

WHAT'S NEXT?

The La Grande School Board will vote on adoption of the proposed 2022-23 budget at its meeting on Wednesday, June 22. The meeting will follow a public hearing on the budget which will start at 7 p.m. The hearing and the board meeting will be in the boardroom at Willow School, 1305 N. Willow St., La Grande.

SCHOOLS

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funding remaining to buffer its enrollment decline, he said, meaning the chance of layoffs starting in the 2024-25 school year will be much greater if enrollment does not rise significantly.

The school district's enrollment has been declining since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Oregon in March 2020. Mendoza said the school district is down 244 students since the start of the pandemic.

Mendoza believes one reason for the decline is that parents and students want consistency and stability. School districts lost an element of this during the pandemic when they were switching from online to in-person instruction and a hybrid model, which is a combination of both.

"It was a yo-yo," he said.

The superintendent believes this is why a number of parents pulled their children out of school and began homeschooling them. He said that homeschooling allowed them to provide a more stable educational environment.

GIVING

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families with a patch that has the yellow and blue colors of their nation's flag in the shape of a heart.

"These are handmade gifts," said Ellen Carr, a Girls Night Out member.

The local sewing club will be sending 27 quilts to the Corner Patch, an arts and crafts shop in the town of Eccleshall in England. The Corner Patch, owned by Janet Markwell, is donating quilts to Ukrainian refugees in England. To date, it has received 100 quilts for refugees.

England has at least 58,000 Ukrainian refugees, according to a story in the May 24 edition of the New York Times. They are among the more than 6.4 million Ukrainians who have left their country since Russia attacked Ukraine in February.

Naylor said she and other members of Girls Night Out have felt frustrated because they wanted to reach out to the refugees but really could not in a concrete manner because they are separated by such a great distance.

"This was something tangible we could actually do," she said.

Naylor and Carr are among about 12 Girls Night Out women involved in the Ukrainian project. They are joined by Mary Brock, Lessa Adams, Joy Cleaver, Susan Le Page, Geri Hall, Cindy Jo DeLong, Teresa Smith-Dixon, Nancy Gromen, Patti Anderson and Jan McDowell.

The quilts the club is sending have an array of colors, including orange, green, red and blue. Many have varying dimensions but they have an important quality in common.

"Many are different, but they all are beautiful," said Gromen, who is Naylor's mother.

Much of the work on the quilts was done alone in the homes of the Girls Night Out members. The



Dick Mason/The Observer

The quilts completed by Girls Night, like these ones shown on Friday, June 3, 2022, have a variety of designs.

"Quilts bring comfort. We are hoping that these will ease their struggle."

— Bridgett Naylor, a Girls Night Out member



group, though, meets once a week in the evening to discuss their project and other topics. The meetings have given rise to their name.

The Girls Night Out quilts will later be taken across the Atlantic Ocean by Naylor and her family to the Corner Patch. Naylor is familiar with England because that is where her husband, Les, is from and she met the Corner

Patch's owner during a previous visit. Naylor's family will bring the quilts in four suitcases. This will save money because Naylor's family would have gone to England anyway. Naylor said it is much less expensive to pay for check-in luggage on a flight than it would be to ship the quilts from La Grande.

Naylor and the other mem-

bers of the group know they will likely never meet the refugees who receive the quilts, but that does not diminish the satisfaction they are feeling knowing that they are helping brighten the lives of people who have just witnessed the horrors of war.

"Quilts bring comfort," Naylor said. "We are hoping that these will ease their struggle."

EXPANSION PROJECT TO DISRUPT NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC

The following are descriptions of how traffic will be rerouted during the Sunset Drive closure.

- Emergency medical services traffic will be coordinated to reroute around the Sunset Drive Avenue closure between H and K avenues.
- Patient traffic will be rerouted via digital/mobile signage at the corners of C Avenue and Fourth Street, and N Avenue and Fourth Street.
- GRH's south campus will be accessed via C Avenue to Sunset. South campus includes the Women's and Children's Clinic, the Specialty Clinic, the Therapy and



- Sports Medicine Clinic and the Sleep Clinic.
- The main hospital will be accessed via N Avenue to Alder. The main hospital includes emergency services, the Cardiology Clinic and the Out-Patient Surgery Clinic.

HOSPITAL

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She said the ceilings of the operating rooms met all state codes when built. However, now they are between 18 and 24 inches too low to meet state building codes, an issue the construction of the new building will address.

Ford said the state granted a waiver to the hospital for the ceiling height problem, but the waiver expires in 2028.

She said the new building will help GRH recruit and retain talented surgeons.

"Surgeons interested in coming here want to know where they will be working," she said.

Ford said the ultimate purpose of the project is to help people.

"This building is for everyone. We see it as a gift to Union County," she said. "The entire purpose of this is patient care."

Ford said the fact the hospital is now in a position to launch such a major project is an indication of how well it survived the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is a testament to the fact that we have had the kind of leadership now and over the past, that we are in a position to even do this," she said.

The building project is expected to take two years and will force a 970-foot segment of Sunset Drive — from K Avenue south to H Avenue — to be closed for two years. The closure, which will apply to all vehicles and pedestrians, will begin Monday, June 20. The intent of the closure is to keep everyone out of harm's way.

"Safety is our No. 1 concern," Ford said.

Ford said the closure will not adversely impact emergency or patient access to the main emergency room or hospital entrance or impact patient access to the hospital's clinics on the south side of the campus.

"GRH has worked to anticipate and consider every impact this expansion project may have on our community," she said.

Ford said the hospital has been especially concerned about the impact the closure and work will have on people living nearest to the hospital campus.

Ford noted that on Friday, May 27, the hospital mailed residents detailed packets of information on the project and invited them to meet with Jeremy Davis, the president and chief executive officer, to discuss any concerns or questions.

HIV isn't just a big city issue.

More than half of Oregonians with HIV live outside of Portland, often in suburbs and small towns like this one.

Good neighbors chip in to get the job done. And we've got work to do on HIV prevention. People in rural Oregon are more likely to get a late-stage diagnosis, and a lack of HIV treatment may harm your health, or your partner's. Detected early, HIV is more easily managed and you can live a long, healthy life. Getting tested is a sign of strength, not weakness. Learn more and find free testing at endhivoregon.org

