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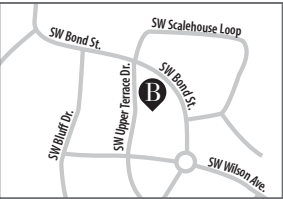
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541-385-5804

OUR ADDRESS
Street 320 SW Upper Terrace Drive
Suite 200
Bend, OR 97702
Mailing P.O. Box 6020
Bend, OR 97708



ADMINISTRATION
Publisher
Heidi Wright 541-383-0341
Editor
Gerry O'Brien 541-633-2166

DEPARTMENT HEADS
Advertising
Brian Naplachowski 541-383-0370
Circulation/Operations
Maria Johnson 541-617-7830
Finance Wendy Dougherty ... 541-383-0324
Human Resources 541-383-0340

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City Julie Johnson 541-383-0367
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

1906 Oregon Trail time capsule found to be empty

BY DICK MASON
The Observer (La Grande)
LA GRANDE — Dale Counsell had his hammers and chisels ready to help him retrieve a 116-year old message from the past.
Unfortunately, the Union County historian didn't need these tools on Thursday for the past proved to be elusive in La Grande when a time capsule was opened and turned out to be empty.
Counsell was among about 200 people gathered for the opening of a time capsule reputed to be in the stone Oregon Trail marker put up by frontiersman Ezra Meeker, the pioneer who spent the later part of his life memorializing the Oregon Trail. The marker, installed in 1906, was removed from its base by a backhoe with assistance from the La Grande Parks and Recreation Department.
Dennis Larsen, the author of several books about Meeker, then examined the stone marker and found a space for a time capsule.
"I've looked at it and unfortunately it is empty," Larsen told the crowd.
The author, who lives in



Isabella Crowley/The Observer

Dale Counsell collects rock samples from inside an Oregon Trail marker in La Grande on Thursday. The samples will be sent off to Washington State University for analysis in an effort to determine the marker's original placement.

Lacy, Washington, said he was not surprised that the time capsule was empty because a number of people have reported that the marker was moved several times in the Walnut Street area after it was installed in 1906. The marker is now in the front yard of Jack and Jennifer Boyd.
Jack Boyd noted that the empty time capsule may give rise to a new

mystery as people try to find out what happened to its contents.
"This is something that could be put into a Steven Spielberg movie," he said.
Larsen is happy that the time capsule, though empty, gave rise to a gathering of people interested in Oregon Trail history.
"It was a good block party," he said.
The time capsule, ac-

cording to a Meeker journal entry, included a speech read by the mayor of La Grande on April 10, 1906, at a dedication ceremony for the marker. Jim Kreider, of La Grande, said good-naturedly that he had hoped the time capsule contained something more.
"It is unfortunate," he said. "I was hoping the secret of life was in there."

MORROW COUNTY

Commissioners fire county administrator

BY PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian
HEPPNER — At a packed public meeting Tuesday, Morrow County commissioners voted 2-1 to fire Darrell Green, who has been county administrator for 4½ years.
Green told the board he learned in August there may have been a complaint against him and an investigation to see if he violated nepo-

tism rules. But no one addressed the complaint with him at the time.
He told the board that in his tenure he never received any verbal or written warnings, and even Tuesday did not have the full information about what led to his firing.
Green asked commissioners about any complaint against him. Commission Chair Jim Doherty and Commissioner Melissa Lind-

sey said they would not make statements on the advice of attorneys.
But Commissioner Don Russell said he had been trying to obtain information about the investigation for months, with no luck.
Without knowing more, he said, he could not support Green's termination.
Doherty and Lindsey voted to fire Green, while Russell voted against it.

LOCAL BRIEFING

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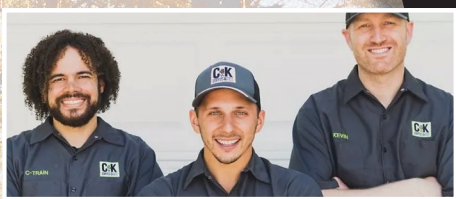
Bend's two Jersey Mike's locations allegedly violated child labor law

Federal labor officials said the two Bend locations of Jersey Mike's Subs violated child labor law as part of a national investigation into the Manasquan, New Jersey-based sandwich chain.
The locations at 222 NE Emerson St. and 143 SW Century Drive, as well as eight restaurants in New Jersey,

Pennsylvania and North Carolina, allowed 14- and 15-year-old employees to work more hours than allowed under the law, according to a statement Tuesday by the U.S. Department of Labor.
The Fair Labor Standards Act mandates that 14- and 15-year-old workers not work past 7 p.m. or more than three hours on school days, and not past 9 p.m. in the summer. Jersey Mike's also failed to maintain proof-of-age documents for minor workers.
The company was ordered to pay \$24,000 in civil penalties.

Anecdotal evidence suggests some employers have responded to the nationwide labor shortage through child labor, though it's too early to say for certain, according to Charlene Rachor, Department of Labor wage and hour district director for New Jersey.
At the time of the investigation, the two Bend locations were operated by the corporate office, Rachor said.
Jersey Mike's has approximately 2,000 franchise locations opened and under development, according to the Department of Labor.

— Bulletin staff reports



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Makenna Cervelli
C: 425-622-3186
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mCervelli@bendbulletin.com

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