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Spring showers linger after 6th wettest May on record

By ISABELLA CROWLEY
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A rainy spring makes for the sixth wettest May on record in Union County over the past 128 years, according to the National Integrated Drought Information System.

The National Weather Service, who partners with cooperative observers like the Oregon Department of Forestry to measure rain

levels, reported 5.44 inches of rainfall in La Grande during May, which was 2.28 inches wetter than normal.

The rainfall was consistent across Eastern Oregon with similar numbers reported by the National Weather Service for Union and Cove in May. There was 4.05 and 5.44 inches of rainfall in Union and Cove, respectively.

The National Weather Service

also partners with the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network — a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers — to measure precipitation in local communities without cooperative observers. A volunteer recorded 2.52 inches of rain in Elgin for May.

The spring rains have not been record breaking though. The wettest recorded May in Union County was in 1998, when a total

of 6.1 inches of rain fell, according to USAFacts, a nonprofit and non-partisan civic initiative that aims to make government data easy to access and understand.

Across the region, rainfall was closer to normal the previous month — 2.06 inches in La Grande, 1.6 inches in Union and 2.12 inches in Cove in April, according to the National Weather Service.

It remains to be seen how

June will compare to normal, but during the first 14 days of the month there was 2.18 inches of rain in La Grande. In the same time frame, Union experienced 2.6 inches and Cove 4.41 inches.

Despite the heavy rains across Union County, the National Integrated Drought Information System indicates that southern parts of the county are abnormally

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EASTERN OREGON ECONOMIC SUMMIT

‘One side can’t do it on its own’

Legislators at summit praise bipartisanship

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Unity became a common theme at the 2022 Eastern Oregon Economic Summit in Hermiston.

Participants, especially speakers, mentioned the value of togetherness and praised past examples of people joining forces.

The summit was Thursday, June 16, and Friday, June 17, in Hermiston.

“I’m happy,” Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, said when it was her turn to speak.

This moment came during the state legislator panel on June 17. Promoted as a “wrap-up of the legislative session,” there was little policy discussed at the panel. Instead, 11 state senators and representatives spoke of something else on their mind — the importance of friendly relationships in government.

Levy is the president of the Eastern Oregon Women’s Coalition, which organized the summit.

Expressing her happiness for the event, she stated she enjoys everyone who was with her on the panel.

The panel was a mix of Republicans and Democrats. Levy declared she was glad to be working with, and spending time with, all her colleagues on

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Stu Spence, left, the city of La Grande Parks and Recreation director, and Ronnie Allen, a local historian, on Friday, June 17, 2022, examine an Oregon Trail stone marker that was put up by Ezra Meeker in 1906 on Walnut Street in La Grande.

EZRA MEEKER’S OREGON TRAIL TIME CAPSULE TO BE OPENED JUNE 23

BACK IN TIME

Story and photos by DICK MASON • The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ezra Meeker, the famous pioneer who spent the later part of his life memorializing the Oregon Trail and reviving memories of it as storyteller, may have one more tale to share.

People opening a time capsule Meeker left in La Grande in 1906 could discover a note or message from the frontiersman that he wanted people to see in the future. The time capsule is set to be

opened at 110 Walnut St. at 1 p.m. on Thursday, June 23. The event will be at the site of a stone Oregon Trail marker Meeker dedicated on April 10, 1906, one which had interior space at its base for a time capsule. Little is known about what the time capsule may contain.

“The only thing we know is that it may have the dedication speech the mayor of La Grande gave,” said

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This stone marker on Walnut Street, shown on Sunday, June 19, 2022, was put up by Ezra Meeker in 1906 to indicate where the Oregon Trail passed through La Grande. The marker contains a time capsule that will be opened on June 23.



Isabella Crowley/The Observer

Old arched windowframes were revealed during renovations at La Grande’s former Elks Lodge, at 1124 Washington St., shown here on Friday, May 27, 2022. Plans include restoring these windows.

Renovations underway in historic downtown building

By ISABELLA CROWLEY
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A La Grande couple will offer a preview of the historic downtown building they are revitalizing during open houses set for this summer.

Jeanne and David Williamson purchased the building — the former Elks Lodge — on the corner of Washington Avenue and Depot Street last August.

“We’ve got a lot of long-term plans for the building,” Jeanne Williamson said.

The building most recently housed the Maridell Center, which featured activities such as roller skating, arcade games and laser tag.

Renovations have been underway since last year.

The first floor will be home to

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