

Elgin honors those who died during past 2 years with memorial

Funeral homes in Union, Umatilla and Baker counties helped with memorial service

By DICK MASON
The Observer

ELGIN — The downtown decor of Elgin has a new addition, one which may prove to be as timeless as the memories of those it honors.

A memorial granite bench was installed earlier in December on Main Street between the Elgin Opera House and the Elgin Museum to recognize the approximately 75 people in the Elgin area who have died in 2020 and 2021.

A service in August gave people a chance to honor family and friends in the Elgin area who were not able to hold services before because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prevented many large gatherings, according to Lauri Ferring, pastor of the Elgin Harvesters Nazarene Church, who helped lead the project.

“They were not allowed the service their family and friends clearly needed. We wanted everyone to have a chance to say goodbye,” she said.

The new granite bench cost more than \$2,500 and was purchased with donated funds, many of which were contributed by local businesses and the families of loved ones honored during the August service.

“It was amazing how people

stepped forward to assist,” Ferring said.

The granite bench, which features polished engraved lettering, was purchased from La Grande’s Memorial Monuments. Kevin Loveland, the owner of Loveland Funeral Chapel, said granite memorials are known for holding up well.

“When they are polished they will last for hundreds of years,” said Loveland, who officiated as a volunteer at the August service.

The polishing of a granite stone’s engraving is done after the cutting of the granite. This process, which includes sanding, preserves the stone by keeping out water that would otherwise settle into the pores of the stone.

Ferring said the memorial is at an ideal location in Elgin because the opera house and museum are popular places for people to visit. She anticipates that many people going to the venues will see and use the bench.

Ferring said volunteers hope to later make additions to the memorial bench site, such as a display with the names of those who it honors. Options being considered include installing bricks in the ground around it bearing the names of the deceased.

The August memorial service was originally scheduled to be held at the Elgin Stampede Grounds. However, the service had to be moved to Elgin High School when wildfire crews combating the Elbow Creek Fire in Wallowa County had to set up camp there. The service at EHS was attended by about 100 people.



Dick Mason/The Observer

From left, volunteers Kathy Bonney, Risa Hallgarth and Lauri Ferring stand beside the new Elgin memorial bench on Dec. 13, 2021. The bench, in front of the Elgin Museum, honors those who died during the past two years. All three women played important roles in getting the memorial bench installed. Bonney is a member of the Elgin Chamber of Commerce, Hallgarth is the mayor of Elgin and Ferring is pastor of the Elgin Harvesters Nazarene Church.

“It was truly amazing. People were in tears and giving each other hugs,” Loveland said.

The program at the service listed the names of 31 people whose families and friends requested they be honored at the memorial event. Others in the Elgin area or with roots in the community, who had died in 2020 and in the first eight months of 2021, also were honored.

Ferring said the service was possible in part because of the help received from four funeral homes in Union, Umatilla and Baker counties. The funeral homes sent letters to families of those in the Elgin area who died in 2020 and 2021 asking them if they would like their loved ones to be recognized at the service.

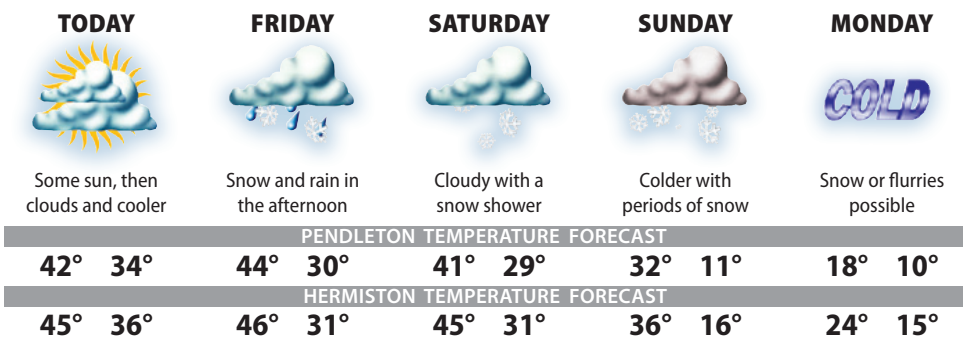
The funeral homes were Loveland Funeral Chapel and Crematory, of La Grande; Daniels Knopp

Funeral Cremation and Life Celebration Center, of La Grande, Munselle-Rhodes Funeral Home, of Milton-Freewater; and Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Halfway.

Ferring hopes that other towns will do something similar in the future because she believes it will bring people closer together.

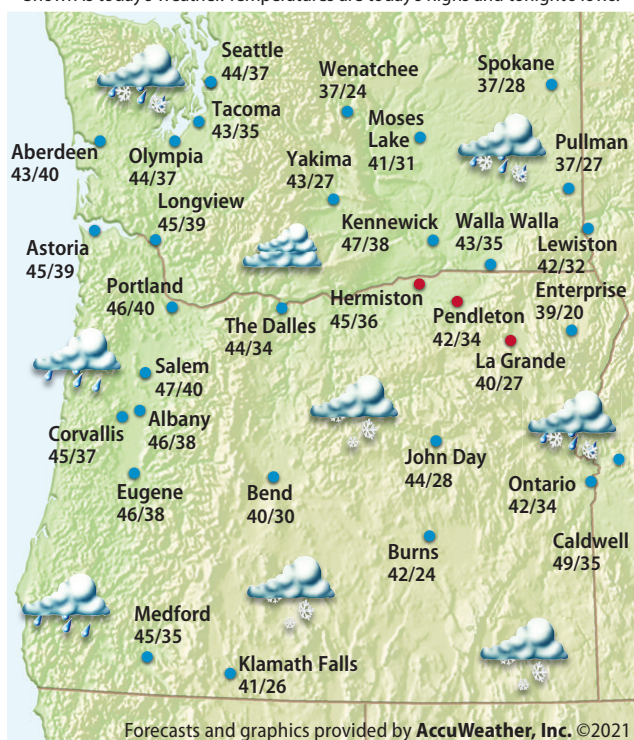
“This is a healthy thing for communities to do,” she said.

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	50°	26°
Normals	40°	27°
Records	68° (1933)	-15° (1983)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	1.50"
Normal month to date	1.05"
Year to date	8.88"
Last year to date	12.75"
Normal year to date	12.78"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	37°	23°
Normals	41°	28°
Records	70° (1933)	-13° (1983)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	1.51"
Normal month to date	0.76"
Year to date	6.58"
Last year to date	4.24"
Normal year to date	8.28"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Fri.
Boardman WSW 8-16	SSW 4-8
Pendleton WSW 8-16	S 7-14

SUN AND MOON

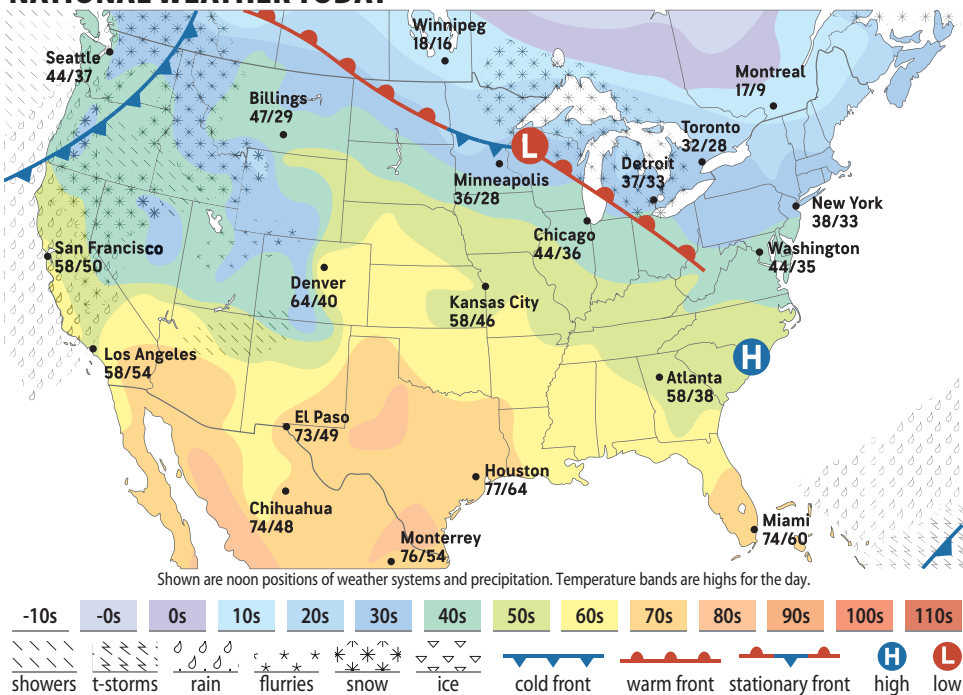
Sunrise today	7:34 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:15 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:39 p.m.
Moonset today	10:54 a.m.

Phase: Last (Dec 26), New (Jan 2), First (Jan 9), Full (Jan 17)

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 84° in Del Rio, Texas Low -18° in Celina, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Near-record snow falls in Joseph

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — One of the snowiest days on record in Joseph occurred last week, according to data from the National Weather Service’s Pendleton office.

While totals of up to 2 feet of snow were reported in some areas around the town on Dec. 14, the NWS officially recorded 14 inches of snow. It marks not only the most snow ever recorded on Dec. 14, but the most anytime in December and ties for the second-highest one-day snowfall amount recorded in Joseph in at least 128 years, per data from the NWS.

Only one other day, according to NWS data, has seen more snowfall in Joseph. That was on Jan. 21, 1894, when a whopping 16 inches of snow was recorded.

Fourteen inches of snow also fell on March 12, 1906.

It also is the wettest December day on record in Joseph, with the 14 inches of snow translating to 1.04 inches of precipitation.

The previous snowfall record on Dec. 14 was more than 100 years ago, when 8 inches of snow fell on Dec. 14, 1915, according to NWS data. Only one other December day in Joseph has seen at least 10 inches of snowfall, when 10 inches came down



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Aaron Murdock shovels snow to clear the alley he and others use as a driveway in Joseph after it was plowed closed following the heavy snowfall during the wee hours of Dec. 14, 2021.

on Dec. 22, 2002.

The last time at least 10 inches of snow fell in Joseph was more than a decade ago, when 12 inches came down on Jan. 28, 2008.

While it would likely take another large dumping of snow, December 2021 is also within striking distance of being the snowiest on record in Joseph. NWS data as of Dec. 20, had 20.3 inches of snow recorded in the town this month. The record for December is 32 inches more than a century ago in December 1916. The month is already well above the 30-year snowfall average of 8.2 inches.

Joseph snowfall records kept by the NWS date back to 1893, though the website does not have snowfall data for the town from about 1955 to 1995.

While near-record snow fell in Joseph, other areas of the county, even if heavily impacted, did not reach the snowfall level Joseph did. Readings taken just south of Flora showed 5 inches there on Dec. 14, while 4 inches fell just south of Lostine and 2.7 inches fell in Wallowa. Over two days, from Dec. 13-14, a total of 15.5 fell in Joseph, 11.5 in Flora, 5.5 in Lostine and 4.9 in Wallowa, according to maps.cocorahs.org.

IN BRIEF

Walla Walla fireworks to start at 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve

WALLA WALLA — Earlier this month, Walla Walla officials asked area residents to help decide when the city’s New Year’s Eve fireworks display should begin this year.

The verdict? The pyrotechnics will begin at 8 p.m. Dec. 31, the city wrote in a press release.

Fireworks will be launched at Walla Walla Community College and will last around 15 minutes. The display will be produced by

Western Display and is expected to include some of the largest fireworks ever launched in the Walla Walla Valley, the release said.

A total of 869 votes were received by the city. Of those, 520 were cast for 8 p.m. (59.83%); 180 were cast for midnight (20.76%); and 167 were cast for 9 p.m. (19.22%).

The fireworks display was originally scheduled for the Fourth of July, but city officials elected to postpone the event until the end of the year due to extreme heat and drought conditions effecting the region this summer.

— Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

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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