



Sports

# Ducks knock off Miss. St.

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## Is a recession near? 1B Bend company develops alternative hydropower, 1B

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Good day to our valued subscriber Velma Johnson of La Grande

## More call Oregon home

■ PSU estimates Oregon's population at almost 4.2 million

By Max Denning  
The Observer

As a whole, Oregon's population growth in the 2010s will likely top 10 percent. While Northeast Oregon continues to grow at a much slower rate.

In its most recent annual population estimate, Portland State University estimated that Oregon's population grew by 54,200 people — an increase of 1.3 percent — from July 1, 2017, to July 1, 2018. Since 2010, Oregon's population has grown by 351,105 people, a 9.13 percent increase.

Northeast Oregon's growth, in comparison, has been more modest. Since 2010, Union County has grown by 5.45 percent, including a 0.1 percent decline from 2017 to 2018. Wallowa County's population decreased by 0.3 percent the past year and has grown by only 1.27 percent since 2010. Baker County grew by 0.1 percent in the past year, and over the past eight years the county's population has grown by 1.98 percent.

Christopher Rich, the Eastern Oregon regional economist for the Oregon Employment Department, said Northeast Oregon's population growth has largely been in the 55 and older age bracket.

"Even though the population overall is growing ... there's a big shift in Eastern Oregon toward an older population," Rich said. "The 55 and older crowd is actually growing a lot more. What's also happening is the 18 to 54 population is actually thinning out a lot."

Northeast Oregon's slower growth since 2010 is part of a larger nationwide tendency of young people moving away from rural areas. In October, the Harvard Political Review published an article outlining this population loss.

"Since 2010, 46 states have seen population loss in over 1,300 counties, the vast majority of them rural," the article stated. "Rural communities must make their towns more attractive to live in in order to attract new residents and prevent old residents from fleeing to the city."

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## RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT BRINGS CHRISTMAS CHEER

■ Shop with a Firefighter celebrates eight years of giving

By Cherise Kaechele  
The Observer

Students from Island City Elementary School walked up and down the aisles at Walmart looking for gifts for their family (and, happily, for themselves). They chatted excitedly with their chaperones — La Grande Rural Firefighter volunteers, for the department's eighth annual Shop with a Firefighter.

Smaller in scale and profile than Shop with a Cop, this event isn't as well known around the community. But the generosity that drives Shop with a Firefighter and the good will accomplished are considerable.

La Grande Rural Fire Capt. Anthony Swales said  
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Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Top photo: The firefighters pick up the students in their fire trucks from Island City Elementary. The children get \$100 each to spend on their family, as well as themselves.



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Anthony Swales helps bag the items the children purchased. The firefighters will be wrapping the items today and delivering them to the families.

## LHS students promote education

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

Looking for the new face of education in Eastern Oregon?

Look no further than La Grande High School sophomore Katie Brown.

Brown is representing this region in "The Promise of Oregon," a campaign coordinated by the Oregon School Boards Association striving to generate public support for education. The LHS sophomore is one of five students, and the only one from Eastern Oregon, currently featured on the home page of the campaign's website, [www.promiseoregon.org](http://www.promiseoregon.org). The students will continue to be featured through the end of this week and then their images will be archived on the website, said Alex Pulaski, communications director of the Oregon School Boards Association.

Brown said she is delighted to be helping to promote public education.

"It is cool," said the sophomore, the daughter of Julie and Ronnie Brown.

She is the first of 15 to 20 La Grande School District students who will be featured on [www.promiseoregon.org](http://www.promiseoregon.org) over the next several months, said Pulaski. The students were recommended to the OSBA by the school district. They then met with OSBA officials and were asked to complete the sentence, "I

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## Anthony Lakes postpones opening due to high winds

By Jayson Jacoby  
WesCom News Service

Hurricane force winds Friday afternoon toppled a semi truck and trailer on Interstate 84, prompting the closure of the freeway through Northeast Oregon for about three hours.

Gusts also overturned a shack at the top of the chairlift at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, forcing the ski area to postpone its planned season opening on Saturday.

The problem at Anthony Lakes wasn't the shack itself, but rather the electrical system that runs the chairlift is connected to the shack and wires were severed, said Peter Johnson, the resort's general manager.

Anthony Lakes is slated to open for the season Dec. 22. It will be open daily through Jan. 6, except for Christmas Day. The lifts will close at 1 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Johnson said resort workers were at the top of the lift Friday afternoon, finishing

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### WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

**Tonight** 38 Low  
Patchy clouds

**Thursday** 45/28  
Mostly cloudy

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### HAVE A STORY IDEA?

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FRIDAY

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