

TODAY

In 1616 (Old Style calendar), English poet and dramatist William Shakespeare died in Stratford-upon-Avon on what has traditionally been regarded as the 52nd anniversary of his birth in 1564.

In 1898, Spain declared war on the United States, which responded in kind two days later.

In 1940, about 200 people died in the Rhythm Night Club Fire in Natchez, Mississippi.

In 1954, Hank Aaron of the Milwaukee Braves hit the first of his 755 major-league home runs in a game against the St. Louis Cardinals. (The Braves won, 7-5.)

In 1969, Sirhan Sirhan was sentenced to death for assassinating New York Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. (The sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment.)

In 1971, hundreds of Vietnam War veterans opposed to the conflict protested by tossing their medals and ribbons over a wire fence in front of the U.S. Capitol.

In 1988, a federal ban on smoking during domestic airline flights of two hours or less went into effect.

In 1992, McDonald's opened its first fast-food restaurant in the Chinese capital of Beijing.

In 1993, labor leader Cesar Chavez died in San Luis, Arizona, at age 66.

In 1998, James Earl Ray, who confessed to assassinating the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and then insisted he'd been framed, died at a Nashville, Tennessee, hospital at age 70.

In 2005, the recently created video-sharing website YouTube uploaded its first clip, "Me at the Zoo," which showed YouTube co-founder Jawed Karim standing in front of an elephant enclosure at the San Diego Zoo.

In 2007, Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first freely elected president, died in Moscow at age 76.

In 2020, at a White House briefing, President Donald Trump noted that researchers were looking at the effects of disinfectants on the coronavirus, and wondered aloud whether they could be injected into people.

Ten years ago: Actor-singer Jennifer Hudson broke down in tears while testifying at the Chicago trial of William Balfour, the man accused of killing her mother, brother and 7-year-old nephew in a jealous rage in 2008. (Balfour was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.)

Five years ago: Centrist Emmanuel Macron and far-right populist Marine Le Pen advanced to a May runoff in France's presidential election (Macron ended up defeating Le Pen).

One year ago: U.S. health officials lifted an 11-day pause on COVID-19 vaccinations using Johnson & Johnson's single-dose shot, after scientific advisers decided its benefits outweighed a rare risk of blood clot.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alan Oppenheimer is 92. Actor David Birney is 83. Actor Lee Majors is 83. Actor Blair Brown is 75. Actor Joyce DeWitt is 73. Actor James Russo is 69. Filmmaker-author Michael Moore is 68. Actor Judy Davis is 67. Actor Valerie Bertinelli is 62. Actor Craig Sheffer is 62. Actor-comedian-talk show host George Lopez is 61. U.S. Olympic gold medal skier Donna Weinbrecht is 57. Rock musician Stan Frazier (Sugar Ray) is 54. Actor Barry Watson is 48. Professional wrestler/actor John Cena is 45. Actor-writer-comedian John Oliver is 45. Actor Kal Penn is 45. Retired MLB All-Star Andrew Jones is 45. Actor Jaime King is 43. Pop singer Taio (TY'-oh) Cruz is 39. Rock musician Anthony LaMarca (The War on Drugs) is 35. Singer-songwriter John Fullbright is 34. Actor Dev Patel is 32. Actor Matthew Underwood is 32. Model Gigi Hadid is 27. Actor Charlie Rowe (TV: "Salvation") is 26. Retired tennis player Ashleigh Barty is 26. U.S. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Chloe Kim is 22.

LOTTERY

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Megabucks
19-20-26-33-42-47
Jackpot: \$4.4 million

Lucky Lines
2-6-11-16-19-23-28-32
Estimated jackpot: \$31,000

Powerball
20-30-45-55-56
Powerball: 14
Power Play: x2
Jackpot: \$370 million

Win for Life
3-25-41-44

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 2-0-8-3
4 p.m.: 7-2-1-8
7 p.m.: 8-4-9-3
10 p.m.: 4-3-1-4

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Lucky Lines
1-5-11-15-19-23-26-29
Jackpot: \$32,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 5-1-7-7
4 p.m.: 4-2-7-8
7 p.m.: 1-2-2-2
10 p.m.: 9-8-6-8

NAPA construction underway

New automotive store on Island Avenue to include added space and favorable location

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Construction work on a new local structure is underway, which will move a long-tenured auto shop from downtown La Grande to Island Avenue.

NAPA Auto Parts of La Grande is set to move to its new location, pending the completion of the new building at the corner of Island Avenue and 26th Street. The project is expected to be completed in the fall, with the new structure providing added space and a more accessible location.

"We're currently working on an entirely new building that will be about 11,500 square feet for a NAPA Auto Parts store," HC Company Project Manager Jesse Roberto said.

The former Eagle Truck Company building used to stand on the plot of land, next to Banner Bank and just past the Interstate 84 exit on Island Avenue, where the new NAPA Auto Parts building will be. The



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Crew members for HC Company Inc. operate heavy machinery at the site of the new NAPA Auto Parts store on Island Avenue on Thursday, April 21, 2022. The new location is set to include a second story for added space and a more accessible location on Island Avenue.

HC Company crew is currently on site and working on the new building's foundation.

According to Roberto, the work will include pre-engineered metal building — the crews will also be adding to the foundation with concrete masonry units.

The current NAPA Auto Parts, at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Chestnut Street, has resided in downtown La Grande for more than 10 years.

The new building will provide added space, a feature that manager Jerry Baker said will be a slight difference from the current

location.

Roberto stated that the plans include a second-floor mezzanine, and the new building will also have restrooms and a utility room.

Baker said location and accessibility played a big role in moving NAPA Auto Parts onto Island Avenue.

He noted that some customers had difficulty finding the store on Jefferson, a block off the main Adams Avenue shopping area in downtown La Grande. Upon completion of the construction work, the new store will have increased visibility for locals as well as pass-

ersby on the busy Island City strip.

While the new building is under construction, the current NAPA Auto Parts store will continue operations as usual.

Baker added that the transition should be mostly seamless, with the new store being stocked before its opening while the crew moves the current merchandise from the old location.

Roberto noted that HC Company Inc. has a long history with the auto part company, estimating that the general contractors have constructed roughly seven NAPA Auto Parts buildings in the past.

Commissioners award COVID-relief grants

70 small Union County businesses to receive latest round of funding

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Seventy small businesses in Union County hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic are set to receive a boost.

The Union County Board of Commissioners voted Wednesday, April 20, to approve a plan for distributing \$500,000 in funds to 70 small businesses in the county harmed by COVID-19. The money to be paid to the businesses will come from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund.

The businesses were selected on the basis of criteria and a scoring matrix approved by the board of commissioners during its March meeting.

The county received a total of 73 applications, and only three did not meet all of the requirements. One business did not meet the requirement of having to have at least 51% of its operations in Union County, another applied too late and a third was ineligible because it was behind in its tax payments, according to Shelley Burgess, Union County's administrative officer.

Of the 70 awarded grants, 19 are in the food and beverage industries; 12 are personal services businesses; 10 are gyms or health and fitness businesses; nine are building

and construction services; five are lodging and venues firms; and 15 are businesses that fall outside of these categories.

Food and beverage businesses will receive \$151,698.24; personal services firms will receive \$80,169.87; gyms, health and fitness firms will be provided \$74,683.48; building and construction services will receive \$55,467.03; lodging and venues will receive \$39,455.93; and the 15 businesses qualifying for grants but falling outside these categories will be paid a total of \$98,525.45.

Applicants who qualified were eligible to receive grants of up to \$10,000. Eligible businesses included those that could demonstrate a one-month decline in sales of 25% or

more, incurred during the pandemic between Dec. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2021, as compared to the same time period in 2019.

Only businesses that employ 30 or fewer employees were eligible for the grants.

Of the 70 eligible businesses, 46 received funding through a similar 2020 COVID-19 relief grant program, and 24 are new recipients, according to Union County records.

The Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds program, a part of the American Rescue Plan, is delivering \$350 billion to state, local and Tribal governments across the country to boost recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Department of the U.S. Treasury website.

Sewer rehabilitation project ongoing in La Grande

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — What may appear to be large smoke clouds in La Grande are actually part of a routine public works project.

The La Grande sewer rehabilitation project is currently underway in La Grande, with crew members from Planned and Engineered Construction Inc., of Helena, Montana, working to replace dated sewer lines across the city. The use of a minimal-impact procedure to add new sewer line pipes across La Grande will limit traffic blockage and avoid digging out entire roadways.

"Most of the projects are all on residential streets, so they usually shut them

down briefly and do about three a day," La Grande Public Works Director Kyle Carpenter said. "They won't be in one spot for more than about four hours at the most before moving on."

The project is in its opening stages and comes in the wake of a video surveillance analysis of the conditions of the existing pipes.

Instead of a more costly method of ripping out the former pipes and causing traffic backups, the crew at PEC uses a minimal-impact system to add new sewer lines. A vinyl "sock" is dropped into the lines that is then infused with an epoxy resin — steam is then pumped into the pipes from one manhole to the next to secure the new pipe in place.

"That's what cures the epoxy up against the existing pipe to create the new hard-formed pipe on the inside," Carpenter said.

Ensuing clouds of steam are a result of this process, with the crew moving around from different access points across the town.

PEC has previously worked with the city, conducting sewer line projects in about five recent contracts. Carpenter noted that the work will likely be completed in the coming weeks.

The project will have a minimal to nonexistent impact on most surrounding buildings.

"It will have very little impact," Carpenter said. Carpenter noted that most residential buildings

will be mostly unaffected, while some businesses attached to the sewer lines in play could cause a slight schedule change for the PEC crew — maintenance work may exceed the end of the work day, in order to not interrupt a potential larger flow of sewage from a commercial building.

Crews from PEC have attached flyers to certain residences, encouraging residents to avoid high usage such as multiple cycles of laundry or excessive use of toilets and sinks.

In instances of higher volume apartment buildings, PEC is requesting residents avoid sewer usage all together during allotted periods of time while the sewage work is ongoing.

NEWS BRIEFS

Wallowa-Whitman forest personal-use firewood permits available May 1

LA GRANDE — Starting this May, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will begin offering free personal-use firewood permits.

The permits are limited to 10 cords per household, per year. Interested individuals can acquire permits free of charge at local Forest Service Offices and at local vendors. When acquiring the permits from local businesses, a \$2 processing fee per transaction may be charged.

Locally, firewood permits can be acquired at the district offices in La Grande, Baker City and Joseph. The permits are valid from Sunday, May 1, through Nov. 30. Early fall snowpack and fire danger in the summer can impact the accessibility of firewood permits and wood availability.

Commercial-use firewood permits are available at the regular price of \$10 per cord, with a minimum two-cord permit.

The Forest Service recommends checking fire closure areas before collecting firewood. Information on indus-

trial fire precaution levels and public use restrictions can be found on the Wallowa-Whitman website, www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman, or by calling 541-523-1234.

OTEC warns customers of scam calls

BAKER CITY — The Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is warning its member-owners about an increase in scam calls.

The electric co-op says it has received numerous reports from members in Grant County saying they have received calls from a person claiming to be an OTEC representative and threatening to cut off electricity unless payment is made immediately.

OTEC officials say this is a scam. They say the co-op will never demand immediate payment over the phone.

Anyone who receives a call of this type is advised to hang up immediately and call OTEC at 541-523-3616 to report the incident.

—EO Media Group

Wallowa officials discuss fairgrounds, moraine plan

By BILL BRADSHAW

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Several updates and routine items were addressed Wednesday, April 20, by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners during its regular meeting.

Commissioner Todd Nash discussed a meeting that had been held the previous evening to solicit public input on how to spend money available to upgrade the Wallowa County Fairgrounds.

He said the primary topic of discussion was how best to spend \$1.27 million available for various projects being considered.

The list of projects includes the indoor arena/show barn roof, the food booth, replacing the ventilation system in the kitchen, remodeling restrooms for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, grounds irrigation, the outdoor arena, new implements for the tractor, a drainage system for the swine barn, support replacement in the beef barn, enclose the maintenance shop under the grandstands, upgrade the Quonset building and its restrooms for ADA compliance.

Also on the list are projects at the Cloverleaf Hall, part of which will be paid with a \$200,000 grant donated by Wallowa Memorial Hospital. Those projects include updating the heat pump system, remodeling restrooms for ADA compliance, a generator to use during power outages and movable room dividers.

No decisions were made on projects, either at the public meeting or during the April 20 meeting, but the commissioners got some valuable input so they can "make better decisions," Nash said.

East Moraine

The commissioners also briefly discussed the ongoing development of a management plan for the East Moraine.

Commission Chair Susan Roberts said a sticking point has been the presence of vehicles on the property.

"We've had quite a struggle getting that done for the East Moraine on vehicular use," she said.

The moraine, a parcel of land of roughly 1,800 acres, was purchased and moved to county ownership in January 2020. A draft management plan has since been worked on by the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership — made up of Wallowa County, the Wallowa Land Trust, Wallowa Resources, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Nez Perce Tribe's cultural and forestry divisions, as well as community members.

A meeting was held Tuesday, April 19, to take public input, but the partnership still has work to do. Roberts said a manager has been hired for the moraine, but the plan has yet to be finalized. She said it must be completed by the end of June — "or sooner, if possible."

"We've had discussions on what we want to allow up there," Roberts said. "It's gone everywhere from some people don't want dogs at all and some people are OK with dogs as long as they're on a leash and other people have other issues. Some people want to have an area for mountain bikes and others don't want mountain bikes at all. Some people didn't even want walkers because it should be left pristine for the wildlife."