

Capital Press

The West's **Ag** Weekly



FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2017

★ VOLUME 90, NUMBER 22

WWW.CAPITALPRESS.COM

\$2.00



“The development pressure around here is huge.”

Farmer Neil Durrant

SAVING THE FARMS

Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Farmer Neil Durrant gets ready to cut hay in a field near Kuna, Idaho, on May 26. Durant has turned down offers from developers for his farmland but a lot of other farmers in southwestern Idaho haven't. BELOW: Farmer Glen Edwards feeds cows May 26 at his farm in Ada County in southwestern Idaho.

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

Efforts grow to preserve ag land in Idaho and across the West

BOISE — Ada County farmer Glen Edwards is in the middle of the battle to stem the loss of farmland in southwestern Idaho. He understands and supports the need to keep high-quality farmland in production. But Edwards, who grows hay, wheat and barley and raises beef cattle and dairy replacement heifers, also said he supports a farmer's right to do whatever he chooses with his land, including selling it for development.

“If a developer walked in here and offered me a huge carrot that I couldn't resist, I'd probably take it,” he said. “This farm is my retirement. When I retire, I have to have something to live on.”

This tension weighs heavily on the minds of many farmers. They understand the need to preserve farmland, but they also believe their property rights must be preserved. With farmland rapidly disappearing in some parts of Idaho's Treasure Valley, several

Turn to **FARMS**, Page 12



Farmers seek to capitalize on eclipse

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

SWAN VALLEY, Idaho — Peter Zitlau hopes a once-in-a-lifetime celestial event will help him generate an income stream to offset a disappoint-

ing year for crop and cattle revenue.

He's one of several Eastern Idaho farmers and ranchers seeking to capitalize from an influx of visitors expected in the region for the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse.

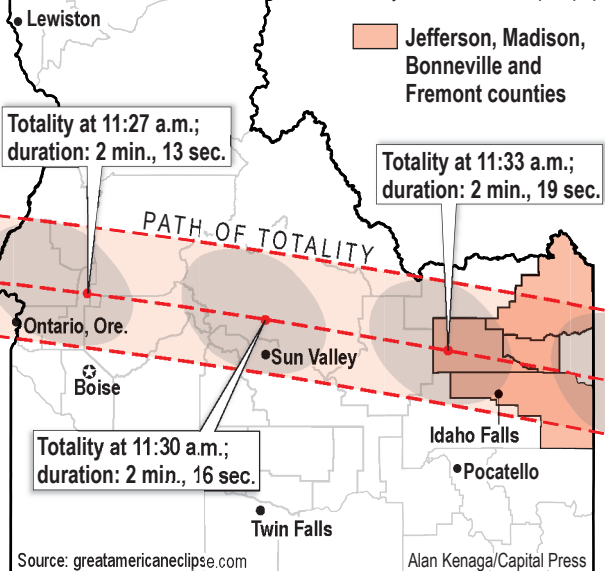
Area municipal and county planners are bracing for tens of thousands of tourists anticipated over a three-day period to view the Snake River Plain's first total solar eclipse in more than 400 years. Though hotels and established campsites have long since filled, farmers and ranchers vow to provide options for the crowd, converting their land into temporary campgrounds. Agricultural landowners are quoting camping rates of \$150 to \$200 per night.

Turn to **ECLIPSE**, Page 12

Total eclipse in Idaho

Farmers and ranchers in Eastern Idaho counties within the path of the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse — the first the Snake River Plain has experienced in more than 400 years — plan to make extra money by offering up their land for temporary camping.

For more information, go to:
www.co.fremont.id.us/eclipse2017/eclipse.html
www.rexburgeclipse.com/about-rexburg/
www.co.jefferson.id.us/eclipse.php



Oregon's wolf management plan may come to resemble Idaho's

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission heard from dozens of people with diametrically opposed views when it took its wolf plan review on the road to hearings in Klamath Falls and Portland this spring. When the commission sits down with ODFW staff June 8 in Salem, members will sift those viewpoints with their own to determine how the state will manage a top predator that wasn't here when the plan was first adopted a dozen years ago. Adoption of a five-year plan is expected late this year.

Potential changes are on the distant horizon. Ultimate-

ly, the state will decide whether wolves are hunted like cougars and bears, whether USDA's APHIS Wildlife Services — loathed by conservation groups — will investigate livestock attacks, whether to give livestock producers more leeway to kill wolves, whether to set population caps, and more.

A model of where Oregon's wolf management may be headed can be found in Idaho, which was the source of the first wolves to enter Oregon and has much more experience balancing the presence of an apex predator with the interests and economic well-being of hunters and livestock producers.

Turn to **WOLF**, Page 12

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