

TODAY

In 1775, the Continental Congress established a Post Office and appointed Benjamin Franklin its Postmaster-General.

In 1847, the western African country of Liberia, founded by freed American slaves, declared its independence.

In 1863, Sam Houston, former president of the Republic of Texas, died in Huntsville at age 70.

In 1945, the Potsdam Declaration warned Imperial Japan to unconditionally surrender, or face "prompt and utter destruction." Winston Churchill resigned as Britain's prime minister after his Conservatives were soundly defeated by the Labour Party; Clement Attlee succeeded him.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act, which reorganized America's armed forces as the National Military Establishment and created the Central Intelligence Agency.

In 1953, Fidel Castro began his revolt against Fulgencio Batista with an unsuccessful attack on an army barracks in eastern Cuba. (Castro ousted Batista in 1959.)

In 1956, the Italian liner Andrea Doria sank off New England, some 11 hours after colliding with the Swedish liner Stockholm; at least 51 people died, from both vessels.

In 1971, Apollo 15 was launched from Cape Kennedy on America's fourth successful manned mission to the moon.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In 2002, the Republican-led House voted, 295-132, to create an enormous Homeland Security Department in the biggest government reorganization in decades.

In 2013, Ariel Castro, the man who'd imprisoned three women in his Cleveland home, subjecting them to a decade of rapes and beatings, pleaded guilty to 937 counts in a deal to avoid the death penalty. (Castro later committed suicide in prison.)

In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be nominated for president by a major political party at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

In 2020, a procession with the casket of the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama, where Lewis and other civil rights marchers were beaten 55 years earlier.

Authorities declared a riot in Portland, Oregon, after protesters breached a fence surrounding the city's federal courthouse; thousands had gathered for another night of protests over the killing of George Floyd and the presence of federal agents.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Colbert is 91. Actor-singer Darlene Love is 81. Rock star Mick Jagger is 79. Actor Helen Mirren is 77. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Queen) is 73. Olympic gold medal figure skater Dorothy Hamill is 66. Actor Nana Visitor is 65. Actor Sandra Bullock is 58. Actor Jeremy Piven is 57. Actor Jason Statham is 55. Actor Kate Beckinsale is 49.

CORRECTIONS
The Observer works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-963-3161.

LOTTERY

Friday, July 22, 2022
Megamillions
14-40-60-64-66
Megaball: 16
Megaplier: 3
Jackpot: \$810 million

Lucky Lines
4-5-10-14-19-21-28-29
Jackpot: \$20,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 0-6-0-2
4 p.m.: 7-3-0-1
7 p.m.: 1-2-0-7
10 p.m.: 5-3-6-9

Saturday, July 23, 2022
Powerball
39-41-54-59-62
Powerball: 12
Power Play: 3
Jackpot: \$130 million

Megabucks
2-5-16-28-40-46
Jackpot: \$3.7 million

Lucky Lines
2-7-10-13-19-24-27-29
Jackpot: \$21,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 6-1-8-3
4 p.m.: 0-2-0-7
7 p.m.: 3-2-4-0
10 p.m.: 1-4-0-1

Win for Life
12-24-45-61

Sunday, July 24, 2022
Lucky Lines
3-5-11-14-17-22-25-32
Estimated jackpot: \$23,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 7-7-0-0
4 p.m.: 6-3-5-7
7 p.m.: 7-3-7-9
10 p.m.: 6-5-5-9

North Powder building gets new life

City's former fire station being converted into new city hall

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

NORTH POWDER — North Powder's old fire station, dormant for almost two years, is coming back to life.

The former fire station is being transformed into North Powder's new city hall, offering a wealth of additional space and a building in far better condition.

The move from the former old city hall, about a block away, began earlier this month and should be completed by the end of this week.

Rick Lawyer, the city of North Powder's public works director, said moving city hall into the new building has involved a lot of work but it has been worth it.

"Anytime you can get a newer building with a lot more room it is a good thing," he said.

The move started after extensive renovations were



Dick Mason/The Observer

David "Shorty" Schwehr, left, Beth Wendt, center, and Rick Lawyer move a filing cabinet out of North Powder's former city hall building on Friday, July 22, 2022. Schwehr, a volunteer and former North Powder city council member, is helping Wendt, the city's recorder, and Lawyer, the public works director, move into the new city hall about a block away.

completed at the fire hall, allowing its north section to be transformed into a reception and office work area. Its features include a mayor's office. The previous city hall building did not have enough space for one.

"It will be so nice to have a mayor's office," Beth Wendt, the city recorder, said.

Wendt said the new mayor's office will be a welcome addition because it will allow the mayor to

speaking privately with people in person and on the phone.

"This was impossible to do in the old city hall building," she said.

The larger building will also allow the North Powder City Council to conduct all of its meetings there. Previously, most city council meetings were conducted at North Powder's Wolf Creek Grange Hall. Wendt said the grange hall is an excellent meeting site but that conducting meetings there

was difficult because of setup and takedown work that needed to be completed before and after every meeting.

The former fire hall, built in the mid-1970s, is in much better condition than North Powder's previous city hall building, which is much older.

The fire hall building has so much additional space that plans call for part of it to be converted in North Powder's new library, Wendt said. Presently, North Powder's library is next to its old city hall in a building that also is old and in poor condition.

Another plus of the more spacious building is that it will make it easier to practice social distancing protocols to be followed if there is ever a need for it because of COVID-19 or another contagious disease.

"Social distancing was hard to practice in the old building," Wendt said.

The old fire station building became available after a new fire station for North Powder was completed in 2020. The North Powder Rural Fire Department is not run by the city but is contracted by it to provide fire protection.

Grant to help with building upgrades

La Grande High auditorium roof will be replaced with funds from seismic grant

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande High School's auditorium is set to receive a major upgrade.

The school district was awarded a \$2.49 million grant from Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, for seismic work on the high school's performing arts auditorium. The grant will cover the replacement of the auditorium's aging roof and boosting the strength of its walls. The upgrade will make the auditorium more

stable in the event of an earthquake.

"I'm always pleased when we can improve facilities in the school district," La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza said. "When you can improve facilities it is a great thing for the students, staff and the community."

A bid to a contractor for the seismic upgrade work will be awarded later, and work on the upgrade project will start with site preparation in late May or early June 2023, Mendoza said. He hopes the project can be completed by early

September 2023, a timeline that would have no impact on student use of the auditorium at the start of the 2023-24 school year.

This will be the second boost the auditorium has received since 2016 when major upgrades were made with funding from a \$31.85 million bond voters approved in 2014. Work done in 2016 included a major expansion of its stage, the installation of new lighting and seating and improvements to the sound system and handicap accessibility.

Mendoza said the work to be financed with the \$2.49 million seismic grant will go a long way toward preserving the upgrades made in 2016.

"It will help us protect

our investment," he said.

This is at least the third seismic grant the La Grande School District has received from the state over the past decade. Earlier state grants paid for seismic upgrades at Greenwood Elementary School and its gym and the La Grande High School's gym.

This year, Business Oregon has provided \$59.4 million in seismic upgrade funding to 17 school districts through its Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program. Eastern Oregon school districts that received grants include the Joseph School District, which was awarded a \$2.4 million grant, a portion of which is being used to build a new roof for a school building.

NEWS BRIEFS

Three small wildfires in Union County cause no injuries or property damage

UNION — Nobody was injured and no structures were damaged in three small wildfires over the weekend in Union County.

The largest was a 1-acre fire near Interstate 84 about 8 miles northwest of North Powder on Sunday, July 24. The fire was reported at 12:35 p.m. and was extinguished less than two hours later. Firefighters from the Oregon Department of Forestry and the North Powder Rural Fire Department responded to the blaze. The fire was human caused and burned only grass, according to the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center's WildCAD website.

The other two fires broke out on Saturday, July 23. The largest was the one-fourth of an acre Floodwater Fire in the Grande Ronde Lake area 15 miles southwest of North Powder. The fire was reported at 9:56 a.m. It was controlled by 2:22 p.m. and contained by 6:40 p.m. on July 24. The fire was caused by lightning and burned timber. Firefighters were sent to it by the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center.

A second wildfire broke out in Union County on July 23 in the Galloway Spring area 2 miles north of Elgin. The one-tenth of an acre fire, which was human caused, was reported at 2:38 p.m. and contained by 5:23 p.m. on July 23. Firefighters from the Oregon Department of For-

estry responded to the blaze which burned grass and brush, according to Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center's WildCAD website.

Tests show young La Grande mother's brain is unresponsive

LA GRANDE — The family of a La Grande woman said Friday, July 22, that tests have shown the sudden cardiac arrest she suffered has left her brain dead.

Vanessa Durfee, 26, experienced cardiac arrest July 17 at her residence.

"She will be flown to Portland on (July 23) for organ donation," Sandra Roda, Durfee's aunt, said. "The GoFundMe account will now be used for her funeral arrangements."

Durfee's oldest daughter found her unresponsive and alerted Vanessa's partner, Troy Jones, who immediately called 911 for emergency medical assistance. According to Roda, Durfee was intubated and admitted July 17 to the intensive care unit at Grande Ronde Hospital, where she underwent tests to determine the cause of her condition.

Durfee is survived by her partner of six years, Troy Jones, and two daughters, ages 6 and 1. She was a graduate of Elgin High School and was the daughter of Sharee Henderson and Ed Durfee, of Elgin.

The family has established a GoFundMe page to help the young family with the costs related to her

medical emergency and her absence from home.

State reports two cases of wolf depredations on Union County ranches

LA GRANDE — Three cases of wolves killing livestock in Eastern Oregon were reported last week by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the ODFW's Livestock Depredation Investigation Report.

Two of the three were in Union County. Ranchers reported depredations on Friday, July 15, in the Palmer Junction area and on July 17 in the Five Points Creek area. Both were confirmed as wolf kills.

The July 15 incident was attributed to the Balloon Tree Pack, while the July 17 incident was attributed to the Five Points Pack.

The third incident occurred in the Grouse Flats area of Wallowa County, according to the report. On July 6, agents of a rancher discovered the carcasses of three yearling cows on a 160-acre private pasture. Two of the carcasses consisted of scattered bones and were estimated to have died approximately a week prior to the investigation. The third carcass was mostly intact and estimated to have died about 36 hours prior to the ODFW investigation.

The third carcass was confirmed as a wolf kill, while the other two were considered possible wolf kills or unknown.

—The Observer

Upper Imnaha Road work needed

Wallowa County officials face roadblocks by federal agencies

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chief of Staff

ENTERPRISE — The Upper Imnaha Road has some treacherous areas that Wallowa County is being asked to fix.

Wallowa County Board of Commissioners Chair Susan Roberts said during last week's county commission meeting she'd received an email from Elizabeth Kelley, of Diamondhead Ranch on Upper Imnaha Road, who asked the commissioners to consider repairs to the road. Roberts had forwarded a copy of Kelly's email to the other commissioners.

At least two of the commissioners said they had visited the site and agreed it needs work, particularly to accommodate today's larger vehicles, and it should be either rerouted or the problem area blasted through.

"That road was built in the 1920s when vehicles were not very big," Roberts said.

Roberts said the county had engineers look at the road in 2011, and at that time, they estimated it would cost \$30-\$40 million. She estimated the cost will have gone up considerably since then.

"It isn't anything we can do immediately," Commissioner Todd Nash said. "Those agencies move extremely slow and to blast that stuff — it's really normal for rocks to roll off those hills into those waters. It's been happening for millennia. But for a human to do that, oh my gosh."

Roberts said she'd been told by a woman that the rumor was no one wanted to take on the road project because it would entail blasting out rocks that might fall into the river and possibly hurt fish.

"She said, 'I have no idea if this is true, but if it is, I would like to believe that the safety of the community — kids on buses and visiting tourists — would be a priority,'" Roberts quoted the woman.

Roberts said the Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries wouldn't object because fish could adapt to any changes in the river.

Nash agreed, saying tumbling boulders down into the streambed would provide more areas where the Chinook can spawn.

Roberts told the woman the county would be willing, but they come up against a federal agency "that absolutely prohibits that."

Commissioner John Hillock brought up the question of how to fund such a project.

Nash has been in touch with the National Marine Fisheries Service, which objected to any potential blasting that would disrupt the Imnaha River and the fish there. He said he had a county employee look at it and blasting an area was considered, but that would mean debris going into the river.

He suggested all the agencies involved should visit the site to see what could be done.

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