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Environmental groups push to ban 'cyanide bombs' in Oregon

By **Stephen Hamway**
WesCom News Service

Nearly 100 private citizens and environmental groups in Oregon and beyond are pushing back against the use of cyanide

capsules as a means of predator control. In a letter sent in September to the state and federal agencies that use M-44 devices, which fire a burst of sodium cyanide

poison when triggered, the groups called for a ban in Oregon. Other states in the West have already done that. The groups criticized the practice as being ineffective, undermanaged and

dangerous to humans, pets and other animals. "This is a no-brainer, and I still find it hard to believe that this is still going on," said Brooks Fahy, executive director of the Oregon

conservation nonprofit Predator Defense, one of the groups leading the effort. M-44 devices — sometimes derogatorily called "cyanide bombs" — are small, spring-

See Cyanide / Page 5A

Cove City Council approves garbage rate increase

Community will see a 20 cent hike

By **Max Denning**
The Observer

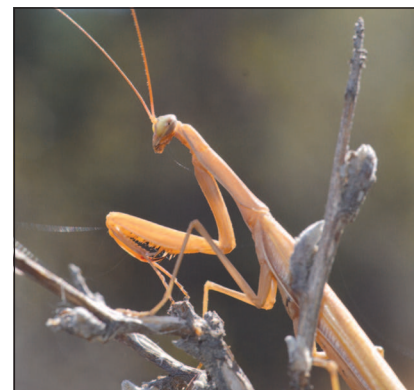
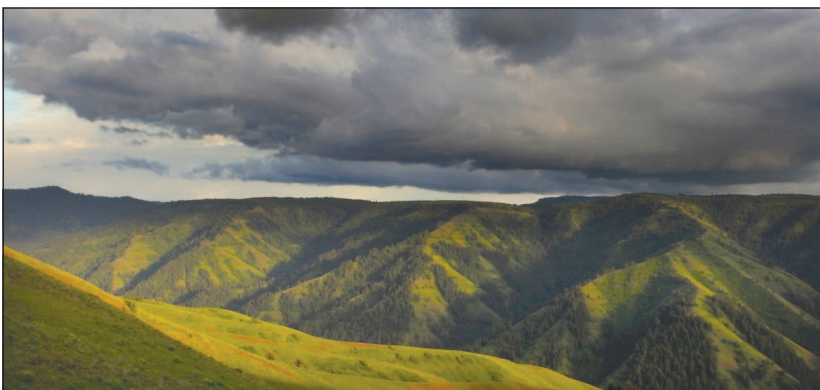
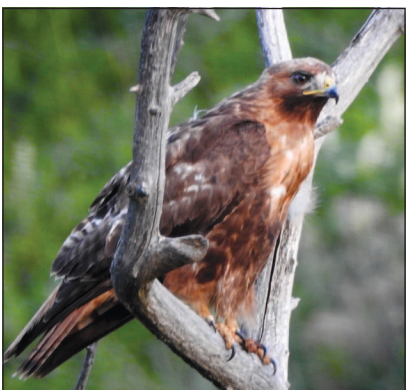
The Cove City Council met Tuesday for its October meeting, where it passed an ordinance increasing the rate for curbside garbage pick-up, considered a new speed limit near the Cove schools and approved a conditional use application.

The ordinance increased the cost of curbside garbage pick-up from \$14.10 to \$14.30 per month.

Darin Larvik of Waste Pro, which handles Cove's garbage, attended the city council meeting and spoke about how the changing market for recyclables has hurt Waste Pro's bottom line. Larvik told to The Observer in July about the issue and said he would be going to cities with proposed rate increases. The council unanimously voted to improve the 20 cent increase. City Councilor Regina Kruse said she thought the rate increase was fair.

"I think it's minimal in comparison to the time and effort that goes into the

See Cove / Page 5A



SECRETS OF THE FOREST

By **Audrey Love**
The Observer

Daniel Biggs, La Grande native and production manager for Blue Mountain Television in Walla Walla, Washington, spent the last 15 months where the wild things are — among the 400-mile-long, 100-mile-wide Blue Mountains.

Stretching northeast from the center of Oregon into the southern corner of Washington, then southeast toward the Oregon/Idaho border, the "Blues" are a magnificent, omnipresent fixture on the horizon. Biggs' newest production for BMT, "Secret Life of the Forest," aims to capture mountain life in all its intricacies — from the smallest, most delicate plants and fungi on the forest floor to the Blues' fiercest predators.

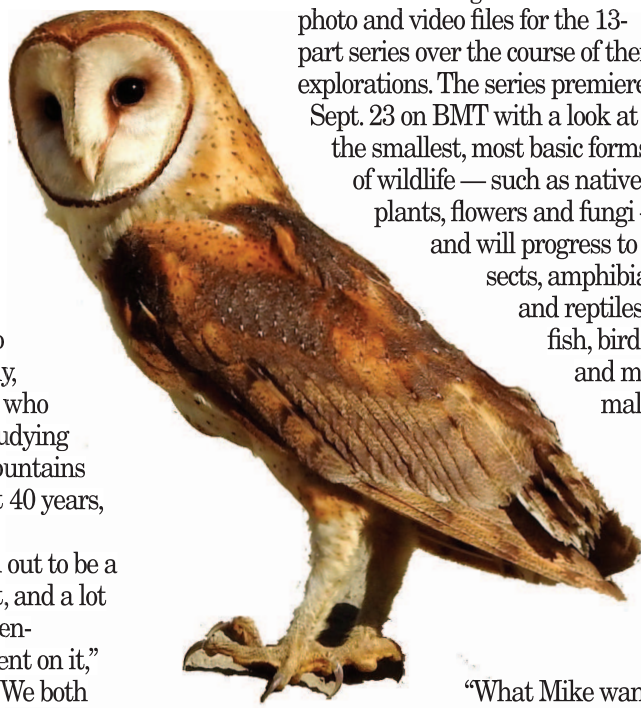
Biggs and series narrator Mike Denny comprised a two-man production crew for the entirety of the series, focusing the majority of their efforts in the northern Blue Mountains (north of Interstate 84). The two met and became friends when Denny was interviewed for another

BMT production, "Valley Viewpoint." Biggs later pitched the idea of a series on the Blues, to which Denny, a naturalist who had been studying the Blue Mountains over the last 40 years, agreed.

"It turned out to be a huge project, and a lot of time and energy was spent on it," Biggs said. "We both were passionate about it — I love photography and he loves explaining the Blue Mountains."

Working as photographer and editor, Biggs followed Denny into the

forest — shooting a combined 15,000 photo and video files for the 13-part series over the course of their explorations. The series premiered Sept. 23 on BMT with a look at the smallest, most basic forms of wildlife — such as native plants, flowers and fungi — and will progress to insects, amphibians and reptiles, fish, birds and mammals.



"What Mike wanted to do was show the relationships between living systems — between the soil and the plants, the plants and the insects (and so on), so we'd start from the base of the foothills and work our

way up to higher areas," Biggs said. While it might be assumed that documenting nature would require miles of strenuous hiking deep into the wilderness, Biggs said that usually wasn't the case.

"We'd get on county roads and go for a ride up in the Blues and see most of the stuff from the roads," he said of the filming process. "There was a loose goal — we would go where we knew we could film (specific) things — but everytime we went out we were finding something new and special to shoot. Oftentimes we'd come (upon) unexpected treasures — certain wildlife or plants we didn't expect to see."

With Denny's expertise — knowing, for example, the area in which a particular animal is likely to be encountered, or when and where certain plants would be in bloom — the pair would venture out to document their subjects. Biggs said most animals hardly acknowledged their presence, though some, like birds, were especially tricky to capture on camera.

See Forest / Page 5A



Photos by Daniel Biggs / Blue Mountain Television

"Secrets of the Forest," airing on Blue Mountain Television, explores wildlife great and small found throughout the Blue Mountains. Clockwise from left: a red-tailed hawk, the Blue Mountains during springtime, a male praying mantis, a red fox, a dome spider, Indian paintbrush flowers, a blue copper butterfly and a barn owl (center).

North Powder school construction will not be slowed by winter

New high school and gym almost weatherized

By **Dick Mason**
The Observer

Winter and its icy grip is fast approaching, but North Powder School District Superintendent Lance Dixon is not worried about his district's partly constructed new high school and gym.

Dixon said Monday the ongoing construction, which began in May, likely will not be impacted by the onset of wintry conditions because both buildings will be weatherized by early next month.

"In a month they will be

weather tight," Dixon said.

The superintendent explained that the high school building, which will also serve as a middle school, is now completely enclosed, with the walls and roofing almost complete.

"Shingles will be added next week," he said.

Wall and roofing work is now being completed for the gym. The next step for

the project will involve the installation of heating and ventilation systems for the gym and high school.

Having the heating and ventilation system in place for the gym will be particularly helpful during construction because this will allow the wood flooring to be brought in and acclimated before being installed. To acclimate the wood floor-

ing, it must be kept in an environment that has the same moisture content as its eventual location. This allows contractors to determine what the actual size of the wood they are installing will be, Dixon said.

The new high school and gym will be west of the present facilities. The new high school building will

See Construction / Page 5A

Truck fire closes down Interstate 84

Traffic was stalled for hours as fire crews responded

By **Chris Collins**
WesCom News Service

The eastbound lanes of Interstate 84 were closed for several hours Tuesday afternoon and evening after a truck hauling straw bales caught fire near Durkee.

The fire started about 1 p.m. near Milepost 325, about 21 miles southeast of Baker City. The freeway was initially closed at Baker City, and the closure was later extended to La Grande and to near Pendleton when truck parking spaces filled in Baker City and La Grande.


Although the westbound lanes were never closed, traffic slowed because of the dense smoke that at times resulted in zero visibility, said Tom Strandberg, spokesman

See Fire / Page 2A

INDEX

Business.....1B	Horoscope.....6B	Sports.....7A
Classified.....4B	Lottery.....2A	Sudoku.....3B
Comics.....3B	Obituaries.....3A	Wonderword...3B
Crossword.....7B	Opinion.....4A	
Dear Abby...10B	Record.....3A	

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	Tonight 42 Low Mostly cloudy		Thursday 58/35 A touch of rain
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La Grande, Oregon

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