

WEATHER

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conditions at the site.

Slagle is a journeyman forecaster at the National Weather Service station for the Pendleton region. The region, or County Warning Area, extends north to Ellensburg; Washington, west to The Dalles, south to Bend, and east to Joseph. Their coverage area includes John Day, Walla Walla, Yakima and the Tri-Cities.

Slagle does the TAF — Terminal Aerodrome Forecast — for seven airports in the region. Those forecasts are updated at least four times a day. The NWS updates a seven-day forecast twice a day.

They're also in charge of putting out hydrology outlooks at rivers and aviation forecasts. If there's a low cloud ceiling above one of the airports in the region, the NWS can make the call saying flying conditions are unsafe.

The agency is also the only one authorized to put out watches, warnings and advisories, Slagle said.

Meteorologists develop their forecasts primarily using model runs, or computer-generated maps that simulate future atmospheric conditions. There are hundreds of different models, based on various grid spacings and physical factors. Meteorologists compare the model runs, along with satellite images and radar data. The more consensus there is between the different sources of information, the more confidence with which the meteorologist can put out a forecast.

Mike Vescio, the meteorologist-in-charge at the Pendleton station, said technological advances have been crucial in making forecasts.

"When I first started, we did only a five-day forecast, and the model data we had was very limited," he said. "We printed it out on facsimile charts, and it was very primitive compared to what we have today."

For most meteorologists, their job changes with the place they live.

"This office is pretty into fire weather," Slagle said. "Most western offices are."

Moving with the job, and becoming an expert in different kinds of severe weather, is part of the territory.

Vescio, a 28-year veteran of the industry, said he has lived and worked in the Carolinas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and Oregon.

"In North Carolina, we had coastal concerns and did a marine forecast," he said. "In Fort Worth, Texas, thunderstorms and tornadoes were a big concern."

A Nebraska native, Slagle grew up knowing he was interested in meteorology, and studied it at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

But upon graduation, he found that getting a job in his field wasn't so easy.

"It turns out a lot of people got into meteorology after the movie 'Twister,'" Slagle joked.

He managed to find work with a private company in Grand Forks, North Dakota, doing a lot of winter forecasts for road companies.

After a few years of trying to get into the National Weather Service, he finally landed an entry-level job in Elko, Nevada, and worked there for three years.

As the industry's reliance on automation grows, Slagle said jobs have become more competitive, as has keeping up with new technologies.

"People don't know about us probably as much as they should," he said. "As smartphones came around, people start to get weather forecasts from their phone. So how do we adapt?"

Some changes have included doing more work with partner agencies like the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, and becoming more visible to the public.

"They want us to get away from drawing grids, issuing weather warnings," Slagle said. "They want us to get into more outreach, social media."

That has included teaching storm-spotting classes and giving tours, as well as going to career fairs and safety fairs.

Slagle said NWS has also begun to provide support on-site during natural disasters, such as chemical spills or events with large numbers of people, like fairs and concerts. They will be on-site at the Pendleton Round-Up in September.

SECURITY

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Humphries said of Bowen.

Bowen, who is continuing to be a full-time SRO in La Grande, has received praise from many La Grande School District educators for his work, which is a big reason why the second position was added.

"We saw a lot of benefits. (Bowen) helped a great deal with safety and security and helped

with the orderly operation of the school environment," said Larry Glaze, who served as the La Grande School District superintendent from 2008 to 2017 and is now director of operations for the InterMountain Education Service District.

Glaze added that Bowen connects well with students and staff.

"He provides a human side to the face of law enforcement," he said.

Glaze helped coordinate the cre-

ation of a collaborative composed of the La Grande, Cove, Union and North Powder school districts, which are sharing the expense of Humphries' position with help from the InterMountain ESD.

Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen said Humphries and Bowen are well suited for their roles as school resource officers because of their approachability.

"Let's face it, not everybody is cut out to be a school resource officer," Rasmussen said. "Not everyone

has a personality that gives them the ability to put kids at ease."

Humphries, like Bowen, will be patrolling schools, assisting at school crosswalk sites, reaching out to students who need help and attending school events like athletic contests to provide an additional measure of security.

The new SRO said he enjoys being in a school environment with students.

"There is so much good, positive energy," Humphries said.

POET

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hold in their hands and say, 'Look what I did.'"

Based out of her home, Baird pours over poetry for hours, scouring Instagram for potential authors and compiling lists of which poets would suit the various themed anthologies she plans to publish in coming months. She also relies on recommendations and second opinions from other writers. Her background as a former high school English teacher has also supplied her with an arsenal of skills — scheduling and keeping to a timeline, problem solving on the fly and managing an array of personalities.

For those posting and promoting their work on social media platforms, gaining notoriety and breaking through to a larger audience can be one of the greatest hurdles. Most are self-promoters, limited to their circle of family, friends and followers when marketing their posts or self-published work. Baird, however, hopes her company can serve as a "larger platform (for them)" to spring from.

"Navigating the stress of publication, taking on the initial costs and attempting to self-market is a lot for writers to take on alone," Baird

said. "Poetry, specifically, is very near and dear to people's souls when they write. You have to tread very carefully in order to publish, promote and sell their work and have them still feel like it's their own and something they want to be a part of. It's not just words on a page; it's a glimpse into who they are."

However, she said the process by which she selects authors and material for the anthologies is a bit unorthodox. Authors retain control of what they'd like published, sending Baird a collection of poems for her to then choose from. How she selects the group of writers featured in a given anthology is entirely dependent on that anthology's theme.

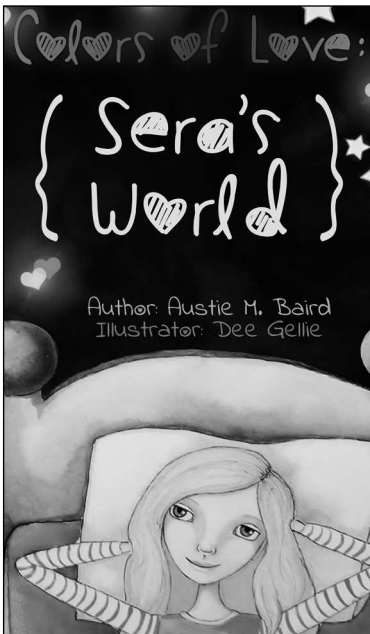
"I don't want just anyone in the anthology, even if they're really talented, because my goal is to highlight each writer's strength," Baird said of the selection process. "Authors who really thrive when it comes to writing poetry on (a certain) topic, that's who we select (for that anthology). I'm not looking for one poem — I'm looking for (a) skill set. I want to be able to feature your writing so that when a reader picks up these anthologies, they can fall in love with who you are as a writer, not (with) one poem."

Amid the chaos and attention

required of her fledgling company, Baird's personal writing (aside from her children's book ventures) has been put on hold. For professional reasons, she's chosen not to include her work in the anthologies. Baird is currently working on the company's next anthology, "Splintered Souls," which centers on mental illness and depression, due at the end of October, and the first installation of her children's book series entitled "Colors of Love: Sera's World," scheduled for the end of September. She intends to release a number of other thematic anthologies throughout the next year and is optimistic about her company's future.

"There's something about really committing yourself to following something that you felt was a good idea and watching it play out — (seeing these) tokens that you're on the right course, even when (some) things are going wrong. Every step that we take into the unknown is another step that's leading us forward to our goals, and so far we haven't gotten lost."

More info can be obtained via email [abbairdpublishing@gmail.com](mailto:abbairdpublishing@gmail.com), Instagram @a.b.baird\_publishing or [www.abbairdpublishing.com](http://www.abbairdpublishing.com).



Courtesy photo

Baird's first children's book, "Colors of Love: Sera's World" is set to release the end of September through her publishing company, A.B.Baird Publishing, based in Cove.

WILDFIRES

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"gross mismanagement" for decades.

"The fuel loads are up. The density of our forests is historical. We have dead and dying timber," Zinke said at a Cabinet meeting at the White House.

"This is unacceptable that year after year we're watching our forests burn, our habitat destroyed and our communities devastated," he added. "And it is absolutely preventable. Public lands are for everybody to enjoy and not just held hostage by special-interest groups."

Zinke has long complained that environmental "extremists" make it difficult for trees to be logged to reduce fire risk.

"Whether you're a global warmist advocate or denier, it doesn't make a difference when you have rotting timber, when housing prices are going up ... yet we are wasting billions of board feet" of timber that could go to local lumber mills, he said.

The focus on wildfire comes as California and other states face longer and more destructive wildfire seasons because of drought,

warmer weather attributed to climate change and homes built deeper into forests.

Yosemite National Park's scenic valley in Northern California reopened Aug. 14 after a 20-day smoked-forced closure, and hundreds of people were evacuated from Glacier National Park in Montana after a wildfire destroyed at least nine homes and cabins in one of the park's historic districts.

In Washington state, officials have distributed masks to combat unhealthy air filled with smoke from wildfires that have blanketed the Northwest.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, said the current crisis underscores the importance of preventing wildfires.

"It is unacceptable to me to have Northwest seniors and young people being afraid to open their doors in the morning because they are afraid of smoke," he said.

Longer and hotter wildfire seasons are the "new normal," said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Washington, "and we have to meet it with a very, very aggressive response" that includes drones, satellites and other

technology.

Not all efforts will be popular, Cantwell said, noting that some Seattle-area residents opposed controlled burns this spring because they feared the smoke.

"I guarantee you now, Seattle would definitely take a little bit of smoke instead of the eventual, all-summer-long smoke that we're getting," she said.

Perdue and other officials said the focus on prevention could save money, noting that federal wildfire costs approached a record \$3 billion last year.

"There's no quick fix," Perdue said, but increased collaboration could eventually save money or at least "get more done with the same costs."

Congress earlier this year created a wildfire disaster fund to help combat increasingly severe wildfires. The law sets aside more than \$20 billion over eight years to allow the Forest Service and other federal agencies to end a practice of raiding non-fire-related accounts to cover wildfire costs.

The plan takes effect in October 2019.

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