



Sports

Tiger girls take third

Inside

Kindness matters, 2A
Focus on veggies, 1B

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Good day to our valued subscriber Joyce Hatch of La Grande

Oregon Legislature

GOP heads for the exits

■ Oregon Senate Republicans walk out over climate bill

By Claire Withycombe, Jake Thomas and Sam Stites
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Republicans in the Senate boycotted a floor session Monday morning, putting a stop to the chamber's consideration of controversial greenhouse gas emissions legislation that has been a political lightning rod.

The Senate requires 20 senators be present to take votes. Eighteen Democrats and one Republican, Sen. Tim Knopp of Bend, were present for the 11 a.m. session Monday. The remaining 11 Republicans disappeared to protest the legislation, thus denying the Senate the quorum to act. The Senate needed at least two Republicans on the floor if all Democrats were there.

Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, issued a call of the Senate to get any absent Republicans in the Capitol building to come to the floor. Before the floor session began, state troopers roamed the legislative halls.

Courtney then adjourned the floor session until 11 a.m. Tuesday after an admonishment that policy and budget bills couldn't get done if senators were absent.

Lawmakers are facing a March 8 deadline to close the session.

He "implored" his "fellow senators" to return to the Senate.

A vote in the legislative budget committee hours earlier that sent Senate Bill 1530 to the full Senate triggered the shutdown. The committee rejected a Republican plan to refer the matter to voters.

Republican senators were hard to find on the third and fourth floors of the

See Exits / Page 5A

Oregon looks upstream to the lower Snake River

DAMS DEBATE

■ Oregon Gov. Kate Brown: Removal of Snake River dams critical to saving salmon

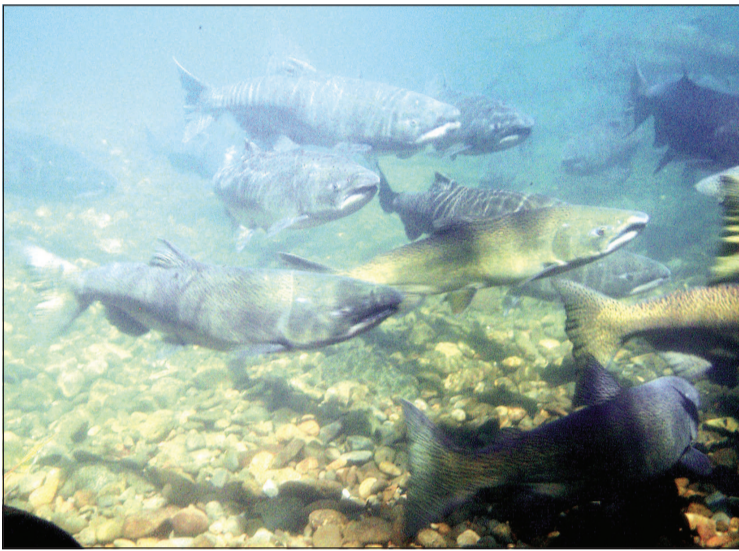


Photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

SALMON

Spring Chinook salmon are one of the most highly prized fish in the Northwest. In a letter to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee this month, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown stated that removing the earthen portions of the four lower Snake River Dams could increase salmon populations — a win for migrating orcas and tribal fishing rights.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

IRRIGATION

Ice Harbor Dam on the lower Snake River holds back Lake Sacajawea, a source of irrigation water for 47,000 acres of farmland. Farmers are skeptical the water could be replaced if the dam were to be breached, according to a study funded by the state of Washington.



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

WHEAT

According to Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, the Columbia Snake River System is the largest wheat export gateway in the U.S. United Grain Corps relies heavily on this export terminal at the Port of Umatilla shown on Friday afternoon.

By Jessica Pollard
EO Media Group

PASCO, Wash. — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown shifted the political debate from cap and trade during the short session in Salem to the waters of the Columbia River's largest tributary — the Snake River — and the four lower dams on the Eastern Washington portion of it.

Brown on Feb. 11 wrote a letter to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee expressing her support to remove the earthen portions from the four concrete lower Snake River dams.

She stated the science was clear — removal is the most probable answer to salmon and steelhead population recovery in the Columbia River Basin, which could aid orcas in their forage for fatty spring Chinook salmon off the mouth of the Columbia in

late winter each year.

However, she added, "much must be done before this is accomplished in order to help minimize and mitigate for potential harm to other vital sectors."

Utilities call out problems with removal

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the mid-1970s built the Lower Granite Dam, the Little Goose Dam, the Lower Monumental Dam and the Ice Harbor Dam east of Pasco where water discharges into the Columbia. The dams supply water to irrigate farmland, hydropower and transportation routes.

Cooperatives, such as Umatilla Electric in Hermiston and Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative in Baker City, purchase the majority of its power from the Bonneville Power Administration, the federal hydro-

power agency.

Member-owned Oregon Trail serves more than 31,000 homes and businesses in four counties in Eastern Oregon. The cooperative expressed its opposition to Brown's proposal in a written statement:

"Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is extremely disappointed with Gov. Kate Brown's stunning decision to support the removal of the four lower Snake River Dams. It is shocking that during a serious legislative debate on carbon reduction, Gov. Brown supports a course of action that is estimated to increase CO2 emissions by over 2 million metric tons — every year."

That output, according to the statement, is the equivalent of adding 421,000 passenger cars to the region's roads each year. Keeping the dams, then, makes more sense

See Dams / Page 5A



Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

TRANSPORTATION

Kim Puze, general manager of the Port of Umatilla, explains the operations of the port Friday at its Industrial Park. He fears removing earthen portions of the four lower Snake River Dams could result in heavy reliance on higher carbon emitting rail and trucking industries for transporting goods to market.

Eastern Oregon University

Experiencing culture with dinner and a show

■ Annual dinner allows guests to experience world culture

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — When Uta Tokuda opened her lunches at her grade school in Japan she often

found onigiri, a small ball of rice shaped into a triangle and wrapped in nori — seaweed — as part of the meal her mother made.

Tokuda now is an international student studying at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, and Saturday shared this part of her past and her culture at the 33rd annual International Student

Association Dinner and Show at the Gilbert Center on the EOU campus. Tokuda was among 18 international exchange students who presented dishes and performances from their culture that night.

"Arts and culture should be accessible to everyone," said Mika Morton, Eastern's assistant director for student diversity and inclu-

sion and international programs. "If we can bring culture to the community through this dinner and show, and invite people in to experience things, we make that culture more accessible."

In addition to onigiri, dishes included Argentinian empanadas, fish and chips from England, Nige-

See Culture / Page 5A

INDEX

Classified.....3B Home.....1B Opinion.....4A
Comics.....7B Horoscope.....5B Sports.....7A
Crossword.....5B Lottery.....2A Sudoku.....7B
Dear Abby.....8B Obituaries.....3A Weather.....8B

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
31 Low
Partly cloudy



Wednesday
48/27
Mostly cloudy

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Call The Observer newsroom at 541-963-3161 or send an email to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.



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THURSDAY

ANIMAL SHELTER SHAKE-UP

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