

# Elgin band misses out state trophy by 1 point

By SHERAZ SADIQ  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

CORVALLIS — The Elgin High School band competed for the first time in the statewide Oregon School Activities Association band and orchestra championships, finishing in fifth place among the seven other bands competing in their school division.

The event started on May 11 in Corvallis and drew nearly 200 public and private high schools from around the state.

Elgin High School band and choir director Tucker Murphey said he was “extremely proud” of his team and their accomplishment.

“They exceeded all my expectations today. I thought the students handled themselves with great poise and professionalism,” he said. “We are bummed that we didn’t come home with a trophy but we are hungry to get back to it next year and hopefully make it to the podium.”

Erika Adams, a flute player, is one of two seniors in the band and is graduating at the end of the month.

“We are a young band and I was trying not to get my hopes up,” she said. “But it



Matt Polacek/Contributed Photo

The Elgin High School band prepares to perform at the May 2022 OSAA state band and orchestra championships in Corvallis. The band finished fifth in its school division.

was such a good experience to go through it and learn from it, and I’m just really looking forward to hearing about how well they do in the future.”

The team scored a total of 278 points, just one point shy of earning a trophy, according to Murphey. Their performance was evaluated on several measures, including intonation and accuracy

of playing the notes in the three musical compositions they performed.

Still, Murphey is thankful for the experience of leading the band to its first-ever appearance at the state finals and is already planning to make changes to be better prepared for next year, including folding in early morning rehearsals.

“We were the very first

group to play, really early at 8 a.m., and my class is in the afternoon, so we are not used to performing in the morning,” he said.

Adams has two younger sisters who also perform in the 16-member band.

“It’s just a really good experience, especially because we’re able to critique each other in a way that’s not hurtful, but they tell me how

I can improve myself, and we go home and we practice together,” she said.

Adams has been a student of Murphey’s since the sixth grade when she decided to pick up the flute and join her friends in band practice.

She was a freshman in 2019 when the band’s performance at a district competition clocked in at just under 15 minutes, the minimum length required under contest rules to advance to the state finals.

“I remember Mr. Murphey being really disappointed and it hurt me more that our teacher had seen such hopes for us and that we weren’t able to get there because of what seemed to be small reasoning,” Adams said.

Murphey resolved to avoid any missteps the following year. But then came the pandemic, which brought the music to a halt well beyond the halls of Elgin High.

“When COVID hit and I lost four seniors (to graduation), I thought the sky was falling. Would the band ever be able to play again at this level?” Murphey said.

He also faced a more pressing problem: How to keep bandmates engaged and developing musically when they couldn’t meet in

person for rehearsals and performances? So Murphey posted assignments on Google Classroom and had the students record themselves completing them for him to critique.

And he also found a way to showcase the band’s growth and instill a sense of cohesion.

“For one of our winter concerts, we were all socially distanced. We played in the gym and I posted it to YouTube and sent it out to parents,” Murphey said.

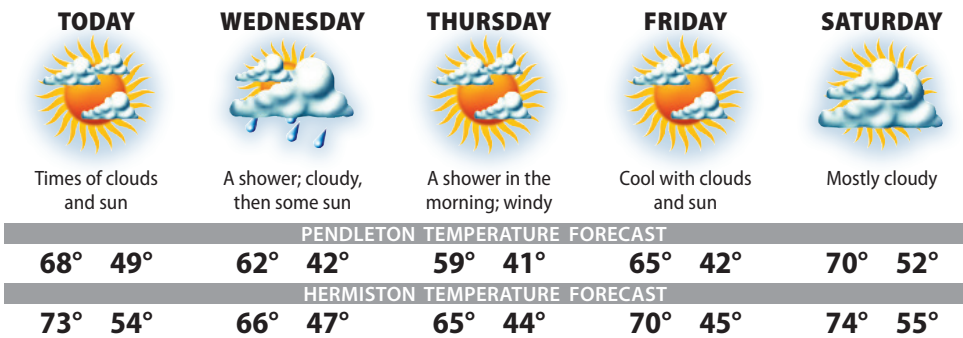
Adams welcomed the opportunity to perform together in person after months spent practicing the flute without all her bandmates nearby for encouragement and motivation.

“We hadn’t been together in forever and it was just exciting to hear that nice big, warm sound again,” she added.

In August, she will leave Elgin to start her first semester at Brigham Young University-Idaho. She plans to bring her flute along and the memories of her time learning from her teacher, mentor and friend.

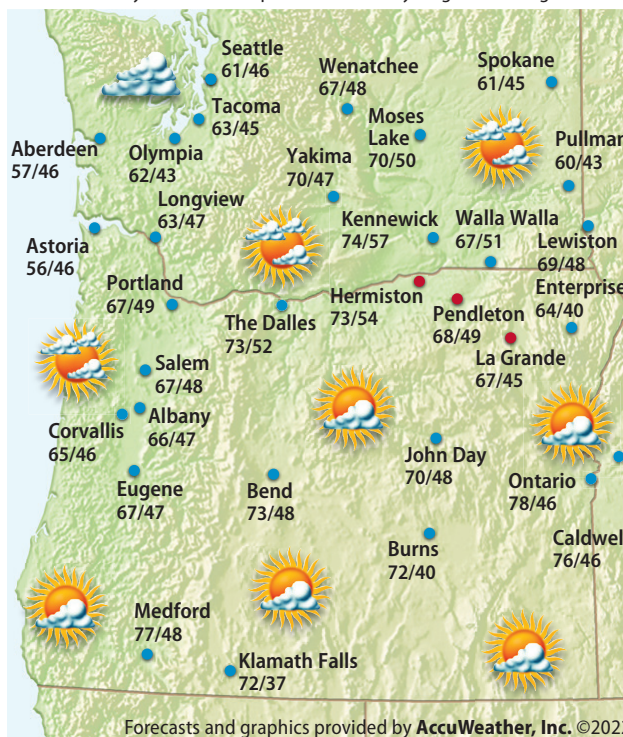
“Mr. Murphey is so inspirational,” Adams said. “He pushes me to be a better person inside class and outside of class.”

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



## ALMANAC

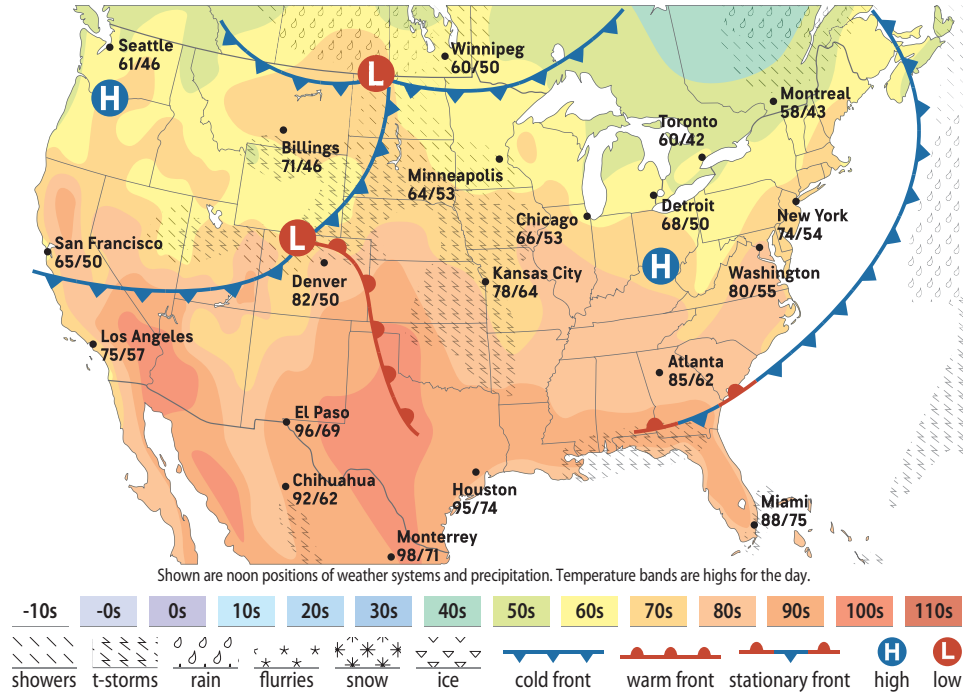
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	68°	56°		
Normals	73°	47°		
Records	94° (2006)	32° (1910)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.03"			
Month to date	1.51"			
Normal month to date	0.70"			
Year to date	7.13"			
Last year to date	3.81"			
Normal year to date	6.04"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	71°	54°		
Normals	77°	46°		
Records	94° (1973)	32° (2002)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace			
Month to date	0.86"			
Normal month to date	0.40"			
Year to date	4.75"			
Last year to date	1.99"			
Normal year to date	3.95"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Wed.		
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 10-20		
Pendleton	W 6-12	W 8-16		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	5:22 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	8:22 p.m.			
Moonrise today	10:59 p.m.			
Moonset today	6:19 a.m.			
	Last	New	First	Full
	May 22	May 30	June 7	June 14

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 106° in Zapata, Texas Low 23° in Daniel, Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Local officials honor past fallen law enforcement officers in Union County

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Four past fallen Union County law enforcement officers were honored last week in La Grande.

Law enforcement officers from the La Grande Police Department, Union County Sheriff’s Office and Oregon State Police hosted a Union County law enforcement memorial ceremony on Friday, May 13, honoring four law enforcement officers who lost their lives in Union County. The event took place in front of a crowd at the Union County law enforcement building, with officials from the city and county in attendance.

“It’s important to honor them and their families,” La Grande Police Chief Gary Bell said. “Several of those individuals still have family members here locally.”

Speakers at the memorial

service in addition to Bell were pastor Franklin Humber, La Grande Police Lt. Jason Hays, OSP Lt. Dave Aydelotte, Union County Sheriff’s Office Lt. Ken Woodward, La Grande Police Officer Scott Norton and La Grande Mayor Steve Clements. The names of the fallen officers were read to the crowd in attendance, while flower wreaths were placed above the memorial outside the law enforcement building.

Those in attendance honored the lives of Amos “Spud” Helms, Michael Lynn Cheney, Raymond Williams and Gary Byassee.

Helms, a trooper with OSP, sustained fatal gunshot wounds in October 1931 on Adams Avenue in La Grande. The trooper served with OSP for six months prior to his death.

In 1980, Union County Sheriff’s Office deputies Cheney and Williams were killed in their patrol pickup on Highway 82 near Elgin when

a drunk driver struck their vehicle head-on. Cheney, who had served in Union County for only 14 days after moving from the Douglas County Sheriff’s Department, was 38 years old — he was survived by two daughters. Williams, who was 33 years old, served with the Union County Sheriff’s Office for five years and was survived by a wife, son and daughter.

La Grande Police Cpl. Byassee died at the age of 30 in the line of duty in 1982, after a leg injury sustained during a police training session in San Luis Obispo, California. Byassee developed blood clots due to the injury, which traveled to his lungs and led to his death before completing treatment in Seattle. Byassee served in the La Grande Police Department for six years, prior to which he served two years with the Union County Police Department — he was survived by a wife and two daughters.

## IN BRIEF

### Man suffers serious injuries in fall from in Union County

LA GRANDE — A 41-year-old La Grande man suffered serious injuries in a fall from a rock outcropping in southeast Union County this weekend.

The victim slipped and fell about 150 vertical feet from the rock outcropping, which was just off Merry-Go-Round Road, 6.5 miles southeast of Catherine Creek State Park, on Saturday, May 14, said Union County Emergency Manager Nick Vora. A helicopter ambulance later flew the victim to St. Alphonsus Medical Center, Boise. Vora said the patient is expected to recover from his injuries.

The man who fell was with a group of all-terrain vehicle riders who rode off Merry-Go-Round Road and then up to a viewpoint. There he got off his ATV and later fell off the outcropping.

The accident was called into Union County’s dispatch soon afterward at 4:41 p.m. Eight Union County Search and Rescue volunteers,

Vora, Union County Sheriff Cody Bowen, three sheriff’s deputies, ambulances with the La Grande Fire and Union fire departments, a member of U.S. Forest Service law enforcement and a Life Flight helicopter soon arrived to conduct the rescue.

First responders set up a low angle rope system with a Stokes litter basket. The man was placed in the basket and pulled up a steep 500-foot incline.

“It was the equivalent of pulling somebody up a ski slope,” Vora said.

Once up the slope the individual was transported in an ambulance to the helicopter, a drive that took about 10 minutes. The helicopter’s pilot was not able to land closer to the accident scene because of the rugged terrain.

Vora said the rescue was successful due in large part to the assistance of volunteer first responders.

“If it had not been for their help we would not have had the same outcome in the same time period,” Vora said.

—EO Media Group

**CORRECTION:** The article, “Ribbon cutting slated for new Stanfield homes” on A3 of the May 7 edition of the East Oregonian referred to the wrong organization partnering with the Umatilla County Housing Authority. The UCHA worked with Casa and the National Equity Fund for Patriot Heights.

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