

OPIOIDS

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the significant uptick in overdoses locally may reflect Oregon's legislation regarding the decriminalization of drugs.

The Center for Human Development, La Grande, released a statement in November 2021 warning of alarming trends in local substance abuse. In April 2022, the Union County Safe Communities Coalition organized a community town hall at La Grande High School, which included Bell, Deputy David Gomez of the Boise County Sheriff's Office, Dale McQueeney of CHD and Dr. Stephen McIlmoil of Grande Ronde Hospital. The gathering focused on raising awareness in the community about the increasing prevalence of drug abuse.



Jay Devin, right, organizer of the Shine a Light prayer group, listens as pastor Keith Hudson speaks at an opioid addiction vigil in Max Square, La Grande, on Saturday, March 5, 2022.

McIlmoil, an emergency medicine specialist, spoke from the perspective of the ER, noting how increased drug overdoses related to fentanyl have become a

driving trend. He stated that such patients entering the emergency room often appear blue in color or close to death. "It's a real problem and

people need to know about it," McIlmoil said during the town hall.

La Grande Police Department Lieutenant Jason Hays spoke about nal-

oxone — a medication that blocks the effects of opioids (such as heroin, morphine, fentanyl, etc.) — that can be used to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. He noted that in many interactions with substance abuse addicts in Union County, the use of naloxone, also known as Narcan, to save a life during an overdose does not result in changed behavior. Instead, the police department has noted more individuals who use the treatment as a fallback.

"More people are overdosing and pushing the limits on their abuse because they know they can be brought back," Hays said.

Spreading the word

According to CHD, the local health center is seeing a shift from accidental overdoses due to fentanyl — a much more potent drug that can be

consumed in what appears to be a very small quantity, so users don't always know how much they are taking — to individuals seeking out the synthetic opioid. The center is pushing community awareness and updating its Narcan giveaway events and education on how to spot an overdose. Bell stated that substance abuse has been a slow-climbing issue for years locally, sparked in recent years. As local entities grapple with the impacts on the community, the emphasis shifts toward raising awareness and providing necessary resources.

"That's really been the approach we've been taking, just trying to communicate with everybody in the community as much as we can so that there's awareness," Bell said. "The idea is to get the information out as wide as we can."

GIVING

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trip, which is open to all current OHSU students as well as recent alumni. As of Friday, May 13, the group has raised nearly \$34,000 of the funds necessary for the entire trip, which will cost around \$50,000.

"The students do their own fundraising and organized that process entirely on their own," OHSU Diversity Coordinator Beckie Juarez said.

In addition to fundraising for travel costs, the group was required to raise roughly \$1,000 worth of supplies to hand out during their time in Honduras — the items include hygiene packs and travel-size toiletries. Upon arriving in Honduras, the group will be led by Global Brigades organizers to pinpoint projects in areas of need.

"It's going to be very structured. They have pretty much every hour of the day planned for us," said Norton, who has been sharpening up on Spanish language speaking skills and watching preparatory videos as she readies for the trip.

Kennedy noted that the trip is an opportunity to apply her studies in a real-world setting. Hearing stories from previous students who participated in international service trips inspired her to take part in a similar experience.

"I have gained skills working through the health care field within the last six years that I think would be really beneficial in an area like Honduras," Kennedy said.

Juarez noted that a local group of OHSU previously planned a service trip to Thailand, but the pandemic put a halt on those plans and the possibility of other service trips.

"I know students were disappointed about that, then COVID hit and took away those opportunities altogether," Juarez said. "This is the first international trip students here have been able to take since then."

May 17 fundraising dinner

With the group set to leave for Honduras on Saturday, June 18, the La Grande brigade is continuing its fundraising efforts to meet its quotas. The group is hosting a fundraising dinner at Tap That Growlers on Tuesday, May 17, from 4-9 p.m.

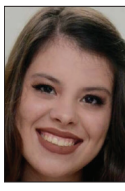
Tickets are \$15 for ages 13 and older, \$7 for ages 12 and younger, and will provide a meal including a hamburger or hot dog, macaroni salad, chips, cookie and a drink sample. To purchase tickets, email globalbrigades-lagrande@gmail.com.



Oregon Health and Science University student Brianna Humeston, left, on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, drops off a meal to donors Dale and Carol Lauritzen during a meal-delivery fundraising event for a group of La Grande nursing students embarking on a service trip to Honduras this summer.



Kennedy



Vieira De Melo



Williams

Jessica Norton/Contributed Photo

Ernest "Ernie" Trimble

April 11, 1953 – May 1, 2022

Ernest "Ernie" Trimble, 69, passed away of natural causes on Sunday, May 1, 2022, at his home in La Grande, Oregon. There will be a small celebration of his life in La Grande for friends and family at a later date.

Ernie was born on April 11, 1953, in Pasco, Washington, to Jack and Lois (Fletcher) Trimble. Soon after graduating high school, he married his one true love, Carolyn (Cyr) Trimble, and together they had three children. Ernie loved the outdoors. Throughout his life he had many hobbies, including boating, fishing and camping, and also loved to build, fix and tinker with computers and electronics.

Ernie is survived by his children, Jeff Trimble, Matthew Trimble and Katie Crampton; sisters, Linda Grittner, Robbie Strand and Kathleen Patterson; and brother, Jack Trimble. He was preceded in death by his wife, Carolyn Trimble, and his parents, Jack and Lois Trimble.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.



Katherine "Kathy" L. (Trump) Southwick

June 19, 1949 – May 6, 2022

Katherine "Kathy" Louise Southwick, 72, of Elgin, passed away on Friday, May 6, 2022, at a care facility in Hermiston, Oregon. A private graveside service will be held. Friends are welcome to visit her gravesite at the Elgin Cemetery after May 16, 2022.

Kathy was born on June 19, 1949, in La Grande, Oregon, to Lloyd and Neva (Rysdam) Trump. She was raised in Elgin and graduated from Elgin High School. She married her one true love, Mike Southwick.

Kathy was employed with US Bank until retirement. She enjoyed camping, riding, ATVs, crocheting and knitting, trips to the Coast, spending time with family and tending to her flowers. She was a member of the Women's Service club.

Kathy is survived by her husband, Mike; children, Michelle Gerber (Don) of Irrigon, Oregon, Krista Silver (Jon) of The Dalles, Oregon, and Pattie Wallace of Hermiston, Oregon; brother, James Trump (Donna) of Elgin, Oregon; six grandchildren, Justin Gerber, Jo Silver, Jade Silver, Rosemary Silver, Cyle Miller and Cody Miller; two great-grandchildren, Selma Miller and Sutton Miller; and two nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd and Neva Trump; sister, Sally Trump; and nephew, Todd Trump.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.

DROUGHT

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the moisture content at the root level of plants.

"The surface level is good but the root zone is not," Vora said.

The emergency manager said the precipitation Union County received in April was 1.5 inches over the county's average for that month.

"It was the 10th wettest April on record," Vora said, "but we still have drought conditions."

Vora also said the Grande Ronde River in Union County, thanks to the wet April, is at a level about average for this time of year. Still Union County is having one of the driest years, when compared to the past 128 years of local recorded precipitation data.

Wet and cool conditions are forecast for much of the rest of May, but after this conditions are projected to be drier and hotter than normal.

"The long-term outlook is for drought to persist or worsen in Union County through the summer," Vora said.

The last time before 2021 that the Union County Board of Commissioners declared a drought emergency was in 2015.

Vora said all of Union County is impacted by the current drought. About 28% of the county is in moderate drought, 66% is in severe drought and 6% is in extreme drought.

Union County is one of 16 counties in the state that have declared drought emergencies this year, according to the Oregon Water Resources Department's website. The others are Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Malheur, Morrow, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Harney, Jackson, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Douglas and Wheeler counties.

Donna Beverage, chair of the Union County Board of Commissioners, has written a letter to Gov. Kate Brown from the

board asking her to declare a drought emergency in Union County. Such a declaration from the state would put Union County in a better position to receive grants to assist those impacted by the drought.

The governor has declared drought emergencies for Grant, Morrow, Malheur, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Harney, Jackson, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake counties this year, according to the Oregon Water Resources Department.

Beverage told Brown in her letter that the full impact of the ongoing drought in Union County will not be known for some time.

"The full scope of drought effects won't be known for several months, but we anticipate significant impacts to crop and livestock production," Beverage wrote in the letter. "With this year being the second consecutive year of drought, we may begin to see impacts to water tables and forest health as well."

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