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INSIDE WEE BIT O'IRELAND RETURNS — IN **GO!**



OLCC bans Russian vodkas

Stirred by the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, OLCC bans Russian vodka from liquor store shelves

By **ALEX WITTWER**
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — The Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission banned the sale of Russian vodkas in all Oregon liquor stores on Monday, Feb. 28, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Independent operators of liquor stores were directed to take Russian vodkas off their shelves, aligning Oregon with other states that have acted to ban the sale of Russian-made products as a part of economic sanctions against Russian-operated businesses, according to a press release from the OLCC.

In Oregon, the OLCC effectively owns the supply of alcohol in the state, serving as a state-run monopoly for the industry.

“The state controls all the liquor that is in the store,” said Liberty O’Dell, manager at La Grande Liquor and Smoke Shoppe. “In fact, they are still the owners of the liquor. We’re beholden as agents of the state to follow their guidance. We don’t take steps ahead of the OLCC when they make guidance like that. It’s similar to a library in that we don’t actually own the product. The liquor is owned by the state.”

Customers in and out of the liquor store commented in passing about the banning of Russian vodka from store shelves. La Grande Liquor, however, had only two bottles of Russian-made vodka — Russian Standard Vodka — and O’Dell said it was “an item that doesn’t sell very well in the first place.”

Customers were understanding, according to O’Dell.

“I think everybody understands why we’re doing it,” he said. “The question we’ve been getting is ‘what’s Ukrainian vodka — and how do I get some?’ So my next order, that’s what I’ll be doing, is ordering some Ukrainian vodka.”

See, *Vodka*/Page A7



Grant Darrow, a retired chimney sweep and Cove resident, poses for a photo outside his home on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022. Darrow has been leading local efforts in the campaign to change the Oregon-Idaho border and allow Eastern Oregon to become part of Greater Idaho.

Photos by Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Cove resident Grant Darrow is articulating the frustrations many Eastern Oregonians feel

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

COVE — Grant Darrow is a man of letters. The Cove resident has penned so many letters to newspapers over the past four decades about pressing issues that he has lost count.

One stands out, however, with the grandeur of 12,662-foot Borah Peak in Central Idaho. It is a letter clipped from The Observer and kept in a black notebook. The letter is fading slightly, unlike the movement it helped ignite. Darrow, in his 391-word piece, published in The Observer on June 29, 2015, pushed for a sea change — the moving of Idaho’s border west so

See, *Border*/Page A7

SUPPORTING A MOVEMENT

“Getting people at the state level to talk about it is the next step. We need to get more dialogue, to get everybody talking about it. We have to get it out there.”

— Grant Darrow of Cove



Legislators push for money to train in the science of reading

Majority of Oregon’s 4th, 8th graders are not proficient in reading, national data shows

By **ALEX BAUMHARDT**
Oregon Capital Chronicle

SALEM — Nearly 3,000 teachers in Oregon schools serving students with the highest needs could soon get paid to learn more about the science of reading.

Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, D-Portland, is asking her colleagues in the Joint Ways and Means Committee of the legislature to allocate \$31 million of Ore-

gon’s federal COVID relief funds for schools, as well as money from the state’s Student Investment Account, to bring teachers up to date in how to teach reading.

A portion of the funding would also pay for tutoring that can get struggling students up to grade level in reading. Both the teacher training and student tutoring would be administered online by Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, and would be available to K-5 teachers



Levy Smith Smith Warner

and students in more than 60 school districts that have four-year graduation rates below 67% and that qualify for “targeted support

and improvement” under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

“We know that kids are further behind than ever in their learning,” Smith Warner said. “This just feels like such a smart, focused thing that we can do. Not only are you teaching teachers how to teach reading better, but it will always be with them no matter what school they go to.”

Smith Warner has the support of several colleagues, including Reps. Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, and

See, *Reading*/Page A7

INDEX

- Business.....B1
- Dear Abby....B6
- Comics.....B2
- Horoscope....B4
- Lottery.....A2
- Obituaries....A5
- Opinion.....A4
- Spiritual.....A6
- Sports.....A9
- Sudoku.....B5

WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 32 LOW Snow late, 1-2"

Friday 44/33 Partly sunny

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