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Utility goes to court over B2H

Idaho Power seeks access to Baker County properties for B2H surveys

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — An Idaho-based utility is asking a judge to order the owners of five Baker County properties to allow the company to survey their land as part of its plan to build a major electric transmission line through North-eastern Oregon starting as early as 2023.

Attorneys representing Idaho Power filed civil petitions regarding two of the properties on Dec. 17, 2021, in Baker County Circuit Court, two others on Dec. 21, and one on Dec. 28.

The company is represented in all five cases by Timothy Helfrich and Zach Olson, of the Ontario law firm Yturri Rose.

The company has been working since 2007 on the Boardman-to-Hemingway project, a 293-mile, 500-kilovolt line that would run from near Boardman to Hemingway, near Murphy in Owyhee County, Idaho.

Although sections of the proposed route runs through public property — Idaho Power has received permission from the federal government to do so — the line, as proposed, would also cross several dozen parcels of private land in multiple counties, including Baker, Union, Wallowa and Morrow in Oregon.

Idaho Power would have to pay private landowners for an easement to build the power line across their property. This would be a one-time payment, not an annual lease, according to the boardmanto hemingway.com website.

Sven Berg, a corporate communications specialist for Idaho Power, said the line would affect about 30 private landowners in Baker County, who combined own about 60 separate parcels.

Court filings

The properties listed

See, **B2H/Page A5**



Crews with the city of La Grande Public Works clear a snow berm along Adams Avenue on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022. Wind storms and severe weather closed schools, as well as several local roads.

High winds batter valley

Severe weather forces road closures, shuts down school districts in Union County

By DICK MASON and ALEX WITTWER
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Snowdrifts created by high winds plus icy conditions are making traveling in Union County treacherous.

The weather forced all six of Union County's school districts to be closed on Monday, Jan. 3, which was to be the first day back after the holiday break.

Imbler School District Superintendent Doug Hislop said on Jan. 3 the decision was not a hard one to make.

"I spent three hours driving around yesterday and most of the time it was hard for me to find anywhere where roads were clear," Hislop said.

He noted that the Imbler School District's parking lot was filled with snow and that workers there spent much of the day just trying to clear the lot.



Oregon Department of Transportation vehicles block Interstate 84 on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022. Severe wind formed several snowdrifts along I-84, closing the roads in and out of the Grande Ronde Valley.

See, **Storm/Page A5**

Recalling a special visitor

Bishop Desmond Tutu spoke during a 1983 visit to Cove

By DICK MASON
The Observer

COVE — A leather fisherman's cap worn by Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu saved the day for a party he was traveling with on Interstate 84 in Baker County four decades ago.

The South African was riding in a car with Rustin Kimsey, then the bishop of the Eastern Oregon Diocese of the Episcopal Church, and his wife, Gretchen, on a hot August day in 1983. The three had left the Ascension School Camp in Cove a half hour earlier. They were bound for the airport in Boise, where they were supposed to pick up Tutu's daughter, M'Pho, before returning to Cove where

Tutu was making presentations during a week-long conference.

The trip to Boise was going well until the car overheated because of a malfunctioning radiator. The vehicle was stranded on the side of Interstate 84 and the situation looked bleak before Tutu spotted a drainage ditch below the road.

"Undaunted by the steepness and while wearing his leather fisherman's cap, he scampered down the ravine, dipped his hat into the drain ditch and brought enough water to our overheated radiator to cool it. Soon we were on our way again," Gretchen Kimsey said.

The three, after a stop in Baker City for repair work,

made it to Boise to pick up Tutu's daughter and soon returned to Cove.

Gretchen Kimsey has fond memories of that day and of Tutu. Kimsey's husband, Rustin, had become a good friend of Tutu's after getting to know him at international meetings of Episcopal church leaders. Tutu, who had just attended a meeting of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, B.C., had come to Cove to speak at the Ascension School Camp at Rustin Kimsey's invitation.

'He spoke to the heart'

The Kimseys were among about 70 people who attended the 1983

See, **Tutu/Page A5**



Ascension School Camp/Contributed Photo
Churchill Pinder is ordained as a deacon in the Episcopal Church by The Most Rev. Desmond Tutu, left, and The Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey at the Ascension School Camp in Cove in 1983.

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Issue 2
2 sections, 14 pages
La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page A4



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