



Photo by Jody Thompson

## DETHMAN RIDGE CRASH

Hood River County Sheriff's Department is still looking for the driver of this vehicle that went off a 50-foot embankment Tuesday on Dethman Ridge Road near Odell Highway. Wy'east Fire District responded after a motorist saw skid marks and flattened foliage at 5:22 p.m. The car was unoccupied and no one was in the area. Firefighters and deputies could find no one, so thermal imaging devices were used to check the brush, but no one was found, according to chief Greg Borton.

## OSU, Soil and Water host 'Landscape with Less Water'

Oregon State University Extension Service, Columbia Gorge Master Gardeners, Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District and Hood River Watershed Group will put on a series of presentations on water conserving landscapes in the Learning Garden at the Extension grounds.

The first will be held July 11 beginning at 9 a.m. The presentations will take place in the gardens and will begin at 9 a.m. with highlighted features to include bioswales, a native plants garden, hellstrip garden, herb garden, and water efficient lawns, followed by a primer on drip irrigation from 11 to 11:30 a.m. This event will be held at

the OSU Mid-Columbia Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 2990 Experiment Station Drive, Hood River, and is free and open to the public.

Follow Tucker Road a mile south of Hood River, and turn just south of Your Party and Rental Center.

Call 541-386-3343 for more information.



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

**JOHN BUCKLEY**, East Fork Irrigation District manager, speaks before the Hood River County Board of Commissioners at a meeting Wednesday at Westside Fire District's Rockford Station. The day's topic: countywide drought emergency.

## DROUGHT

*Continued from Page A1*

years.

The meeting, held at Westside Fire District's Rockford Station at 4250 Barrett Drive, summoned city and county leaders, as well as experts in water management, forestry and fire. The audience numbered roughly 40.

Barb Ayers, Hood River County Emergency Programs Manager, opened the morning's discussion by describing the magnitude of the countywide drought.

"Every single forecast at the state and federal level shows this is a long-term drought," said Ayers. "They're our lowest levels since the early '80s and unless some miracle comes along, it's not gonna go away soon."

Ayers said the record low snowpack and stream levels affect agriculture and fire danger most profoundly. "What's called 'potable' or drinking water is in good

shape. But our irrigation districts are deeply concerned," Ayers said.

John Buckley, East Fork Irrigation District Manager, said local irrigation districts depend on snowmelt and stream levels. His district covers 9,494 irrigated acres, and is forecasted to have mandatory reductions by next month.

"Water is survival. It's a major aspect of surviving financially ... we all have to do our share," said Buckley.

Snowpack on Mt. Hood is virtually non-existent — roughly 5 percent of its usual level, as measured at the Red Hill SNOTEL site in April. The Hood River is running at 40 percent of the average level, according to the U.S. Geological Survey gauge at Tucker Bridge.

All three major irrigation districts of the Hood River Valley — East Fork, Middle Fork and Farmers' Irrigation District — have requested a 25 percent reduction of rates for their users.

"The (benefit) with the drought declaration is to give

us some tools for our department that can help ease the drought for landowners," said Bob Wood, Oregon Water District 3 Manager.

Wood leads state water operations in a 3,000 square-mile district that includes Hood River and Wasco counties.

Wood explained that temporary emergency water use permits are faster and cheaper than typical applications. What usually takes months to get through a state application process can now be conducted before the end of summer, he said.

"Basically, it's giving a better access to water supplies to support our irrigation districts," said Ayers.

"The money wagon isn't gonna come driving into Hood River. But (a drought declaration) can help way speed up, expedite, the process and lower the fees on transferring water rights or moving things around."

## HEAT

*Continued from Page A2*

■ Grill outside or use a microwave or toaster oven. A toaster oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a regular oven and releases less heat into the home.

■ Turn off heat-generat-

ing devices when not in use, including lamps, televisions and computers.

Think for the long term

- Plant deciduous trees to shade the south side of your house. Well-placed trees can reduce cooling needs as much as 20 percent, and an air conditioner operating in the shade can use as much as 10 percent less electricity.
- Insulate floors, walls and

attics to keep cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Seal and insulate air conditioning ducts that run through unconditioned spaces.

■ Get your air conditioner tuned up annually.

■ Consider a new air conditioner, heat pump and other appliances — new models are more efficient and may lower your electric bill.

## COOL

*Continued from Page A1*

Cooling center hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The fire hall is located at 18th and May streets.

At the downtown library, people coming to get out of the heat will get air conditioning, access to water, and lots of comfortable places to sit down and rest. Thanks to Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, the library also will hand out free refillable water bottles when the outside temperature is 95 degrees or hotter, according to Library Director Buzzy Nielsen.

These bottles can be filled at the library or various other locations downtown, including the new hydration station at Shortt Supply, open during store hours.

There are also drinking fountains located at the new City bathroom facility on State Street.

At the fire hall, enjoy free wireless Internet, plenty of seating, air conditioning, and drinking fountains with special bottle fillers to refill your water bottles. If you do not have a water bottle, the department will have some



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

**EMPLOYEE Amber Strangstalien** works the desk at the Hood River Library, which offers a cool place during the heat wave, and water bottles for those who need them, courtesy of Providence.

on hand so you can stay hydrated. Fire chief Devon Wells said Hood River Fire and EMS encourages the community to use due diligence when venturing outside.

"Drink plenty of water, stand in the shade, use sunscreen every few hours, and remember pets and children," he said. "Please enjoy the weather and all of the recreation events available this summer, but please remember it's hot and to take care of yourself, loved ones, and friends to prevent heat

related injuries," Wells said.

The pool will be open Friday from 1-5 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m. for \$1 open swim, and again on Saturday, 1-5 with regular admission.

Sunday and Monday open swim hours are 1-5 p.m. and lap swim times are weekdays at 8 a.m. and on Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m.



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