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A BIG BOOST

Union businesses typically see uptick during Eastern Oregon Livestock Show week

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

UNION — Everyone loves a parade, and nobody has more reason to enjoy one than Dennis Falk, co-owner of Falk's Mini Mart on Main Street in Union. The sales at his grocery store and gas station soar each year before and during the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Parade. "On the day of the parade, it is crazy. It is absolutely nuts," Falk said of his store's sales. The Eastern Oregon Livestock Show, the oldest show in the Pacific Northwest, runs Sunday, June 5, through Sunday, June 12. Falk is hoping for another sales spike on Friday, June 11, when parade spectators gather along the route for the parade. Unfortunately though, Falk, who owns the



The Observer, File

store with his wife, Jodi, fears that his overall sales during the EOLS week this year will not jump like they have previously. This year's event will not have a carnival for the first time in decades, something Falk said could diminish his sales because there will be fewer carnival workers coming in to buy food, ice, coffee and soft drinks. "It is amazing how many carnival workers have come in," he said. "We will miss them." High fuel costs are the reason there will not be a carnival this year, according to JoAnn Hefner, EOLS secretary-treasurer. Hefner contacted four carnival companies and all told her it would be cost prohibitive to haul in carnival equipment for the short time they would operate in Union. "They all felt fuel prices are too high and

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ABOVE: Cowboys ready Mason Cooley, of Prineville, as he prepares to ride a bull at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union in 2021. The Eastern Oregon Livestock Show, the oldest show in the Pacific Northwest, runs Sunday, June 5 through Sunday, June 12. **BELOW:** The Pete Davis Gate, the main entry point into the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Grounds in Union, on Thursday, June 2, 2022, awaits the crowds of the upcoming event.



Isabella Crowley/The Observer

ELECTION 2022

Poll: Drazan, Kotek claim early lead in governor race

But nearly 24% of likely voters remain undecided on next governor

By **JAMIE GOLDBERG**
The Oregonian

SALEM — Former House Republican Leader Christine Drazan and former House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Democrat, are leading in the race for governor, but many voters remain undecided more than five months before the decisive November election, a new poll released Wednesday, June 1.

Nearly 30% of likely Oregon voters picked Drazan as their choice for governor, while nearly 28% chose Kotek in a poll conducted by Nelson Research, an Oregon-based public opinion research firm. Unaffiliated candidate Betsy Johnson drew more than 19% support.

Given the poll's margin of error, 4.3%, that puts Drazan and Kotek in a statistical tie for first place and also puts Johnson in a statistical tie with Kotek for second place — an indication of just how competitive the three-way race for governor could be in November. Nearly 24% of likely voters remain undecided, the poll found.

The early poll of 516 likely voters conducted on May 25-27 sheds some light on the race, but should be viewed with caution, given that the general election campaign has yet to begin in earnest.

Kotek beat state Treasurer Tobias Read to win the Democratic primary for governor last month, while Drazan beat out corporate consultant and former state lawmaker Bob Tiernan and a half-dozen other serious candidates in the Republican primary.

Johnson, a former longtime Democratic lawmaker, is running unaffiliated. To get on the general election ballot, Johnson will need to gather 23,743 valid voter signatures, representing 1% of the votes in the last presidential election, according to state law.

The poll appears to have misidentified Johnson as a candidate with the Independent Party. She is running independently as an unaffiliated candidate.



Drazan



Kotek



Johnson

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Oregon Trail Electric to build solar farm in La Grande

Community solar project will feature 500 solar panels

By **ANDREW CUTLER**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's already mostly carbon-free power supply is about to get a little greener. The Baker City-based cooperative will begin work this fall on a 500-panel community solar project near the cooperative's Gekeler Lane substation outside La Grande. Construction on the project is expected to take just one month to complete and put into service, according to the cooper-

ative, which serves about 23,000 customers in four Eastern Oregon counties. "Our highest priority is to serve our membership so we put together this project," Charlie Tracy, the cooperative's director of engineering, said. "It's on property here in Union County. It's in La

Grande. So we're excited about it. That's also the district where we've seen the most interest, so we're excited to be able to have it be local and have a member be able to drive by the place that they know that their power is coming from." This is the utility's first solar project. "You can't really say you're an expert in solar farms until you build one, right? So a big part of it is to gain expertise and become experts in the changing landscape," Tracy said. "In another year, we'll really know quite a lot about it and I feel like we do now, but this is part of that learning process."

Oregon Trail members will have the option of helping finance the project by buying subscriptions. When the solar project begins generating clean energy, members will start receiving a credit on their utility bill for their portion of the electricity generated.

"We meter it just like we would a house or a load, and then we divide the output, so the energy that's generated within a given month, we divide it up into portions," Tracy said. "Those portions are sold to a member as a subscription. So essentially, they pre-purchase the output of the array and

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MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's solar farm, visit the cooperative's website at otec.coop.

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