



# The Nugget

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## Frigid weather held Sisters in icy grip

By Ron Thorkildson  
Correspondent

Central Oregon's prolonged spell of cold, snowy weather provided a certain wintry charm to the holiday season this year.

That "charm," however, came, quite literally, at a cost. Local residents paid more (or will when the bills arrive) to heat their living and working spaces.

Then there was the additional expense associated with clearing snow from around homes and businesses. This might have included purchasing products that help melt snow and ice from sidewalks and other walkways, making it safer for pedestrians to get around.

Most of the area's citizenry probably take all this in stride, regarding it as a small price to pay for the privilege of living amid such natural beauty. But as more and



PHOTO BY RON THORKILDSON

Dawn's first light is illuminating the North and Middle Sister on a bitterly cold January morning.

higher mountains of snow continue to pile up around town, some are starting to

wonder how long the current cold regime will last. The current stretch of

frigid weather here in Sisters Country began on December See WINTER on page 24

## Mentors have a big impact in community

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

Mentoring organizations, city councils, and civic organizations across Central Oregon are partnering through Better Together to celebrate National Mentoring Month with a regional campaign to recruit caring adults to volunteer as youth mentors. During the month of January, *The Nugget* will feature some organizations in Sisters and their volunteer mentors.

The articles will share the stories of Sisters youth mentors and hopefully encourage other local residents

See MENTORS on page 20

## Schools wrestle with snow-closure decision

By Steve Kadel  
Correspondent

Few people pay more attention to winter weather forecasts than Sisters School District administrators, who must balance the need for student safety with the state of Oregon's requirement for classroom days each year.

For Sisters Superintendent Curtiss Scholl, things begin early when a big snowfall is anticipated.

"Our head of transportation is on the road at 4 a.m. and I'm on the road by 4:30," Scholl said. "We talk at 5 in the morning about whether the roads have been cleared. We talk about whether to close school or have a late start."

Two particularly heavy snowstorms have forced closures this school year. That included the 20-inch storm before Christmas break and the latest round of snow that closed schools on Wednesday, January 4. Another closure was announced early Tuesday morning, due to a heavy storm moving into the region.

The District's annual schedule includes an extra day of classes beyond what the State requires. But so far, closures will mandate three or four extra days of school in June.

Scholl said there's no extra cost for teachers because their contract stipulates 189 days

See CLOSURES on page 25

## How Sisters wildlife copes with winter

By Jim Anderson  
Correspondent

Winter is hard on wildlife, just as it is on you and me. But like you and me, wildlife that spends winter with us have layers they use to stay warm and dry — like our layers of clothing that keep us comfortable in cold temperatures.

Birds who winter here are well-suited to survive frigid conditions, with downy feathers close to their warm bodies. Their down is like our long-johns, trapping air close to our skin, keeping in the heat. A bird's outside feathers, that prevent cold wind, snow and rain from reaching their insulating down, is like our jackets, overcoats and wool hats.

Most birds seek shelter in dry trees and shrubs to keep



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Mule deer can have a tough time when the snow gets deep — but wildlife is adapted to extremes.

the wind, wet and cold away from their bodies.

It's the same for mammals: Jackrabbits, coyotes, and badgers, for example, have thick dense fur to keep the cold moisture from contacting their warm, dry skin.

In fall, mule deer shed

their reddish brown summer hair, which are solid shafts that block summer heat. The gray hairs of winter are hollow, and the deer grow a dense, wool-like underfur that provides insulation.

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