

BRIEFLY

I-84 closed from Pendleton to Ontario

PENDLETON — The westbound lanes of Interstate 84 were closed between Pendleton and Ontario for two hours Monday afternoon because of freezing rain and multiple minor accidents, including a jackknifed truck, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

ODOT reopened the roadway at about 4 p.m. but warned that the weather was creating hazardous driving conditions, and urged travelers to delay their trip as long as possible until conditions improve.

Morrow County schools to evaluate superintendent

BOARDMAN — The Morrow County School District Board of Directors has called a special meeting for Monday, Jan. 11 at Sam Boardman Elementary School to evaluate Superintendent Dirk Dirksen.

The meeting will begin at 5 p.m. For more information, call the district at 541-676-9128.

Parks & recreation releases new activity guide

PENDLETON — To find out all the fun things Pendleton Parks & Recreation has planned for the upcoming months, be sure to pick up a copy of the Winter/Spring 2016 Activity Guide.

The guide is available at the library, city hall, chamber office, the parks office, Safeway, Up with Donuts, Roosters, Dairy Queen and Tum-a-Lum. In addition, it can be viewed at www.pendletonparksandrec.com.

For more information, stop by the parks office at 865 Tutuilla Road, or call 541-276-8100.

Hermiston offers tree recycling

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston is offering free recycling of Christmas trees for local residents.

Trees may be dropped off between today and Jan. 29 at the traditional location next to the Butte Park spray park.

For more information, contact the city's parks department at 541-667-5018.

Dress exchange for formal dance

PENDLETON — Girls can get a free dress for the upcoming Daddy Daughter Dance through a program sponsored by Pendleton Parks & Recreation.

The Dress Exchange is free. People are asked to drop off new or gently used dresses between now and Friday, Jan. 8 at the parks office, 865 Tutuilla Road, Pendleton. Or people can bring one to the exchange day.

The free event is Saturday, Jan. 9 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Foundation Room at the Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave.

For more information, stop by the parks office or call 541-276-8100.

Local club sets annual bird count

PENDLETON — The 29th official Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count will take place at four locations around Pendleton.

The event is scheduled for Saturday. For details on locations, contact George Ruby at 541-278-2472, gtlrbby@yahoo.com. Also, the Pendleton Bird Club will host a countdown to compile the results from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Abby's Pizza, 828 Southgate, Pendleton.

Experienced birders and novices are invited to participate in the event. The count is held in conjunction with the national Audubon Christmas Bird Count. For more information, visit www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

HERMISTON

HHS swim team stages talent show

Funding pays for daily travel to BMCC pool

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Singers, tap dancers, violin players, piano performances and a special top-secret final act featuring girls from the Hermiston High school swim team are included during the HHS Swim Team Talent Show.

The fundraising event provides money for transportation costs for the team to use the Blue Mountain Community College pool for practices. Lynne Hamblin, coordinator of the show and wife of swim coach Kevin Hamblin, said the community has been supportive of helping the team. She said the team has the highest transportation costs for any activity in the district.

"We came up with this idea after dealing with too many cold miserable days standing outside counting pop cans," Hamblin said. "Now we have an activity that our community can enjoy in the warmth of the auditorium and help our swimmers at the same time."

The fifth annual Talent Show is Saturday in the school's auditorium, 600 S. First St. Admission is \$8 per person or \$20 for a family.

Mark Douglass, elementary music teacher, is assisting with directing the show, and Charlie Clupny, a retired education service district employee, is returning for the fourth year as master of ceremonies.

Also as part of the fundraiser, raffle tickets can be purchased for \$10 from swim team members through intermission of the show. Items up for grabs include an i-Pad Air, a Fit Bit, metal art featuring the Hermiston "H," a flower arrangement, a pedicure/manicure and numerous gift cards. Also, a bake sale will be held during the intermission.

More than two dozen acts are featured during the show, including



The Hermiston High School swim team boys perform a synchronized "swimming" number to wrap up the 2015 Swim Team Talent Show. The 2016 event, which serves as a fundraiser for transportation to practices, is Saturday in the school's auditorium.



HHS Swim Team Variety Show winner Corrina Tibboni, accompanied by Josh Rist, belts out Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing" during the 2015 talent show.

reigning champion Korrina Tibboni, who is back for her fourth year.

Containers will be sitting in the commons for the audience to vote by placing cash in the jar of their favorite acts. Prizes for best of show will be determined by judges, while first through third place will be from the amount of cash collected from audience votes. All of the winners will receive gift cards.

"This is our way of giving back to the community for being so generous to our hard working swimmers," Hamblin said. "This is a great family night with great entertainment."

For more information, call Lynne Hamblin at 541-571-5691.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

Owyhee Basin farmers optimistic about snowpack

By SEAN ELLIS
EO Media Group

ONTARIO — A series of snowstorms over the Owyhee Basin has resulted in snowpack levels more than twice their normal amount for this time of year.

That has given farmers in Eastern Oregon who get their irrigation water from the Owyhee Reservoir a reason to be optimistic for the first time in several years.

The basin has experienced four straight years of reduced snowpack levels and the 1,800 farms that depend on the reservoir have had their annual water allotment slashed by two-thirds the past two years.

Water has stopped flowing through the Owyhee Irrigation District's 400 miles of canals, laterals and ditches in August the past two years, two months earlier than normal.

But as of Dec. 24, snowpack in the basin was at 233 percent of normal for that date.

"I'm really pleased with what I'm seeing so far," said dairyman and farmer Frank Ausman, a member of the Owyhee Irrigation District's board of directors. "We're sitting quite a bit better at this time than we were the last couple of years."

But Ausman and other farmers said the snow needs to keep falling in order for growers to have

an adequate water supply next season.

"It's definitely ... a good start but it's a little early to start counting our chickens," Ausman said.

OID Manager Jay Chamberlin said the storms have laid down a lot of snow proportionally over the whole watershed, unlike last year when the sparse snow the basin received was spotty.

"Keep it coming. This feels good," he said.

The reservoir provides water for 118,000 irrigated acres in Malheur County in southeastern Oregon and around Homedale and Marsing in southwestern Idaho.

Farmers in this area have

had to alter their rotations and farming practices as a result of drastically reduced water supplies the last three years. A lot of farm ground has been left idle and growers have planted a lot more crops that require less water but also bring less income.

While farmers and water supply managers expressed optimism at the current snowpack situation in the basin, they also cautioned that it's still early in the snow season and the reservoir needs a lot more water.

To guarantee a good water supply year, the reservoir needs about 450,000 acre-feet of storage water, Chamberlin said. It's holding about 50,000 acre-

feet right now.

"We're going into 2016 in a lot better shape than we did the last three years," Chamberlin said. "But we have a whole lot of room in an empty bucket. We can take whatever (is sent) us."

Farmer Paul Skeen likened the current water situation to being early in a football game. While farmers are leading, there's a lot of ballgame left, he said.

"Yes, things don't look nearly as bleak as they did last year," said Skeen, president of the Malheur County Onion Growers Association. "But we're a long ways from the fourth quarter. We're just finishing the first quarter of the game."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

TUESDAY, DEC. 29
PENDLETON TOASTMASTERS No. 154, 6:45 a.m., Pendleton City Hall community room, 501 S.W. Emigrant Ave. (toastmasterdarleneuse@gmail.com).
TOPS CHAPTER OR 1110, 8 a.m. weigh-in, meeting starts at 8:45 a.m., Missionary Baptist Church, 125 E. Beech St., Hermiston. (Margaret Wetterling 541-720-0276).
BIBLE STUDY, 10 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 352 S.E. Second St., Pendleton. (Rev. Jim Pierce 541-276-2616).
GREENFIELD GRANGE PITCHOLE, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., The Hall, Boardman.
"THE LIFE MODEL - LIVING FROM THE HEART JESUS GAVE YOU" BOOK STUDY GROUP, 1-2:30 p.m., Bowman Building, 17 S.W. Frazer, Pendleton. (Pat 541-276-6671).
STUDYING THE MIRACLES OF JESUS, 4-6 p.m., Good Samaritan Ministries, 319 W. Locust Ave., Hermiston. (541-564-1041).
PENDLETON EAGLES BINGO, 6-8 p.m. tacos for members and guests only, bingo at 6:30 p.m.,

Pendleton Eagles Lodge No. 28, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Regular packet \$10, special packet \$5. Proceeds donated to local charities. (541-278-2828).
HERMISTON EAGLES BINGO, 6 p.m. doors open, games begin at 7 p.m., 160 N.W. Second St. Members and their guests welcome.
AWANA, 6:30-8 p.m., Pendleton Baptist Church, 3202 S.W. Nye Ave., Pendleton. For children ages 3 through the sixth grade. (541-276-7590).
IRRIGON/UMATILLA LIONS CLUB, 6:30 p.m., Amanda's Bar and Grill, 610 Sixth St., Umatilla.
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
WILLOW RUN LADIES GOLF CLUB, 8 a.m., rain or shine at the Willow Run Golf Course, Boardman. Participants do not need to be a member to play with the club. (541-481-4381).
ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL OF PENDLETON, 12 noon program meeting, Red Lion Hotel, 304 S.E. Nye Ave., Pendleton.
CAY-UMA-WA TOASTMASTERS, 12 noon-1 p.m., Wildhorse

Casino & Resort Birch boardroom, 46510 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. Everyone welcome.
HERMISTON KIWANIS CLUB, 12 noon, Desert Lanes restaurant conference room, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston. (Doug Barak 541-567-6728).
OREGON GRASS ROOTS CRIBBAGE CLUB NO. 2, 6:30 p.m., Desert Lanes Bowling Alley, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston. All levels of players welcome. (541-567-6594).
THURSDAY, DEC. 31
TUMBLEWEED TOASTMASTERS, 6:45 a.m., Conference Room 3&4, Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Visitors welcome. (541-567-4349).
ARTS AND CRAFTS FROM THE DRY SIDE, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., basement of Assembly of God Church, 730 East Hurlburt Ave., Hermiston. Use the Seventh Street entrance. (541-567-4446).
UMATILLA DOG WALKING CLUB, 10 a.m., 630 Switzer St. at the dog wash in front of Umatilla High School.

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL OF HERMISTON, 12 noon, ARC of Umatilla County, 215 W. Orchard Ave.
HERMISTON LINEBACKER CLUB, 12 noon to 1 p.m., Desert Lanes, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston. Hear HHS football coach David Faaeteete discuss last week's game and talk about the upcoming tilt. RSVP by Wednesday at 3 p.m. to 541-567-5215. Cost is \$11 for members, \$13 for non-members.
HERMISTON ROTARY CLUB, 12 noon, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Parish Hall, Fifth Street and Locust Ave.
PENDLETON LIONS CLUB, 12 noon, Roosters Restaurant, 1515 Southgate, Pendleton.
HERMISTON HORSESHOE CLUB, 5 p.m., Weber Field, 600 S. First St., Hermiston. (Rick Re-

man 541-720-6402).
ARC OF UMATILLA COUNTY BINGO, 6 p.m. doors open, bingo starts at 7 p.m. 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-7615).
TOPS, 6 p.m. weigh-in; 7 p.m. meeting, Peace Lutheran Church, 210 N.W. Ninth St., Pendleton. (Ruby Gray 541-566-3624, 541-969-2990 or rubbygray79@gmail.com).
HERMISTON ELKS, 7 p.m., 480 E. Main St.
MOVE ON, 7 p.m., Great Pacific Wine and Coffee, 403 S. Main St., Pendleton.
PENDLETON KIWANIS CLUB, 7 p.m., venue varies, Pendleton. Guests welcome. ((541-278-5785).
FRIDAY, JAN. 1
No meetings scheduled

celebrate **new year's eve** at **HAMLEY STEAKHOUSE**

Little live music **L McKay CREEK** in the Slickfork Saloon Starting at 9pm no cover

Midnight Balloon Drop • Drink & Appetizer Specials

COURT & MAIN, PENDLETON • Large Party Reservations Available - Call 541-278-1100

TEXAS TRIBUTE

THE NW PREMIER ZZ TOP TRIBUTE!

Texas Tribute - Premier ZZ Top Tribute Thursday, Dec. 31 9 pm - 1 am

Bruce Smith and the Boda Boyz Saturday, Jan. 2 8 pm - Midnight

Pendleton Red Lion Inn - 304 SE Nye, Pendleton, OR 541-276-6111 • Presented by www.gcproductions.rocks