

The playground is planned for a site owned by the Wallowa School District and he has received approval from the district and support from the city.

The project is budgeted for about \$200,000, Pickens said. He is now working on several projects to raise money for the bike playground, most of which include raffles.

- Two bicycles have been donated by a local individual who purchased them in La Grande — a Trek 820 and a Precaliber 20. Raffle tickets for the bikes cost \$3 for one, \$5 for two or \$10 for four. The drawing for the bicycles will be held in April.

- A raffle for a plane ride to the Minam River Lodge for a breakfast for two goes for \$25 per ticket. That drawing will be May 4.

- A Traeger barbecue that was donated by Ace Hardware in Enterprise also is up for a raffle. Those raffle tickets cost \$3 for one, \$5 for two or \$10 for four. The drawing will be March 17.

- Sales of caps with "Wallowa

Bicycle Playground Project" and the project's logo emblazoned on it go for \$20. The logo was designed by students at Wallowa and at the alternative school and also will appear on sweatshirts and a sign at the park.

Pickens said the plan is to have students do the actual drawing in the raffles.

Donations to support the project or to purchase raffle tickets can be made by contacting Pickens at Building Healthy Families at 541-426-9411 or rpickens@oregonbhf.org.

Pickens said that beginning in early March, he plans to start working with youths in Wallowa on more fundraisers.

He said he hopes to see the end of the playground opened by the end of August.

"Our game plan is to continue to receive donations up until the park opens, but we hope to have all of it secured by mid-May," he said. "We've got great traction, but still we've got to make some headway."

# Imbler names new school superintendent

## Randy Waite signed two-year contract with the Imbler School District

By **DICK MASON**

The Observer

IMBLER — The immediate future of the Imbler School District is now in sharp, high-definition focus.

The Imbler School Board on Tuesday, Feb. 15, voted unanimously to approve the hiring of RanDel "Randy" Waite as its next superintendent. Waite, who has deep Northeastern Oregon roots, is completing his second year as assistant principal at Phoenix High School in Phoenix, 5 miles southeast of Medford.

"We are excited to have Randy join the district after an exhaustive search process," said Imbler School Board member Ken Patterson.

Waite was one of two finalists for the position along with Louise "Lou" Lyon, superintendent of the Burnt River School District in Baker County.

Patterson said the board had two strong finalists to choose from.

"If we had gone to our second pick we would have been in a good position too," he said.

Waite, who has signed a two-year contract with the Imbler School District, grew up in Pendleton and is an Eastern Oregon University graduate. He taught at La Grande High School for three years two decades ago.

He spoke with a sense of humility about his selection after the board's vote.

"It will be a challenge. I hope that I fit in," he said.

The educator said he has long wanted to work in the Imbler School District.

"It has a great reputation," he said.

Waite's experience as an educator also includes four years as a teacher at Weston-McEwen High School, nine years at Ontario High School, one year at Roseburg High School, four years at Ridgeway High School in Ridgeway, Idaho, and three years at Crater High School.

Waite has worked as an educator for 28 years, the first 22 years as a teacher and the past six as an administrator.

He has also been a head high school football coach for a total of 20 years. His gridiron experience includes two years as La Grande High School's head coach, in 2001 and 2002.

The educator, who will also serve as principal of Imbler Elementary School, said that coming to the Grande Ronde Valley will feel like a homecoming of sorts, especially because his parents live in Island City.

Working in education runs in Waite's blood. His wife, Traci, is a first grade teacher and his brother, Rob, is superintendent of the Shoshone School District in Shoshone, Idaho.

Waite will begin his new duties as Imbler superintendent and principal on Friday, July 1. He was named following a selection process that included a new twist — student-led tours of the high school and grade school.

The tours for the two finalists were conducted during a school day by the student body president and vice president of each school. The students gave input about the candidates to school board members following the tours.

"I thought they did a great job and it was fun for the kids," Waite said.

Waite will succeed interim school district superintendent Doug Hislop, who has served as interim superintendent since July 1, 2021, after Angie Lakey-Campbell resigned to take a position with the Hansen School District near Twin Falls, Idaho. Hislop previously served as the Imbler School District's superintendent for 10 years.



Waite