

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

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Group hosts Lane Co. in ranch tour

Stockgrowers event brought diverse ranch communities together

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — Cattle ranchers from opposite ends of Oregon got together here recently to learn more about the challenges each faces and foster a sense of unity among the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Members of the Wallowa County Stockgrowers Association hosted an exchange with members of the Lane County Livestock Association mostly on Saturday, May 22, consisting of a bus tour of Wallowa County sites, including ranches, the Zumwalt Prairie, the historic Buckhorn Lookout and other sites pertinent to the local livestock industry.

"I thought it was a great tour," said Todd Nash, a Wallowa County commissioner, rancher and president of the OCA, on May 23. "We got to see some really diverse ranching."

More than 25 ranchers from Lane County were among the approximately 60 people who took part in the tour. Three commissioners of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; ODFW staff; state Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, and an aide; and an aide to Republican U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz also took part. In addition to the bus tour, there were meals and social time at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

Lane County abuts the Pacific Coast and is the fourth-most populated county in the state with the highly urban Eugene at its heart. This is in contrast to Wallowa County tucked away in Oregon's northeast corner and the state's fifth-least populated county.

But both are known for their fertile soil and

See, **Ranches/Page A6**

MEMORIAL DAY



Dick Mason/The Observer

John Craig, left, of American Legion Post 43, and volunteer Lowell Knopp, of La Grande, help install the Avenue of Flags at Grandview Cemetery on Saturday, May 28, 2022.

Long history, BRIGHT FUTURE

Interest in annual Avenue of Flags ceremony in La Grande remains high

By **DICK MASON** • The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ronald Reagan was completing his second term as president when the first Avenue of Flags program was conducted on Memorial Day weekend in 1987 at La Grande's Grandview Cemetery.

Each Memorial Day weekend since then, Grandview Cemetery has been a swirling sea of large American flags, all donated by families in honor of their loved ones. Virtually all of the original flags have been replaced after becoming tattered, but the passage of 35 years has not frayed

interest in and enthusiasm for the Avenue of Flags.

Indeed interest and enthusiasm appears to be growing.

"It keeps getting more recognition each year," said Kevin Loveland, a member of La Grande's American Legion Post 43, which again was in charge



Dick Mason/The Observer

Members of the La Grande Lions Club place flags at the gravesites of veterans at Grandview Cemetery on Thursday, May 26, 2022.

of the Avenue of Flags program this Memorial Day weekend.

Members of the veterans organization and community volunteers installed about 120

flags on poles at Grandview Cemetery starting at 6 a.m. Saturday, May 28.

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Police remain unsure why work truck was stolen

Walla Walla man crashes stolen vehicle into truck driven by La Grande resident

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA — Police say they don't know why Anthony M. Stalder stole a U.S. Linen truck and drove it down the wrong side of state Route 125, crashing into another vehicle and killing himself and La Grande man Jeremy S. Richards on Tuesday, May 24.

Stalder, of Richland, Washington, was not being pursued by police, Walla Walla Police Sgt. Nick Loudermilk told the

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin on Friday, May 27.

Stalder, 28, stole the work truck from the Gesa Credit Union parking lot at 1355 W. Poplar St., Walla Walla, Loudermilk said. And police were just preparing to start a search when the report that it was involved in a crash on the highway between College Place and Walla Walla came over the radio from dispatch.

Stalder drove the stolen 2014 Ford Econoline head-on into northbound traffic on

state Route 125 and crashed into 48-year-old Richards, who was driving alone in a 2022 Dodge Ram. Richards died on the scene,

according to Washington State Patrol. Stalder was taken to Providence St. Mary Medical Center, where he died.

Richards was married and had three young children at home in La Grande, according to a social media post by his family.

The Richards family has

started a Facebook fundraiser at bit.ly/jeremyrichardsfund to help Richards' wife, Kaylee Richards, with expenses, including the graduation of their oldest child in the coming weeks.

His parents, Mickey and Tawnya Richards, spoke about their son on their shared Facebook account.

"Jeremy (touched) lives he didn't even know he touched," the post reads. "He is an example of someone who choose to change his direction in life at a vulnerable age. He would see those that struggled as he had and always gave them an oppor-

tunity to make the same choice he did."

Stalder was born and raised in Walla Walla, according to his obituary posted online by Herring Groseclose Funeral Home. He played golf and was a varsity athlete in wrestling at Walla Walla High School, his family wrote.

But he got into trouble with local police several times over the last few years, according to previous Union-Bulletin reporting, and his obituary notes that he "battled substance abuse and mental health for several years."



Richards

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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page A4.

