



SEED & ROW CROPS SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

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THE COMEBACK

BEGINS

Oregon, Idaho onion industry rebuilds following winter damage; 1 billion-pound-plus harvest looms

An excavator clears debris from an onion shed in Nyssa, Ore., that collapsed this winter under the weight of snow and ice.

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

NYSSA, Ore. — The snow is gone, but much of the devastation remains.

Many members of the region's vibrant onion industry are rushing to rebuild their storage and packing facilities after four feet of snow and ice crushed the buildings and destroyed the onions and equipment inside.

The damage is extensive — most estimates place the total at \$50 million to \$100 million. That includes about 100 million pounds of onions — about 7 percent of the year's crop — that were lost.

Clock is ticking

The industry must rebuild in time for this fall's 1 billion-pound-plus harvest. Most of the Spanish big bulb onions grown along the border between southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon are stored to be marketed later in the year.

About 60 onion storage sheds and packing facilities

Turn to **ONIONS**, Page 12

Onion country rebuilding

Nyssa, Ore., in the heart of the nation's largest onion growing region, is recovering from winter storms that dumped unprecedented snowfall in the area. Dozens of onion storage sheds and packing facilities collapsed under the weight of the snow and ice, causing an estimated \$50 million to \$100 million in damage.

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



"It's forced us to make some changes that, frankly, otherwise we would have taken longer to do." — Shay Myers, general manager Owyhee Produce



Photos by Sean Ellis/Capital Press

The Idaho and Oregon governors, along with members of their staff and onion industry leaders, exit a National Guard Black Hawk helicopter Feb. 10 after touring the region and seeing the dozens of onion storage sheds and packing facilities that collapsed.

Oregon wolf management plan moves into new phase

Snake River pack captured by a remote camera photo taken Feb. 1 in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.



Courtesy of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

SALEM — The latest count of Oregon wolves shows there are eight breeding pairs in Eastern Oregon, meaning state wildlife officials move into a management plan phase that potentially could ease restrictions on killing them if they decimate deer and elk herds or chronically attack livestock.

Under Oregon's wolf plan, three consecutive years of at least seven breeding pairs advances the state into what's known as Phase III management. The ODFW Commission is scheduled to receive the annual wolf report at its April 21 meeting in Klamath Falls.

Oregon Wild, the Portland-based conservation group that has been heavily involved in development of the state's wolf plan,

called the count of breeding pairs "heartening" but warned it could lead to wolves being killed by "trophy hunting" or under the plan's "controlled take" provision.

"Controlled take" means wolves can be killed if they are causing declines in elk and deer populations or are involved in chronic livestock attacks. Arran Robertson, Oregon

Turn to **WOLVES**, Page 12

Portland's container port 'saga' still has uncertain ending

When, and whether, service will return remains up in air

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

PORTLAND — The Port of Portland has officially regained control of its container terminal,

but agricultural exporters can't expect shipping from the facility to resume quickly.

The port's commission voted unanimously March 8 to sever ties with ICTSI Oregon, a terminal operator involved in a long-running labor dispute that brought container shipping at Terminal 6 to a halt.

"This gives us the opportunity to press reset," Keith

Leavitt, Port of Portland's chief commercial officer, told the commission.

With ICTSI out of the picture, the port will now seek to repair relations with the International Longshore Workers Union, said Leavitt.

While that partnership is key to resuming service at Terminal 6, finding a new company to run the facility is more

complicated, he said.

"How do you proposition when you have no cargo and no volume?" Leavitt said. "The value proposition to an operator is a complex equation."

The port will need to identify its market strengths and develop a business plan for reactivating the container terminal, he said.

Turn to **PORT**, Page 12



Keith Leavitt

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