

Ranchers, local allies wary of militia

Hammonds plan to surrender despite calls to resist

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Two Oregon ranchers convicted of setting fires on federal lands say they will report to prison Jan. 4, though militia organizations with ties to Nevada cattleman Cliven Bundy are rallying supporters to protect them.

Dwight Lincoln Hammond, 73, and his son, Steven Dwight Hammond, 46, were resentenced Oct. 7 to five years in prison for the fires on U.S. Bureau of Land Management property near the town of Diamond.

Bundy has had ongoing disputes with the BLM in Nevada for more than 20 years.

In 2012, the federal government filed a lawsuit against Bundy, alleging that he allowed cattle to graze on BLM property, despite an earlier injunction barring him from the land.

When the BLM tried to remove Bundy's cattle, armed militia members surrounded the ranch and began a tense standoff with federal agents.

Bundy's son, Ammon, posted a Facebook video asking Bundy Ranch supporters to come Saturday to Burns, the county seat of Harney County, where the Hammonds live. Bundy said the Hammonds are being persecuted by a land-grabbing federal government and that their case was "in many ways more important than the Bundy Ranch."

In an earlier video, Ammon Bundy said, "I feel justified in defending the Hammonds, even they don't have the strength and courage right now to stand for themselves."

The Hammonds' attorney, Alan Schroeder, said Wednesday that the Hammonds appreciate the support they've received from groups and individuals, but reaffirmed that militia members do not speak for them and that they intend to serve their time.

Montana resident Ryan Payne, an associate of Bundy's who participated in the standoff with federal officials at the Bundy Ranch, said Wednesday he hoped the Hammonds will reconsider and accept "protection."

"They're not in prison yet," Payne said.

Payne said he expected "a lot" of protesters Saturday. Organizers have asked protesters to bring pennies, nickels and dimes to toss at a county office building to symbolize how county authorities have "sold out" the Hammonds by not offering refuge.

Harney County Judge Steve Grasty

said he's highly sympathetic to the Hammonds and believes their sentence was too severe. But militia groups' anger at county officials over a federal prosecution is misplaced.

"It doesn't make sense to me. I don't know why we're suddenly the bad guys," he said.

He said militia members have come into the county, openly carrying firearms and creating an intimidating atmosphere.

"I can't get in and out of Safeway in less than an hour because people are stopping and asking me about it," Grasty said. "I just can't discern local support for what they're doing, with very little exception."

Payne and Ammon Bundy recently spoke at a meeting in Harney County attended by about 60 people, mostly local residents. From that meeting emerged a new group, the Harney County Committee of Safety, with the stated mission of safeguarding individual liberties.

Committee member Melodi Molp, a Harney County rancher, said Bundy "kind of woke a bunch of us up."

The committee, however, planned to meet Wednesday evening to discuss its relationship with outside militia members.

"The Bundy group seems to be rubbing quite a few people the wrong way," she said.

Their tactics may be too aggressive for a county heavily dependent on government employment, Molp said. "Bundy's direction would put more than half of the people in this county out of a job," she said.

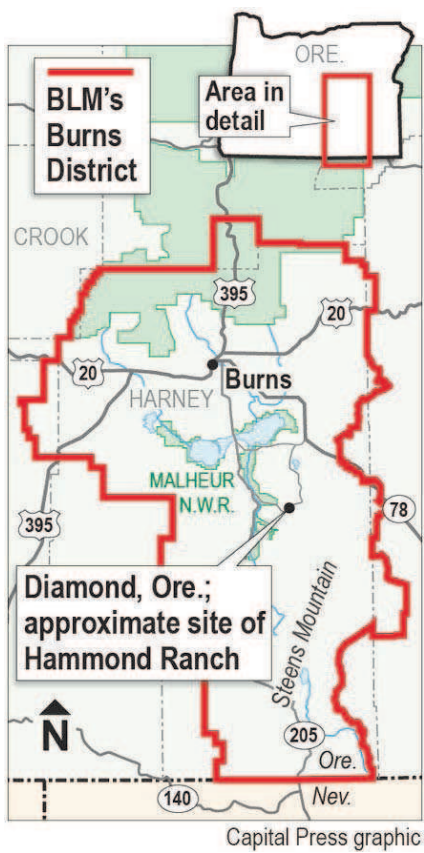
Molp said she planned to watch but not take part in Saturday's rally. "I'm hesitant to participate. I've never been to one of their rallies. It might be a little more aggressive than I'd like to see," she said.

Payne said that if the local committee asks outside groups to leave, "I think we'd have to have a conversation."

Payne said the issue was important to the entire country, not just Harney County residents.

"If we allow this to happen then the federal government will be encouraged to label anyone a terrorist," he said.

The Hammonds were convicted of arson in 2012 after a two-week jury trial. Both were found guilty of starting a 139-acre fire in 2001. According to the U.S. Justice Department, Steven Hammond said he started the fire on private land to burn invasive plants and it spread to public lands. Prosecu-



tors said the fire was set to cover up deer poaching on BLM land. Dwight Hammond also was convicted of setting a backfire in 2006 that burned 1 acre of public land.

The Hammonds originally received much shorter sentences from a U.S. District Court judge, who said the mandatory minimum sentence of five years was far too long. The lenient sentences, however, were overturned by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, leading to the Hammonds' resentencing.

Harney County Farm Bureau President Rusty Inglis said he doubts outside militia groups will generate much local enthusiasm.

"We don't support them, simple as that," he said. "I hope they have their little rally and it stays peaceful and nobody gets hurt," he said.

The Oregon Farm Bureau has denounced the Hammonds' punishment, but its president, Barry Bushue, said Wednesday that armed militia members won't help their cause.

Bushue, a longtime family friend, said he expects the Hammonds will want to return to ranching.

"They want to do it peacefully. They want to move forward, instead of clinging to the past," he said. "From my perspective, that's where the community can be most beneficial, instead of making it into a public spectacle."

"I fear it reflects badly on the ranching community and the local community, or at least has the potential to," Bushue said. "We are incensed by the fact that (the Hammonds) have to go back to prison, but in the end, the rule of law has to be followed."

SOU workers get \$2.5M wage settlement

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Some 325 employees who built a dining hall and residence halls at Southern Oregon University will receive \$2.5 million in a settlement with the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

The sum is the largest prevailing wage settlement in the 112-year history of the agency, according to BOLI spokesman Charlie Burr.

"This settlement is a result of an extensive, multi-year effort by our Prevailing Wage Rate Unit to ensure that these workers receive every dollar they've earned," said Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian in a prepared statement.

SOU already has directed \$1.5 million to the Bureau

of Labor and Industries. The agency mailed payments from that amount to 179 workers Tuesday.

BOLI will contact the remaining 146 workers to secure individual releases of claims and collect and distribute the outstanding payments by May.

BOLI's Wage and Hour Division initiated about 80 prevailing wage audits, starting in 2013, because of information found during a separate investigation at a SOU project.

The inquiry determined that 44 contractors and subcontractors on the project owed \$2.6 million to workers. Prior to the \$2.5 million settlement, the agency secured about \$52,000 in wage payments for the workers.

Environmental groups sue over wolf protections

PORTLAND (AP) — Three environmental groups are suing Oregon wildlife officials over their decision to remove the gray wolf from the state's Endangered Species Act list.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, the Center for Biological Diversity and two other groups say it's premature to delist the animal with only about 80 adult wolves living in the state.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission stripped wolves of their endangered status in November, after state biologists said the species won't go extinct.

But some independent scientists disagree with that conclusion. According to wolf advocates, the Commission failed to follow the best available science and its population viability analysis for the wolves was flawed.

"The commission's

decision to delist wolves is plain political kowtowing to the livestock industry. This decision was not based in science, it was not based on Oregon's conservation values," said Noah Greenwald, Endangered Species Program director at the Center.

Oregon Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy declined to comment on the lawsuit. But she said "ODFW is confident the department followed statutory and legal requirements in its process and that the Commission acted legally when it delisted wolves from the state ESA."

Dennehy said the Commission's decision to delist wolves was based on their rapidly expanding range in Oregon, their growing population, the stability of their habitat and the fact that "over-utilization" of wolves isn't likely to occur.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
COLD	COLD	COLD	COLD	COLD
Freezing fog; quite cold	Freezing fog; very cold	Freezing fog; very cold	Freezing fog; very cold	Mostly cloudy and very cold
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
23°	13°	21°	11°	23°
13°	11°	12°	25°	13°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
27°	16°	24°	16°	24°
16°	13°	26°	15°	27°
13°	17°			

ALMANAC

PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

HIGH LOW

Yesterday 30° 26°

Normals 39° 26°

Records 63° (1920) -12° (1968)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace

Month to date 2.28"

Normal month to date 1.55"

Year to date 10.09"

Last year to date 13.24"

Normal year to date 13.02"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

HIGH LOW

Yesterday 35° 29°

Normals 39° 27°

Records 66° (1949) -13° (1990)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"

Month to date 1.78"

Normal month to date 1.41"

Year to date 7.17"

Last year to date 7.60"

Normal year to date 9.88"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 7:36 a.m.

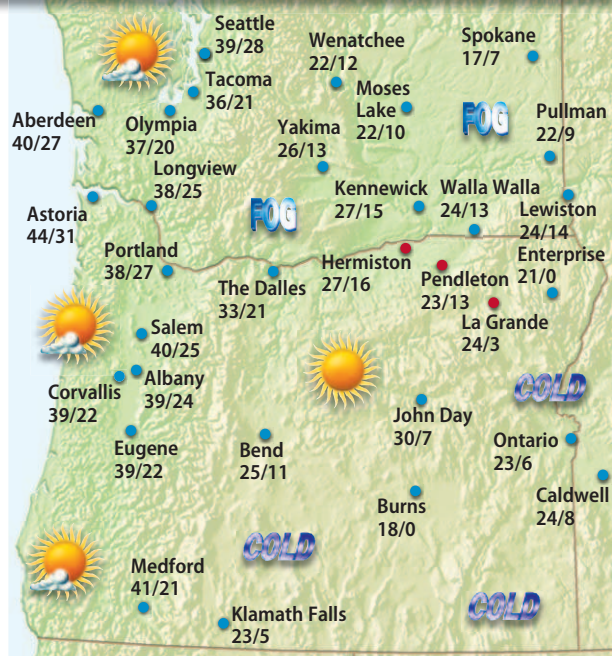
Sunset tonight 4:20 p.m.

Moonrise today 11:14 a.m.

Moonset today 11:03 a.m.

Last New First Full

Jan 1 Jan 9 Jan 16 Jan 23



Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Mostly sunny today. Clear tonight. Plenty of sunshine tomorrow.

Eastern Washington: Low clouds and freezing fog today into tomorrow. Saturday: low clouds and freezing fog.

Cascades: Mostly sunny and cold today. Clear tonight; cold. Plenty of sunshine tomorrow.

Northern California: Mostly sunny today; frigid in the interior mountains. Clear and cold tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	44	31	s	46	31	s
Baker City	17	1	s	17	1	s
Bend	25	11	pc	26	7	c
Brookings	47	31	s	47	32	s
Burns	18	0	pc	14	-8	s
Enterprise	21	0	s	21	1	s
Eugene	39	22	pc	40	21	pc
Heppner	24	11	c	23	10	c
Hermiston	27	16	c	24	16	c
John Day	30	7	s	30	4	s
Klamath Falls	23	5	s	26	4	c
La Grande	24	3	s	24	2	c
Meacham	24	4	s	25	5	c
Medford	41	21	pc	42	22	pc
Newport	42	31	s	44	32	s
North Bend	50	33	s	51	33	s
Ontario	23	6	c	16	2	c
Pasco	26	18	c	24	15	c
Pendleton	23	13	c	21	11	c
Portland	38	27	pc	38	25	pc
Redmond	26	10	pc	27	8	c
Salem	40	25	pc	41	23	pc
Spokane	17	7	c	16	6	c
Ukiah	23	5	s	24	3	c
Vancouver	36	25	pc	36	22	pc
Walla Walla	24	13	c	20	13	c
Yakima	26	13	c	26	11	c

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	41	20	s	44	23	s
Hong Kong	67	61	pc	68	62	pc
Jerusalem	50	40	sh	44	35	sh
London	51	33	sh	46	45	pc
Mexico City	76	49	pc	73	49	pc
Moscow	19	6	c	9	3	pc
Paris	51	37	pc	48	44	c
Rome	52	40	pc	55	42	c
Seoul	38	22	pc	42	33	pc
Sydney	78	63	pc	78	64	s
Tokyo	50	41	pc	53	40	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	NNE 4-8	NNE 4-8
Pendleton	NNE 3-6	N 3-6

UV INDEX TODAY

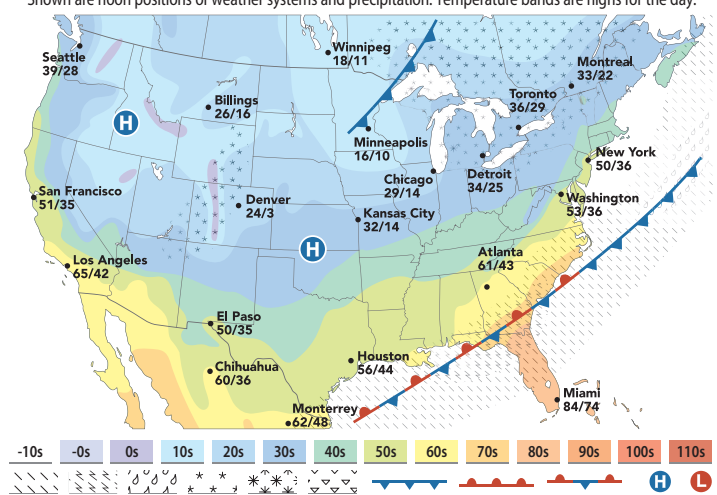
0	1	0	0	0	0
8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.					
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme					

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2015

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



National Summary: Rain will soak areas from South Texas to the Carolina coast today. Snow showers will fly around the Great Lakes and dot the Rockies. Fog and freezing drizzle will affect the interior Northwest.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 88° in Naples, Fla. Low -16° in Moose, Wyo.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.			Today			Fri.			
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Albuquerque	32	20	s	34	22	c	Louisville	40	28	pc	38	24	s
Atlanta	61												