Ezra Meeker Oregon Trail time capsule to be opened June 23

By DICK MASON The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ezra Meeker, the famous pioneer who spent the later part of his life memorializing the Oregon Trail and reviving memories of it as storyteller, may have one more tale to share.

People opening a time capsule Meeker left in La Grande in 1906 could discover a note or message from the frontiersman that he wanted people to see in the future. The time capsule is set to be opened at 110 Walnut St. at 1 p.m. on Thursday, June 23. The event will be at the site of a stone Oregon Trail marker Meeker dedicated on April 10, 1906, one which had interior space at its base for a time capsule. Little is known about what the time capsule may contain.

"The only thing we know is that it may have the dedication speech the mayor of La Grande gave," said Ronnie Allen, a La Grande local historian who has done extensive research on Meeker's stone markers and is a member of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Allen has organized the time capsule opening event with major help Dale Counsell, of La Grande, a fellow local history aficionado. Counsell said the Oregon Trail has special meaning to him because a number of his relatives came to the Northwest on the Oregon Trail.

A time capsule of distinction

The stone marker is among 35 Meeker set up along the Oregon Trail during the three journeys he made across the United States to promote



Dick Mason/The Observer

Stu Spence, left, the city of La Grande Parks and Recreation director, and Ronnie Allen, a local historian, examine an Oregon Trail stone marker Friday, June 17, 2022, that Ezra Meeker put up in 1906 on Walnut Street in La Grande. Parks and recreation will help open a time capsule in the marker on June 23.

efforts to preserve the overland route.

The stone marker on Walnut Street may be the only one Meeker put up that had a time capsule.

"It is the only marker that had a time capsule, according to his diaries," Allen said. The time capsule will be opened

with assistance from the La Grande Parks and Recreation Department, which will be using a backhoe for the work, according to Stu Spence, the department director.

Once the contents of the time

capsule are removed they will be replaced by items Allen and Counsel have collected for a new time capsule. They will include an Oregon Trail brochure, a copy of the Overland Journal (a quarterly publication of the Oregon-California Association) plus items that are or recently have been integral parts of our daily lives today including two face masks, a COVID-19 home test kit, an iPhone, a \$2 bill and a quarter. Allen said he is not sure if all of these items will fit into the time capsule.

Once the new time capsule items are placed in the stoner marker, it will be reinstalled in the exact place it is now, Allen said.

The marker is in the front yard of the home of Jack and Jennifer Boyd.

"I am so excited," Jennifer Boyd said of her anticipation of the time capsule opening.

Attracting **Oregon Trail fans**

The stone marker is easy to miss but many Oregon Trail fans have

no trouble finding it after reading about it in books and online. Jennifer Boyd said that in the summer five or six people a week come to her house asking about the marker.

The Oregon Trail was close to Meeker's heart because he had taken the route west from Iowa in 1852 when he was a young man. He later settled in what is now Puyallup, Washington, and was the

town's first mayor. In the 1880s, he made and lost a fortune growing and marketing hops. Meeker then went to Alaska to look for gold, returned and experimented with dehydrated foods. He took up writing, producing at least five books before he died.

Meeker made his 1906 stop in La Grande while on an eastbound trip along the Oregon Trail in an ox-drawn wagon. He made a second trip across the trail by wagon, and still later retraced portions of it in an automobile.

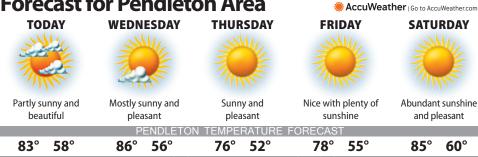
At 94, he made the trip by airplane. He flew over the trail in a week. His 1852 journey took seven

Meeker died in December 1928, at the age of 97.

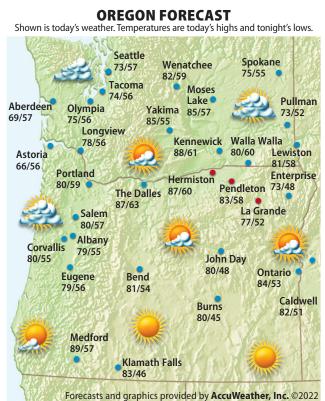
Boyd said a story from a 1906 edition of The Observer indicates that about 600 people attended the dedication ceremony for the stone marker on what is now Walnut Street. She hopes that a crowd at least that big will be present for the June 23 time capsule opening.

"Ezra Meeker would be so thrilled to know that part of the history he kept alive still excites people," she said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



54°



NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 106° in Comanche, Texas Low 21° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

58°

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest. TEMP. HIGH Normals 103° (1900) 38° (1893) **PRECIPITATION** 24 hours ending 3 p.m Month to date Normal month to date Year to date Last year to date Normal year to date **HERMISTON** through 3 p.m. yest.

ALMANAC

54°

SATURDAY

Abundant sunshine

and pleasant

60°

62°

2.46

TEMP. HIGH Normals **PRECIPITATION** 24 hours ending 3 p.m 0.00" Month to date Normal month to date Year to date

Last year to date

Normal year to date

WINDS (in mph) Wed. Today WSW 8-16 Boardman SW 4-8 Pendleton NW 4-8 W 7-14 **SUN AND MOON** 5:06 a.m. Sunrise today 8:48 p.m. 1:24 a.m. 1:36 p.m.

Sunset toniaht Moonrise today First Full Last July 13 July 6 July 20

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY • Billings 75/52 0 New York 77/64 Chicago 97/74 San Francisco Washington Kansas City Atlanta Miami Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day 20s 90s -0s 0s 10s 30s 40s

cold front

BMW riders roll into John Day

By JUSTIN DAVIS Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Chief Joseph Rally returned to the Grant County Fairgrounds this year following a two-year absence due to the pandemic.

Camping tents and a plethora of BMW motorcycles of all types and ages once again filled the grassy area beside Trowbridge Pavilion over the course of the three-day event. The rally started Thursday, June 16, and concluded the night of Saturday, June 18, with riders leaving town the following day.

The event was sponsored by BMW Riders of Oregon and drew riders from all over the Western United States and parts of Canada. Guided rides, riding instruction, speakers, seminars and nightly motorcycle movies were some of the activities the rallygoers participated in over the course of the event.

BMW Riders of Oregon rally chair Alice LeBarron said the group is passionate about BMW bikes, but owning one isn't necessary

to join their club.

"Our club and this rally are really open to having other brands of bikes," she said. "It's people who are of the same mindset, basically.'

LeBarron said she thinks a lot of people have moved to BMW motorcycles over the years due to the number of

"WE'LL KEEP COMING HERE. THERE IS SUCH GREAT RIDING HERE, AND THE LOCATION JUST **WORKS FOR** *US.* "

Riders of Oregon rally chair

different models the company makes that cater to different riding styles and preferences.

LeBarron said she's been coming to the rally in John Day since 2012 and that she even came over the two years that the rally was canceled due to the pandemic: "The two years that we didn't have our rally ... I came here with a few friends and we camped out and had an unrally.'

While LeBarron said there isn't much interaction between the rally and the community, she added that anybody who is curious about riding or anything concerning BMW Riders of Oregon always is welcome to attend the rally and have their questions answered.

LeBarron said there were 277 people registered to attend the rally but that the overall number of attendees was a "bit lower than normal" due to the national BMW rally in Springfield, Missouri, being held over the same weekend as Chief Joseph.

She added Grant County is a place she looks forward to visiting every year and that she enjoys working with Mindy Winegar and her staff at the fairgrounds.

"We'll keep coming here," LeBarron said. "There is such great riding here, and the location just works for us."

IN BRIEF

COVID-19 levels 'low' or 'medium' in Eastern Oregon

LA GRANDE — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention monitors community levels of COVID-19 to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in

The CDC listed the following levels for Eastern Oregon:

Morrow County: low.

- Umatilla County: low.
- Union County: medium.
- Baker County: medium.
- Wallowa County: medium.
- Malheur County: medium.

The CDC recommends staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. Those who have symptoms should get tested.

For communities with medium levels, additional precautions are issued for those at high risk for severe illness, including talking to a health care provider about the need to wear a mask.

— EO Media Group

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In the App Store:



East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. **Postmaster**: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Copyright © 2022, EO Media Group

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\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

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