

News Briefs

Waldport fined for dumping sewage

EUGENE — The city of Waldport has been sentenced to a \$2,500 fine and five years on probation for criminal charges related to the dumping of sewage into Alsea Bay, the U.S. attorney's office announced Tuesday.

The sentence requires the city to spend at least \$50,000 to improve their underground sewer pipes. The city also must train workers at its sewage treatment plant and ensure that backup workers are available.

In court documents, the city acknowledged that in the spring of 1996, the city's main plant operator went on medical leave.

Her boss, the Waldport Public Works Superintendent, decided to run the plant himself. Court papers state that he did not have the ability to competently operate the plant and essentially ignored it for two weeks.

Because of this, the plant went septic and its effluent, which flowed into the bay, was polluted with high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, posing a threat to humans and shellfish.

Federal Reserve takes steps to slow crisis

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve moved to inoculate the U.S. economy against a spreading global crisis Tuesday, cutting a key interest rate for the first time in nearly three years.

The quarter-point cut in the

federal funds rate to 5.25 percent will mean slightly lower borrowing costs for millions of Americans on everything from auto loans to home equity lines of credit if commercial banks, as expected, follow suit in coming days by lowering their benchmark prime lending rates. The prime rate is currently at 8.5 percent.

Wall Street, which had hoped for a bigger rate cut, sent stock prices plunging by more than 100 points after the Fed announcement but later recovered somewhat. The Dow Jones industrial average ended the day down 28.32 at 8,080.52.

Evacuees return after Georges makes its exit

PASCAGOULA, Miss. — The whirlwind that was Georges began to disappear from the weather map Tuesday, but its story was still being written: Rains drenched Alabama and the Florida Panhandle, and evacuees slowly returned to find out what happened to their homes.

Downgraded to just a tropical depression, Georges and its downpours moved northeast, into Georgia and South Carolina. The hurricane wind that ripped through the coast with gusts as high as 174 mph had dropped to 35 mph.

President Clinton declared the entire storm-damaged swath a disaster area and planned to visit as soon as recovery operations allowed.

— The Associated Press

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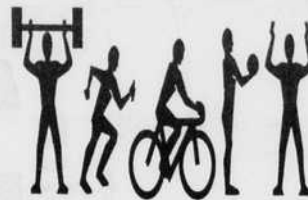
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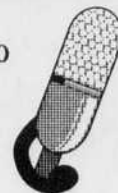
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