

Snowpack at all-time low in Oregon

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**
East Oregonian

Oregon has endured historically low snowpack in 2015, exacerbating drought conditions for farms, fish and forests heading into summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service released its June water supply report on Friday, which shows 60 percent of the state's snow telemetry sites measured their lowest snowpack on record last winter.

In the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow basins, snowpack peaked at about 50-60 percent of normal and melted off between four and nine weeks earlier than usual, according to the report. The Umatilla River is expected to flow through Pendleton at just 38 percent of its average volume from June through September.

The report says water managers should expect "significant water shortages" this summer. Gov. Kate Brown has already declared a drought

emergency in 15 counties, including Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Scott Oviatt, NRCS snow survey supervisor, said there is usually at least some snow still left this time of year in the northern Blue Mountains. However, most of the snowmelt this year peaked around February, with virtually none left to replenish streams and reservoirs into summer.

In fact, of the 81 snow sites across Oregon, only one has any measurable snow left, Oviatt said.

"Water managers and water users just need to be prudent," he said. "There's not going to be as much water as we're accustomed to using for irrigation and other uses, but if conservation measures are applied, there should be adequate supplies."

The governor's drought declaration does allow water managers greater flexibility to help irrigators with emergency water use permits and temporary transfer of water rights, if needed. The NRCS has also made available up to \$2.5 million for farmers, ranchers and

forest landowners in those counties to enhance their conservation practices.

Applications are due to the local USDA Service Center on Friday, 26.

Meanwhile, dry conditions prompted the Oregon Department of Forestry to declare the start of fire season Saturday in the Central Oregon District, which covers 2.2 million acres of private and public forest and rangeland in Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Morrow, Wasco and Wheeler counties. Fire season has not yet been declared in the Northeast Oregon District, though Mitch Williams, wildland protection supervisor for ODF in La Grande, said they also expect an early start unless conditions change.

The most recent U.S. Drought Monitor shows nearly all of Eastern Oregon in either severe or extreme drought.

Contact *George Pavlen* at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.

IRRIGON Man indicted for allegedly killing 10-month-old daughter

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

The Irrigon father in jail for killing his 10-month-old daughter faced manslaughter charges and more Friday afternoon, based on a grand jury indictment.

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson said the grand jury Thursday indicted Travis Michael Martin, 21, on two counts of first-degree manslaughter, two counts of second-degree manslaughter, three counts of first-degree criminal mistreatment and two counts of second-degree assault.

Those were the same as the initial charges Nelson brought against the suspect Monday. Nelson said the grand jury added nothing new and Circuit Judge Eva Temple kept Martin's bail at \$500,000.

The grand jury heard evidence from Pendleton police detective Rick Jackson and Dr. Sally Aiken of the medical examiner's office in Spokane County, Washington. Nelson also said the grand jury watched videos of police questioning Martin.

Attorney Robert Klahn of Pendleton represented Martin. Temple set a pretrial hearing for June 18 at 8:15 a.m. in Heppner.

KaSandra Martin last Thursday took her infant daughter, Savannah, with her on an errand, according to Nelson, and in Pendleton the mother discovered the child would not wake up. KaSandra Martin sought

help, and an ambulance took the girl to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, which sent her on an emergency flight to a children's hospital in Spokane where she died.

That sparked a criminal investigation, Nelson said, and police found

Travis Martin threw the infant to the ground the night before she died. The charges against Martin also indicate he abused the child in September 2014 and in January. Nelson said KaSandra Martin worked nights and knew nothing about any abuse and does not face charges.

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Travis Martin at his home the night of May 29 and booked him into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.



Martin

A royal visit to the Capitol

Governor Kate Brown meets the Pendleton Round-Up court and Happy Canyon princesses Thursday at her office in Salem. The courts presented Brown with a Pendleton blanket.

Photo contributed by Gov. Kate Brown's office



PENDLETON

Sister-city students working toward \$10K goal

Group looks to sushi night for big trip fundraiser

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Six Pendleton-area students are working their way to resuming the cultural exchange with Minamisoma, Japan.

Getting to Pendleton's sister city, though, will require earning at least \$10,000 before they depart in July.

Pendleton High School students Haley Kendrick, Riley Kendrick, Stephen Machado, Raeana Mikel and Cheney Chrisman and Nixy-aawii Community School student Katie Ward are about \$4,000 shy of the goal. Roberta Lavadour, executive director of the Pendleton Center for the Arts, agreed to chaperone the group on the trip July 13-28. She said if they make more than they need, that money would help pay to host the Japanese students and their chaperones, who come in August.

Pendleton and Minamisoma started sending students back and forth in 2000, but the exchange ended for Pendleton in 2011 when the Tohoku earthquake

and tsunami devastated Minamisoma and caused a meltdown at a nearby nuclear power plant.

"This lapse was because of a monumental catastrophe," Lavadour said. "And anyone who works with an organization knows that when something gets mothballed for four years, you kind of have to reinvent the wheel."

The reinvention has meant the students and Lavadour reached out to local charities and organizations for funds, including Cayuse Technologies Community Outreach Committee, which donated \$1,000.

A seven-member delegation from Pendleton visited Minamisoma for two days in April 2014 to assess the situation there, among other objectives, and found it was safe to send local students.

Families in Minamisoma will host the Pendleton group for the two-week stay, so they will get a sampling of daily life in the area. They will also get to see Minamisoma's big festival — a recreation of a millennia-old battle involving dozens of men clad in samurai armor racing on horseback across a wide field to capture a banner.

Seven students from Minamisoma in August will

make the reverse trip for two weeks with Pendleton host families. The group used to come in September for the Pendleton Round-Up, but that made it tough to find Japanese students willing to skip out on two weeks of high school.

Karin Power was an exchange chaperone in 2006 and hosted a number of Japanese students and adults. She said this latest group of Pendleton students is learning basic Japanese greetings and a smattering of "survival Japanese." They also are meeting with Hiroko Cannon, a Pendleton artist from Osaka, Japan, to learn about Japanese etiquette and how to avoid making a common faux pas. Power said that is more than most exchange groups have done.

"I was just really impressed with how prepared they will be," she said.

The team of soon-to-be exchange students made and sold crafts at the Pendleton's Farmers Market and have a car wash fundraiser Sunday and another June 14 at Dave's 12th Street Food Mart, Pendleton. The group also went to the Web to seek funds at www.gofundme.com/sistercityexchange.

And the group's big event

is a sushi night Monday, June 14, at Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's in downtown Pendleton. Tickets are \$35 per person, with a social hour at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 and a silent auction that includes a one-of-a-kind Pendleton/Minamisoma kimono and two flight vouchers for Seaport Airlines and a night in a Portland hotel. Lavadour said the event features Cimmiyotti's signature sushi rolls, such as the California Roll and the Cowboy Roll, traditional ramen, saki tasting and more. There also will be a "non-sushi alternative," according to Lavadour, "for those with less adventurous palates."

Lavadour also said people can give tax deductible donations in the form of checks payable to Pendleton School District, 1100 Southgate, Suite 8, Pendleton, OR 97801.

The visit to Japan will be a first for all the students and Lavadour. She said sending local youth to see other parts of the world has value, and the fundraising effort the group has shouldered is helping lay a foundation for future exchanges.

Contact *Phil Wright* at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

BRIEFLY

EOU to raise in-state tuition 4.9 percent

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University's board of trustees proposed a tuition increase Thursday for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The increase would raise resident undergraduate tuition by 4.9 percent and non-resident tuition by 3 percent. The result would be an annual tuition of \$6,345 for undergraduates from Oregon and \$16,560 for non-residents.

The recommendation is being sent to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education for approval, although the university's board will have the authority to raise tuition on its own starting July 1.

"EOU will still be the lowest-cost public university in the state, even with the proposed increase," said outgoing president Jay Kenton.

Oregon outdoor education tour set for Eastern Oregon

Leaders from the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition and Environmental Literacy Plan will hold a series of meetings in Eastern Oregon to explain the benefits of Outdoor School to local parents, teachers and community members.

The presentations will explain the vision for Oregon's Environmental Literacy Program and provide a legislative update on the coalition's efforts to fully fund Outdoor School for every fifth- and sixth-grade student statewide.

The first meeting will be Tuesday, June 16 at Pendleton City Hall from 6:30-8 p.m. A pair of meetings will be Wednesday, June 17, first from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Anderson Perry Building in La Grande, and then from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Baker School District Office in Baker City.

For more information about the Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition, visit www.oregonoutdoored.org.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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