

# THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

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Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

VFW Post 4060 Commander Larry Forrest observes mementos hung on the wall of the VFW Post 4060 dining room on North Main Street in Union on Friday, April 29, 2022. The members of Post 4060 are working to set up a service group to provide support to veterans not eligible for organizations such as the VFW and to civilian first responders.

## NEW FOCUS

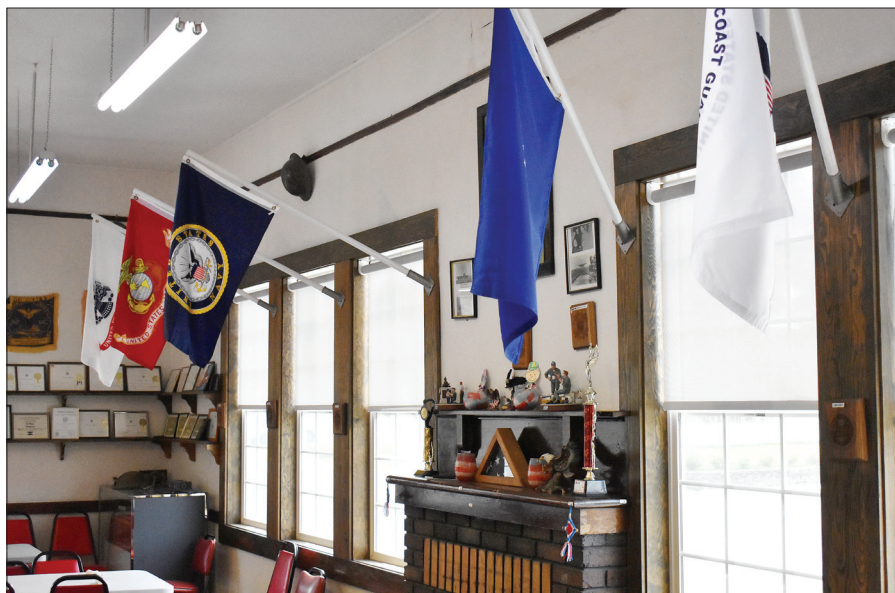
VFW jump-starting member-run group open to first responders and all veterans

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

**U**NION — The Veterans of Foreign War High Valley Post 4060 is looking to get a new service group up and running for local first responders and veterans.

The new group will be open to all first responders, including military, firefighters, law enforcement and emergency medical technicians. The group will be managed by its members, opening the doors for assistance and camaraderie among all those who serve or have served their countries and their communities, military and civilian.

"We've got some veterans in the Union and Cove area that would like to join the VFW, but because they didn't serve in a conflict they're not eligible," said Ken McCormack, a member of the VFW Post 4060, based in Union. "We decided to start a new group that



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Flags representing the branches of the United States military are displayed in the dining room of Union's VFW Post 4060 on Friday, April 29, 2022. The organization is helping jump-start a new group open to first responders and military members who did not serve in foreign wars.

would be like the VFW or American Legion, but is made up of all the first responders."

The new group will allow for first responders to take part in a group very similar to the VFW and American Legion, while military members are also encouraged to join. Members or former members of the military who

did not serve in conflict are also eligible to join the group.

According to McCormack, the members of VFW Post 4060 are working to assist in the organizing of the new group, and the first responders group is currently utilizing the VFW

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## Debate set for county commissioner candidates to talk issues

Paul Anderes, Lisa Hill to participate in event hosted by EOU debate team May 6

By ANDREW CUTLER  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The two candidates for Position 1 on the Union County Board of Commissioners on Friday, May 6, will debate issues affecting the county.

The event, hosted and moderated by the Eastern Oregon University debate team, is scheduled for 6 p.m. at Huber Auditorium on the EOU campus.

"We thought we could help serve the community by giving them an opportunity to really meet the candidates for commissioner," said Isaac Insko, a freshman at Eastern and one of three moderators for the debate.

Insko said the EOU students saw an opportunity to host a debate because none had been scheduled in the county.

"We have a group of students who are really interested in politics and debates, and we thought, why not reach out to the candidates, see if they'd be interested in attending a debate, and it just went down the line of getting everything scheduled," he said.

The moderators — Insko, Calvin Bennett and Abby Whitnah, both EOU sophomores — plan to ask incumbent Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes and challenger Lisa Hill questions about issues that are important to county residents.

"We're still developing new questions every day," Insko said.

The debate will be separated into three rounds, with the first and third rounds focusing on basic questions for the candidates. Anderes and Hill will have an opportunity to respond to their opponent's responses and rebuttals. The second round will be questions submitted from the candidates, a "question they would like their opponent to be asked," Insko said, adding that Hill and Anderes will not know the questions ahead of time.

"It's a true debate," Insko said. "The moderator will give the candidates an

**IF YOU GO**

**What:** Union County Board of Commissioners debate

**Where:** Huber Auditorium, Eastern Oregon University campus, La Grande

**When:** 6 p.m., Friday, May 6

**Online:** The debate will be streamed by EO Alive TV.

**Of note:** The debate will feature the two candidates — Paul Anderes and Lisa Hill — for Position 1. The debate will be moderated by members of the EOU debate team — Isaac Insko, Calvin Bennett and Abby Whitnah.

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## Guentert takes over as CCNO executive director

Former Wallowa County manager for the agency takes over for longtime leader Margaret Davidson

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

LA GRANDE — Connie Guentert knows she has big shoes to fill as the new executive director of Community Connection of Northeast Oregon.

Thankfully, the outgoing director, Margaret Davidson, has been right alongside Guentert as she

makes the transition into the lead role in the organization, a move that became official May 1.

"Margaret has just been a fantastic leader and teacher," Guentert said. "To be able to follow in those large shoes is a challenge, but also the foundation of having her for all this time, she's imbued in me those same values and

goals that we strive for in our agency."

Guentert has been a part of Community Connection for 15 years, the last eight as the county manager in Wallowa County.

"Matter of fact, it's like eight years exactly. May 1 eight years ago I took over as county manager, eight years later, the new executive director," she said.

Guentert said she has been "inspired" by Davidson and repeatedly

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Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Connie Guentert, then the manager of Community Connection in Wallowa County, addresses the county's Rotary Club in November 2019. On May 1, 2022, Guentert became the new executive director of Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, which has its headquarters in La Grande.



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**WEATHER** Full forecast on the back of B section

	<b>Tonight</b> 36 LOW Partly cloudy		<b>Wednesday</b> 71/50 Warmer
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**CONTACT US**

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La Grande, Oregon  
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