

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

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Following in their footsteps

Local Latter-day Saints youths, adults walk and roll along the trail of Mormon pioneers

By DICK MASON • The Observer

LA GRANDE — Handcarts can make people feel like they are turning back the hands of time, something Kaylee Carpenter, a La Grande High School student, understands well.

Carpenter is one of 270 youth and 100 adults from Union, Wallowa, Baker and Grant counties with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who participated in a pioneer trek in

early August. It was a small-scale reenactment of pioneers who pulled handcarts while crossing the plains and moving into the Salt Lake Valley in Utah from 1856 to 1860.

The youths traveled 16 miles on foot, including 14 while pushing and pulling handcarts in Wyoming.

“It was an amazing experience,” Carpenter said.

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Greg Baxter/Contributed Photos

Youths from Northeastern Oregon push and pull a handcart through the Sweetwater River in Wyoming as part of a historical reenactment in August 2022.

➤ Youths and adults from Northeastern Oregon walk up Rocky Ridge in Wyoming while traveling a route pioneers took to Salt Lake Valley in the 1800s. The reenactment trek is conducted every five years by the La Grande Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which encompasses Union, Wallowa, Baker and Grant counties.



Backup arrives to fight Double Creek Fire

Wallowa County blaze biggest in state, topping 43,600 acres

The Observer

ENTERPRISE — Additional resources continued to arrive on Sunday, Sept. 4, including task forces from the Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal, to help battle the both the Double Creek and Eagle Cap Wilderness fires in Wallowa County.

The Double Creek Fire is the largest wildfire burning in Oregon.

The fire has now burned 43,668 acres, according to the Sept. 5 update, up from the more than 37,800 acres reported on Sept. 4. The blaze is still zero percent contained, and there are more than 400 personnel assigned to fight the fire.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act on Sept. 3 in response to the Double Creek Fire.

Strong winds, hot temperatures and humidity that dipped into single digits in places Sept. 3 also enabled two lightning-caused fires in the Eagle Cap Wilderness to grow substantially.

According to a press release from the Type 1 overhead team that’s managing the Double Creek and the wilderness fires, task forces from the State Fire Marshal’s office initiated structure protection on the

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BEND SAFEWAY SHOOTING

‘AR-15 style’ rifle is loved and hated

By GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

BEND — The rifle type used in the deadly Bend shooting on Sunday, Aug. 27, has enjoyed a popularity boom among millions of gun owners, while it is reviled by gun control advocates as an icon of mass murder.

Police say a gunman fired more than 100 shots at The Forum Shopping Center with an “AR-15 style” rifle, killing two men in the Safeway supermarket. Officers found the shooter dead at the back of the store from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, next to his rifle and a shotgun.

The police description of the rifle as AR-15 “style” hints at the rifle’s convoluted history.

Touted for its modern, military look, the AR-15 design is actually 66 years old. It inspired the design of the M-16 rifle used since the Vietnam War, but the AR-15 itself is very rarely used by U.S. Armed Forces.

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New faces, new location for Celebrate La Grande



The Observer, File

La Grande Police Chief Gary Bell grills hot dogs Thursday, Sept. 10, 2020, at Celebrate La Grande’s COVID-friendly drive-thru party. The more charred the better, Bell said of his grilling style.

By ISABELLA CROWLEY

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The annual celebration of everything that makes La Grande “grand” was the creation of two public officials in 1995.

Then-mayor Di Lyn Larsen-Hill and former police Sgt. Scott Franks wanted to bring neighbors together to celebrate the community that makes La Grande so special, Larsen-Hill said. The community-oriented Celebrate La Grande “end-of-summer block party” is always a mix of fun games and free food.

“It’s a feel-good event,” Larsen-Hill said. “The thing I love the most is walking through the crowd and seeing strangers meeting strangers and becoming friends.”

According to the former mayor, building community was one of the major goals of Celebrate La Grande. Larsen-Hill said she not only wanted neighbors to bond with neighbors, but she also wanted everyone to meet the people working for the city. She thought it was important for public officials to get out into the community, so that people could put faces to the names.

Larsen-Hill also wanted residents to know more about their community and what resources are available. This is why there is a “nonprofit showcase” at the block party, where nonprofit organizations set up booths and provide information.

Another key goal for Larsen-Hill — the event had to be totally free for the public.

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	57 LOW		91/47
	Mainly clear		A stray t-shower

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