

# THE OBSERVER

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## EOU Board of Trustees name interim co-presidents

Board considered several options for interim leadership

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Richard Chaves and Lara Moore will take over as interim co-presidents of Eastern Oregon University on Sept. 1, the university announced

in a release Friday, Aug. 19.

The Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees made the decision after convening for a special session on Aug. 19. The move was made necessary by the announcement earlier this month that current president, Tom Insko, would be leaving his post at the end of September.



Moore



Chaves

Insko has been named president and chief executive officer at Collins, a wood products company based in Wilsonville.

“We don’t make this choice lightly,” said Cheryl Martin, vice chair of the board of trustees. “We want to provide the university, and most important, our students, with stability, con-

tinuity and momentum as they come into the new year.”

After discussing the options for interim president, the board voted to adopt resolution 22-07 appointing Moore, the vice president for finance and administration, and Chaves, the current board chair, as interim co-presidents. Chaves will resign from the board to assume his new duties. The resolution also encourages the extension of interim provost

Matt Seimears’ appointment until June 30, 2024.

The board began discussions of interim leadership at its retreat earlier this month. During its special session, the board held a lengthy review about its options for appointing interim leadership following President Insko’s resignation in early August.

The board discussed the

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## Elijah Ward arrested in connection with fatal hit-and-run

Arrest documents reveal more information about deadly weekend crash in La Grande

By ISABELLA CROWLEY  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Court documents submitted by La Grande police stated that Elijah Ward knew he hit something with his car the night of Friday, Aug. 12, but he didn’t know he struck a person.

Law enforcement arrested Ward, 26, of La Grande, on Aug. 16 in connection with the hit-and-run death of Maison Andrew, 24, according to a press release from the La Grande Police Department.

The investigation began after La Grande police responded to a report at 5:30 a.m. Aug. 13 of a dead male on the side of 16th Street. Sgt. Dusty Perry and Officer Ryan Herbel responded to the scene and immediately confirmed the individual had died. When Detective Sgt. Ryan Miller arrived on scene, he noted there was a large pool of blood on Andrew’s face and he appeared to have road rash on his right abdomen.

There were broken car parts from headlights, a reflector lens and turn signal indicators near Andrew’s body that spread south down the street, according to the probable cause declaration. A large black plastic piece of debris recovered from the scene contained a visible part number, belonging to a Mitsubishi Galant produced between the years 2001 and 2012.

On Aug. 16, Senior Officer Ryan Bernards located a white 2009 Mitsubishi Galant with damage to the driver-side headlight and front fender parked outside 609 Y Ave., according to police documents. Bernards noted there was a large circular “spiderweb” crack in the windshield, which appeared to start from one impact point.

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# If these walls COULD TALK

North Powder Community United Methodist Church approaching 140 years of operation in same building

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

**N**ORTH POWDER — It may be the most memorable dollar ever spent in North Powder’s long history.

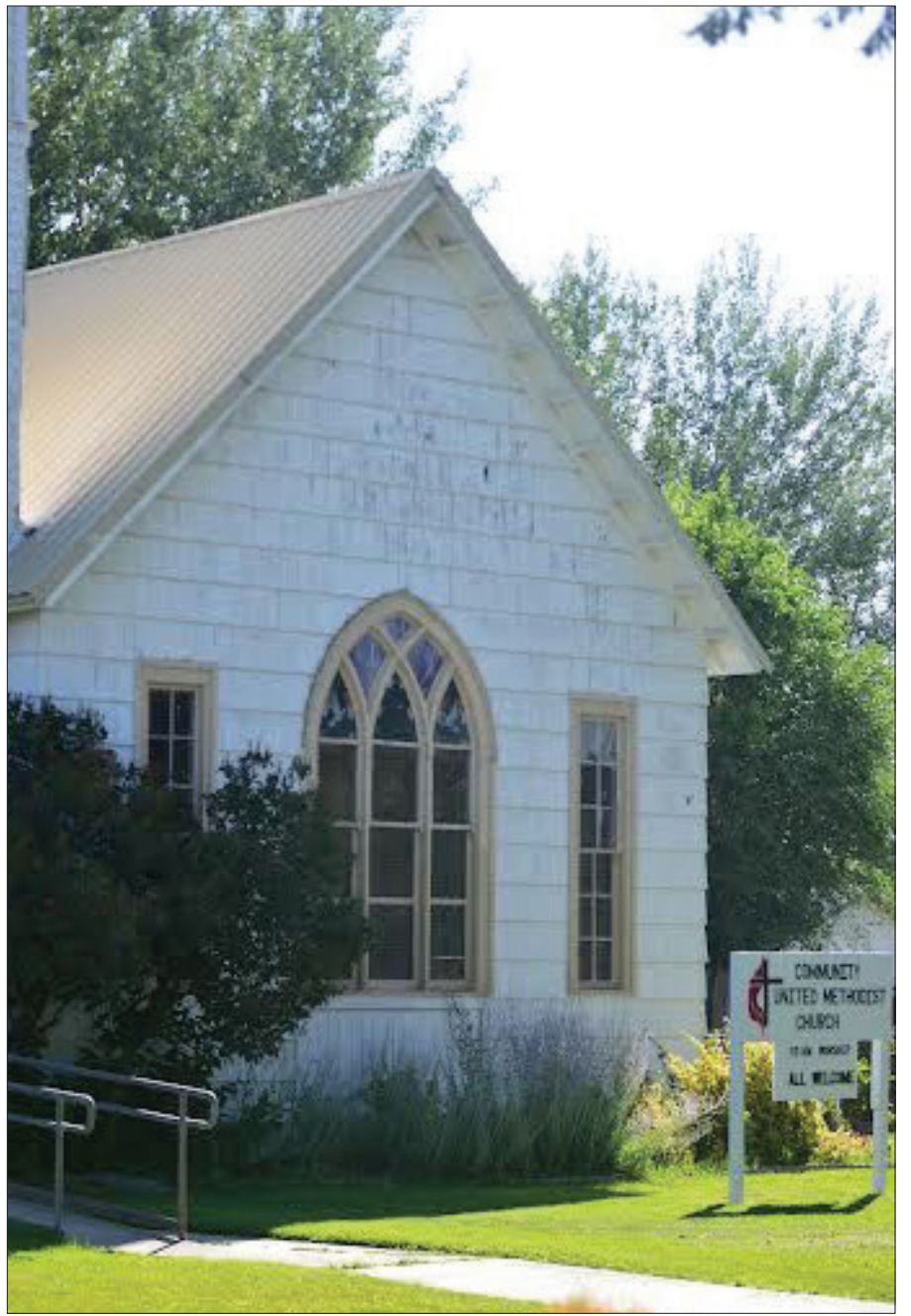
In 1882, Sarah and James W. Welch sold a block of property in North Powder for \$1 to the United Methodist and Episcopal churches, according to records. The Methodists and Episcopalians built a church on the block in 1883, which they shared for four years before the Methodists assumed full ownership.

Today, the North Powder Community United Methodist Church is on the verge of joining a select circle — a limited number of other churches in Oregon to have operated in the same building for at least 140 years.

It is not hard to imagine what the church looked like in 1883. The building is filled with links to its past, including a few wooden pews believed to be the same ones the church first had in the 1880s and a bell in a tower that congregants still ring with the pull of a rope before Sunday services.

These vestiges to the past are in a well-maintained building that looks

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Dick Mason/The Observer

The North Powder Community United Methodist Church, shown here on Sunday, Aug. 14, 2022, was built in 1883. The building has been used as a church continuously since then.

## Local school districts to control COVID protocols

ODE will not require statewide COVID-19 safety measures

By ELIZABETH MILLER  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Later this month, thousands of Oregon students will begin to head back to schools across the state, the third school year affected by COVID-19.

But how each school handles the coronavirus and its risks will be up to individual decision makers and local public health

authorities, a continuation of how Oregon schools operated last year.

“This year, nearly all health and safety protocols will be locally determined, with district leaders partnering with local public health authorities to make decisions about how to implement health and safety protocols to keep schools open by keeping staff and students healthy,” said Oregon Department of Education director Colt Gill at a press conference Wednesday, Aug. 17.

Some statewide rules are still in



Gill



Sidelinger

effect, including the vaccination requirement for teachers and other school staff.

But decisions around whether to require masks, ventilation protocols and testing procedures remain in local hands. State officials point out that individuals may choose to wear face masks, even if they’re not required.

The question of how much the state should require versus how much it should advise districts and allow local decision-making has been a source of tension practically since the pandemic began. Some

school leaders are welcoming the state’s approach for this fall.

“We are very appreciative as local school districts to be provided with a little bit more authority in an effort to meet the needs of each of our unique communities that we all serve and represent,” said Estacada superintendent Ryan Carpenter on OPB’s Think Out Loud.

Carpenter said the district remains focused on keeping schools open while also supporting students and families no matter what choice they make around masks.

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	Tonight		Sunday
	58 LOW		96/58
	Mainly clear		Hot with sunshine

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Email story ideas to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com).  
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