

Union County community for veterans now open

Neighborhood of 10 cottage-style homes aims to address veteran homelessness

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A one-of-a-kind neighborhood is officially up and running in La Grande.

Veterans Village Union County hosted a virtual ribbon-cutting event Thursday, Dec. 9, which acknowledged the many entities that contributed to the village. The 10-house neighborhood is specifically for veterans who otherwise might not have a home.

“Through this amazing collaboration of efforts, we created something wonderful — permanent, well-built and energy-efficient homes for many veterans who would not likely get this opportunity without help,” said Gust Tsiatsos, owner of GCT Land Management, who coordinated the project.

Tsiatsos and Veterans Village Advisory Council Committee Chair Lindsey Freeland hosted the event, which was attended via Zoom by about 40 people. Attendees included La Grande Planning Commission members and



Cottage-style homes at the Veterans Village Union County on Russell Avenue in La Grande await residents on Nov. 8, 2021. The community for veterans opened Thursday, Dec. 9.

county commissioners from Union County as well as other surrounding counties.

The Veterans Village, a little more than 80% of an acre at the corner of Russell Avenue and North Pine Street, features fully furnished homes for veterans. Each unit is a cottage-style small home that includes a bedroom, living room, fireplace, fenced-in backyard and amenities. The 10-house village also has a community center that can serve as a gathering space for fellow veterans to interact.

Tsiatsos recognized many individuals and organizations that assisted along the way in developing the village,

among them Kevin Reed; Ace Hardware; Bob Haley, job site superintendent; Terri Bradley, marketing consultant; Seder Architecture; and Angel Smith, social worker.

“Through all the local group and individual support, the state of Oregon also recognized the project as a front-runner at the state level and a worthy partner through the Oregon Housing and Community Services program,” Tsiatsos said.

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program through Veterans Affairs finds individuals who meet the guidelines to live in the village, while the Northeast

Oregon Housing Authority manages the property. After the La Grande Planning Commission amended its codes to allow for tiny homes and cottage-style houses, the Veterans Village serves as the first example of what can be done to ease the city’s tight housing market.

“I think the concept works well in many applications, not just veterans housing,” Tsiatsos said. “I hope to see other smaller units popping up here and there where we can get some more housing here.”

Veterans Village Baker County is under development, a neighborhood with nine one-bedroom units and



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File
Dennis Scudder, an Army veteran, looks over his new neighborhood in La Grande on Nov. 4, 2021. Scudder bounced between temporary housing solutions before moving into Veteran Village Union County, a new community of cottage-style homes.

three two-bedroom homes. According to Tsiatsos, there is room for another eight units that could be for sale in Baker City. Several visiting county commissioners such as Court Boice of Curry County attended the meeting and asked questions to gauge the possibility of a similar development.

Gus Bedwell, a veteran’s service officer with the state of Oregon, worked with Veterans Village Union County during its development. He noted that the neighborhood can be a blueprint for other communities.

“What Gust and his team has done in La Grande could

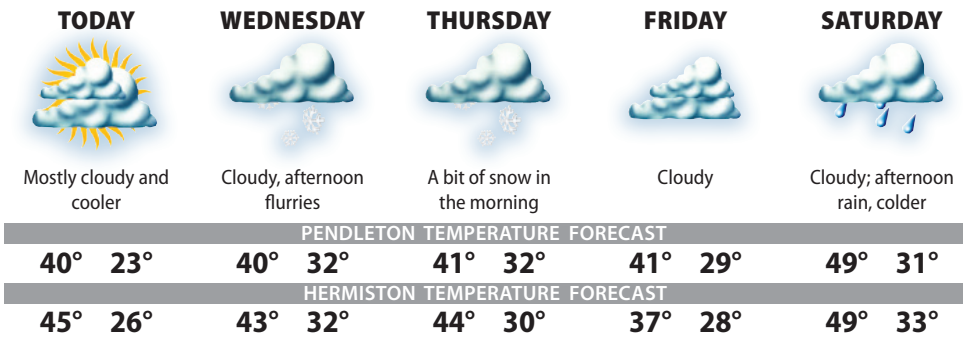
be done in every single county in the state of Oregon,” Bedwell said.

He said having just 10 to 15 similar units in each county in Oregon could go a long way in addressing homelessness among veterans. It is estimated there are more than 1,300 veterans in Oregon who lack housing.

The virtual gathering concluded with the raising of the United States flag by the veteran residents of the La Grande neighborhood.

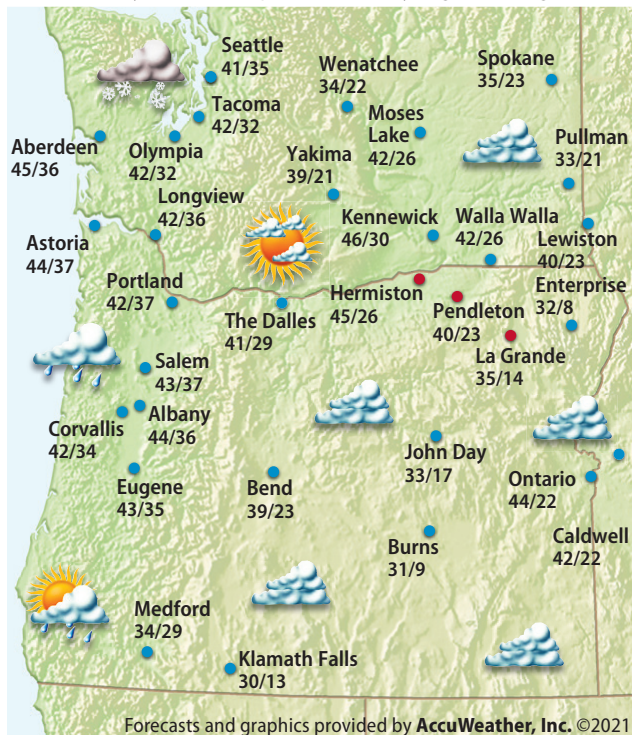
“It’s for a very small amount of money too, so we could make a huge impact,” Bedwell said. “I can’t speak highly enough of it.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	55°	38°
Month to date	0.24"	
Normals	41°	28°
Records	63° (1924)	-28° (1919)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.24"	
Normal month to date	0.59"	
Year to date	7.62"	
Last year to date	12.30"	
Normal year to date	12.32"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	45°	34°
Normals	42°	28°
Records	62° (1995)	-10° (1972)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.16"	
Normal month to date	0.42"	
Year to date	5.23"	
Last year to date	3.95"	
Normal year to date	7.94"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Wed.	
Boardman	SW 6-12	W 4-8
Pendleton	WSW 6-12	SSE 7-14
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:28 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	4:11 p.m.	
Moonrise today	1:52 p.m.	
Moonset today	3:01 a.m.	
Full	Last	New
Dec 18	Dec 26	Jan 2
		Jan 9

Storm raises hopes for ski season start

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

NORTH POWDER — Winter remains more of a rumor than reality in Baker City, but a weekend storm fulfilled its forecast in the mountains.

And although city dwellers will have to wait to construct the season’s first snowman, skiers and snowboarders are getting close to making their first runs at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

The potent storm was a perfect illustration of the rain shadow phenomenon, although in this case the precipitation was generally frozen rather than liquid.

With winds in the upper atmosphere coming from the southwest, the mountains, notably the Elkhorns, intercepted most of the moisture, according to the National Weather Service.

Snow showers fell periodically in Baker City on Saturday, Dec. 11, but almost none accumulated.

Yet just 10 miles or so to the southwest, on the other, windward side of a shoulder of the Elkhorns, the storm dropped a few inches of snow.

And higher in the mountains, much more snow piled up.



Ian Warner/Contributed Photo
A Nordic groomer works on a trail beside Anthony Lake on Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021. The ski area could open for the season Dec. 18.

Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort reported 13 inches of new snow during the weekend, with a snow base of 18 inches on Dec. 13.

If the weather forecast for the rest of this week proves close to accurate, with snow likely most days, there’s a “very, very good chance” that the ski area will open for the season Dec. 18, said Chelsea Judy, Anthony Lakes marketing director.

“We’re very optimistic,” Judy said.

An automated snow-measuring station near Bourne, about six miles north of Sumpter, reported 15 inches of new snow, with 16 inches on the ground the morning of Dec. 13.

Another station, at Eilertson Meadow along Rock Creek on the east side of the

Elkhorns, about 14 inches of snow fell during the weekend. There was only 1 inch of snow there before the storm.

At Schneider Meadows, in the southern Willows north of Halfway, about 22 inches of snow fell during the weekend, bringing the total to 31 inches.

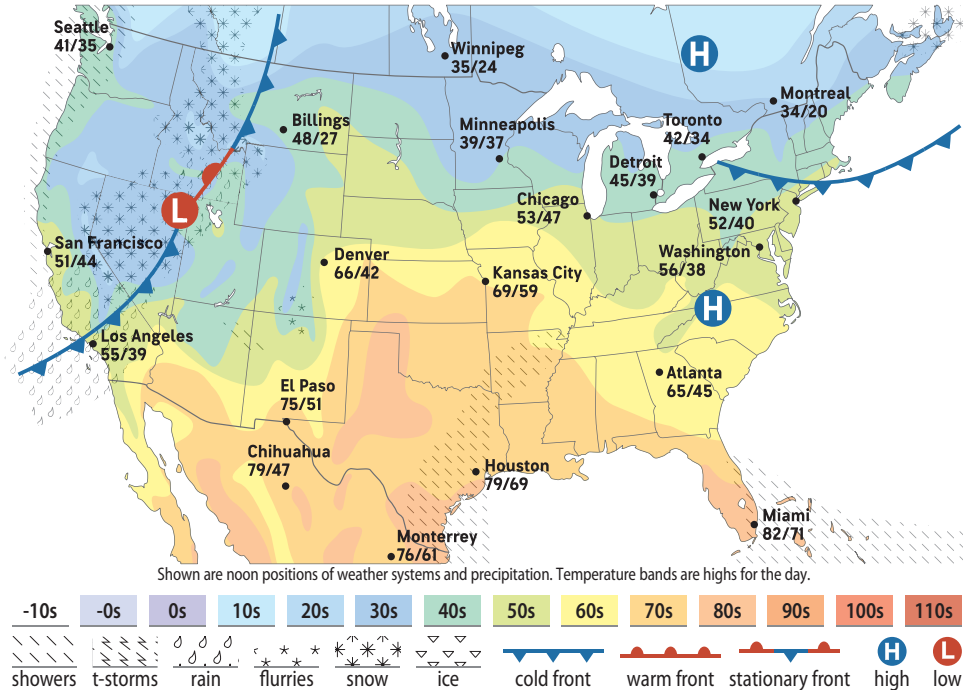
The chance for sticking snow in Baker City and other valleys of Baker County will increase this week after a cold front sweeps through the night of Dec. 13, ushering in colder air and changing the upper air pattern to northwest, which reduces the rain shadow effect.

The National Weather Service predicts snow to continue in the mountains, with a foot or more during the week in the Anthony Lakes area.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 87° in Key West, Fla. Low -13° in Crested Butte, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



IN BRIEF

Two die in separate crashes

BAKER COUNTY — Two people died in separate single-vehicle crashes on snowy highways in Baker County during the weekend, Oregon State Police reported.

The first fatal crash happened Friday morning, Dec. 10, on Highway 203, the Medical Springs Highway, northeast of Baker City.

A passing driver saw an overturned 1991 Dodge Neon near milepost 31, about 8 miles east of Interstate 84 near Salt Creek.

The driver and lone occupant, Gwyn Monroe Adams, died in the crash, according

to OSP. He lived at Pondosa, about 8 miles north of the crash site.

The investigation is continuing. On Dec. 11 at about 11:30 a.m., Maureen Welsh, 69, of Harper, in northern Malheur County, died in a crash on Highway 26 near milepost 202, near the Blue Mountain summit about 10 miles northwest of Unity.

Welsh was driving east when she failed to negotiate a corner, and her Ford Excursion left the road and crashed into a tree, according to OSP. Welsh died at the scene.

Highway 26 was closed for about seven hours.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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