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INSIDE



EXPLORE OREGON'S REVITALIZED THEATERS IN **GO!**

MAY 17 PRIMARY ELECTION

Hill to challenge Anderes for commission seat

Paul Anderes wants to finish projects delayed by COVID-19

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Paul Anderes has found his first term as a Union County Commissioner to be fulfilling. “I absolutely love it. I love being an advocate for the county,” Anderes said.



Anderes

Still, he feels a bit frustrated. He explained that a number of projects he began have not been completed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He cites this as a big reason he is seeking reelection.

“Some of my projects were delayed by COVID-19. I want to finish what I started,” said Anderes, who lives in La Grande.

See, **Anderes**/Page A7

Lisa Hill believes there is a need for community members to lead

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Lisa Hill believes she has a good firsthand understanding of the challenges local business owners face, a grasp, she said, that would serve her well if elected to a position on the Union County Board of Commissioners.



Hill

Hill has owned and operated a commercial office building in La Grande since 1994, one with five tenants who are all women entrepreneurs in the health care field. She credits this experience with giving her an understanding of the challenges faced by local property and business owners. Hill is eager to put what she has learned from this

See, **Hill**/Page A7

Wyden: Housing needs linger in Oregon

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden said the lack of affordable housing and homelessness continue to be issues that linger in all corners of the state.

“There’s not a nook or cranny in the state from Portland to the valley or throughout the rural part of the state where people aren’t asking about housing,”



Wyden

Wyden said during a Wednesday, April 20, town hall for Union County residents.

Following the town hall, Wyden further discussed several elements of current plans for lower-income residents in need of housing and how the plans can be expanded to assist middle-income families and first-time home buyers as well.

Wyden detailed the expansion of low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC), legislation that opens doors for low- and moderate-income tenants to acquire affordable rental units. With the rental burden affecting various income levels, he

See, **Wyden**/Page A7

SHIFTING GEARS



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Union County’s law enforcement building, La Grande, shown on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, houses the La Grande Police Department, the Union County Sheriff’s Office and the Union County Jail.

Design firm may be brought in to evaluate La Grande public safety building, determine if it can be expanded

By **DICK MASON** • The Observer

LA GRANDE — The drive for a new public safety building in Union County is shifting into neutral.

Union County Sheriff Cody Bowen, the leader of an effort to get a new public safety building constructed to reduce overcrowding and address building main-



Bowen

tenance issues in the current structure, said he wants to reevaluate and see if other options should be considered.

“I am pulling back,” Bowen said. The sheriff had earlier proposed hiring a design firm to develop a conceptual plan for a new public safety building. The Union County Board of Commissioners gave Bowen the green light last August for moving forward with that plan.

Bowen’s proposal encompassed a public safety center that would house the Union County Sheriff’s Office, La Grande Police Department, Union County Jail, Union County Parole and Probation and a



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

The sign outside Union County’s law enforcement building at the corner of K Avenue and Sixth Street, La Grande, on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, points out the structure’s many uses.

center where people experiencing mental health issues could be helped.

This plan is now at least temporarily off the table. Bowen said he believes it is not a good time to pursue constructing a new building because of the fragile status of the economy, which is being rocked by inflation.

Instead, Bowen, in his second year as sheriff, wants to take a closer look at the current public safety building and see if steps could be taken to address issues like overcrowding and deteriorating conditions by renovating or making additions

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight 37 LOW
Rain and drizzle

Friday 56/38
Warmer

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