



**ALABAMA WINS TITLE**  
SPORTS/1B

**HERMISTON STARS TAKE THE STAGE**  
REGION/3A



**David Bowie dies of cancer at 69**  
WORLD/6A

# EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## Snow report already beats 2015

More needed to feed streams into summer

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
East Oregonian

Oregon started off 2016 with more snow than at any point during last year's historically dry winter, though more is needed to fill streams and reservoirs heading into next summer.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service issued its first water supply outlook report of the new year, and the numbers are promising: on Jan. 1, snowpack was 138 percent of normal across the state compared to just 53 percent a year ago.

Locally, the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow basins measured 122 percent of their normal snowpack. Snow depth in the northern Blue Mountains ranged from 13 inches at Emigrant Springs to 65 inches at Milk Shakes, a snow survey site near the Oregon-Washington border.

If the region continues to receive normal rain and snow, the Umatilla River, Willow Creek and South Fork Walla Walla River could all meet or exceed average flows through September, according to the NRCS. That would be great news for the area's farms, fish and firefighters.

However, the long-range forecast is iffy at best. A strong El Niño in the Pacific Ocean will likely linger into spring, and the National Weather Service is calling for warmer, drier weather in northeast Oregon over the next three months.

See SNOW/8A

**"We've had our share of low snowpack winters in recent years. I'd like to see us buck that trend."**

— **Melissa Webb**, snow hydrologist with the NRCS

HARNEY COUNTY STANDOFF: DAY 9

## Files dug up, fences torn down

Group will use documents to 'expose' discrimination against Hammonds

By **RICK BOWMER**  
Associated Press

BURNS — The leader of a small, armed group occupying a national wildlife refuge near Burns said Monday he and his followers are going through government documents stored inside refuge buildings.

Ammon Bundy told reporters the documents will be used to "expose"

how the government has discriminated local ranchers who use federal land for cattle grazing.

Bundy said the documents would also help secure the release of Steven and Dwight Hammond, two area ranchers convicted of arson who returned to prison last week to serve longer sentences. The Hammonds' case set off the occupation of the Burns-area refuge on Jan. 2.

Bundy said his group is not accessing government computers at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, including personnel files.

After the news conference, the group drove in a convoy to a ranch near the refuge and tore down a stretch of government-erected fence. The goal, according to the armed men, was to give the rancher access to the range that had been blocked

for years. It's not clear where the fence was located or which rancher sought the group's help.

The refuge is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Spokesman Jason Holm said because the documents and files at the refuge may have personally identifiable information, the agency "is taking necessary steps to ensure employee and family safety."

The agency strongly condemned

See REFUGE/8A

### PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Cutie and Cuddles, who are most likely siblings, share a pen at PAWS animal shelter on Monday in Pendleton. The pair of pooches were two of 20 dogs taken in by the animal shelter this weekend from a seizure in Yakima County.**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Crystal Sullenger, the manager for PAWS animal shelter, pets two dogs named Hugs and Kisses on Monday at the shelter in Pendleton. The Pendleton animal shelter took in 20 dogs from a rescue over the weekend and they are now trying to find homes for the animals.**

## Puppy love

PAWS volunteers set up assembly line to bathe, blow-dry 20 neglected pooches

By **KATHY ANEY**  
East Oregonian

Twenty dogs arrived in Pendleton this weekend after being removed from their home in Washington.

The canines were among 56 living in a residence in Yakima County, and a cadre of 12 volunteers welcomed the animals. Over the next couple of hours, the volunteers examined and bathed the

dogs, gave kennel cough shots and then tucked them in for the night.

"We had an assembly line of people," said Pendleton Animal Welfare Shelter Manager Crystal Sullenger. "Washing stations were set up. The pups were covered in their own feces. Each dog was bathed and blow-dried."

Sullenger said most of the canines range from five months to

See DOGS/8A

## Cabbage Hill street blues

Hazardous section of I-84 prone to close; commercial drivers plan ahead

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

When inclement weather hits the region, Eastern Oregon often ends in Pendleton.

When snow, ice and fog cover the Cabbage Hill section of Interstate 84, it's not uncommon for the Oregon Department of Transportation to close the steep incline between Mission and Meacham, halting traffic on a stretch of road ODOT calls "one of the most hazardous stretches of road" in the

interstate system.

ODOT spokesman Tom Strandberg said the department doesn't track the number of times or how long it closes the highway, but he estimated the department closes the hill about a dozen times a year in intervals ranging from 30 minutes to several hours. It was closed on back-to-back days in December.

This holds up the roughly 10,000 vehicles that travel the stretch each day, even those that transport goods and materials up and down the hill.

Michael Cannon of Hermiston has been operating pilot cars and transporting oversized loads for a living for over a decade.

See CABBAGE HILL/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Semi-trailers drive down Cabbage Hill on Interstate 84 in 2015 near the snow line east of Pendleton.**

