

HARNEY COUNTY STANDOFF: DAY 11

Rancher says he didn't let group remove fence

BURNS (AP) — An Oregon rancher whose cattle graze next to the national wildlife refuge that an armed group is occupying says he didn't give them permission to enter his property and remove part of a fence.

The group protesting federal land policy tore down a stretch of government-erected fence Monday near the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The group says the goal was to give rancher Tim Puckett access to land that had been blocked for years.

But Puckett told The Oregonian on Tuesday that he wasn't aware of the group's plans and "they didn't have my permission to do anything."

Puckett says one of his representatives allowed the group onto the property but didn't let them remove the fence. He says he works with federal officials on land management and his employees have repaired the fence.

The small group lead by Ammon Bundy is under pressure from many locals to end the occupation that began Jan. 2.

The group plans a meeting Friday night with the local community to explain their actions, Bundy has said.

Bundy has previously said the group would not leave until a plan was in place to turn over federal lands to local

authorities. They also want the release of Dwight and Steven Hammond, father-and-son ranchers convicted of arson who returned to prison last week to serve longer sentences.

Though their case set off the occupation, the Hammonds have distanced themselves from the Bundy's group.

Federal, state and local law enforcement are monitoring the occupation but have not taken action.

Federal offices in the Burns area remain closed out of security concerns.

On Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell sent department employees a note stating "our foremost priority continues to be the safety and

security of our employees so that you can continue to perform your duties and serve the American public."

Jewell said federal agencies have partnered well in the past with communities in Harney County and elsewhere in the West.

She said "those important efforts continue — even as the situation remains extremely tense, unsettling, and frustrating" for her employees and for residents of Harney County.

Jewell said the department is working with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to "peacefully resolve this situation as quickly and safely as possible."

Oregon to issue new industrial hemp licenses this winter

By ERIC MORTENSON Capital Press

SALEM — The state Department of Agriculture expects to resume issuing licenses to grow industrial hemp by the end of February, but some problems continue to dog the new crop.

The state issued 11 hemp licenses in 2015 before cutting off the process in August. Nine of the licensees planted a crop and three harvested a product, said Lindsay Eng, the department's program manager. But the crops of two other growers, one in Grants Pass and one in Bend, are embargoed because the plants exceeded the THC limit required under state law, Eng said.

The crops will have to be destroyed or remediated in some way, she said, perhaps by using the plant stalks without the flowers or seeds.

Industrial hemp is related to marijuana, but doesn't contain nearly the level of THC, the chemical compound that makes pot users high.

Instead, advocates say industrial hemp fiber and oil can be used to make clothing, food, rope, cosmetics, plastics and other products. They've long said hemp could replace cotton or petroleum in some uses.

Ag researchers say some conventional farmers might eventually be interested in growing hemp as a rotational crop, but for now the market appears to involve small-scale farmers who want to process hemp themselves to make lotions or other products.

Eng said details in Oregon's hemp law may

need tweaking by the Legislature when it meets in February. A section requiring 2.5-acre hemp plots causes some growers problems, as does a requirement that the plants be directly seeded instead of started in greenhouse pots. In addition, it's hard to obtain seed, Eng said. Canada is the most common source.

Oregon State University has asked the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency for permission to import hemp seed and conduct basic crop research. Jay Stratton Noller, head of the university's Department of Crop and Soil Science, said he anticipates the DEA will approve the request and test plots could be planted in April. Three to five years of experiments would be necessary for Oregon State to produce useful data for growers, he said.

Researchers are starting from scratch because hemp germ plasm had to be destroyed in the 1970s when the federal Controlled Substances Act classified hemp the same as pot and other drugs, Noller said.

Noller said hemp was a viable crop in the past and is grown around the world. In the U.S., the first American flag was made of hemp, he said.

The Legislature legalized hemp cultivation in 2009, but the law wasn't implemented because the U.S. Department of Justice classified hemp the same as marijuana. The federal classification remains, but the Justice Department has said it won't interfere with hemp production in states that have adopted a robust regulatory system.

Linn County plans class action for state's forestland management

By PARIS ACHEN Capital Bureau

SALEM — Linn County plans to seek more than \$1.4 billion in damages in a class action suit against the state for breach of contract in management of forestland in 15 counties.

Linn County special counsel delivered a letter to Gov. Kate Brown and State Forester Doug Decker Wednesday to notify them of the county's plan to file the suit after a mandatory 30-day waiting period.

Up to 150 local taxing districts that receive timber

sales receipts from harvests from the Oregon Forest Trust Lands contract could be eligible join the suit. That includes schools, libraries, public safety agencies and other districts.

The other counties that benefit from the trust are Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Douglas, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, and Washington.

"There have been general discussions and angst for years about the distribution formula and how counties have been deprived of revenue by state," said

attorney John DiLorenzo, who is representing Linn County in the suit. "It's no surprise they're not getting as much of a return from the arrangement as they should be."

The 15 counties have contracted with the state since the 1930s to manage forestlands for the land's "greatest permanent value." Linn County and the state are at odds over the meaning of that term. The county claims that the term means greatest economic value allowable under state and federal regulations and that returns ought to match what

a private land manager could glean off the land. The state in 1998 defined the term to mean economic, ecological, recreational and aesthetic returns and implemented a management plan based on that definition starting in 2000, DiLorenzo said.

Linn County estimates that the 150 local districts in the 15 counties have missed out on \$35 million per year in revenue in the past 15 years from the state's management of the forestland. That number is based on forest modeling, much of which was borrowed from the Department of Forestry, DiLorenzo

BRIEFLY

Corrections Department will improve care for mentally ill

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Department of Corrections says it will reduce isolation and improve care for inmates with serious mental illness.

Officials on Wednesday said they have entered into an agreement with the Disability Rights Oregon effective this month. The agreement follows an investigation by the group into the behavioral health unit at the Oregon State Penitentiary, which houses adults with serious mental illness who have committed violent acts or disruptive behavior.

The investigation found inmates were routinely isolated for 23 hours a day without timely access to care; mental-health related behaviors were often dealt with through unnecessary force.

Corrections officials will now allow the inmates more out-of-cell time and will provide enhanced access to mental health services. To make the changes, the department will ask the legislature for funding.

Man charged with leaving toddler in freezing car overnight

MILTON, Wash. (AP) — A Milton man has been accused of leaving his toddler daughter in a freezing car overnight after driving her home while intoxicated.

Pierce County prosecutors say Michael A. Dufour pleaded not guilty Tuesday to charges of criminal mistreatment, abandonment of a dependent person and possession of methamphetamine.

Charging documents say Milton police received a call Saturday morning about an abandoned child.

When an officer arrived, he found a car in the driveway with the windows rolled down. Police say Dufour was standing in the home's doorway, holding a 15-month-old girl.

Police say she was naked, red and lethargic. Hospital staff said she had frostbitten hands and feet and was hypothermic.

Police say Dufour had meth in his pocket. Dufour said the drug was not his and the girl's mother was trying to set him up.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast TODAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY PENDING TEMPERATURE FORECAST 45° 33° 45° 35° 43° 36° 45° 34° 47° 32° HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST 45° 33° 45° 35° 42° 33° 44° 36° 46° 32° ALMANAC PENDING through 3 p.m. yesterday TEMPERATURE HIGH LOW Yesterday 51° 34° Normals 41° 27° Records 70° (1923) -7° (1909) PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.22" Month to date 0.34" Normal month to date 0.72" Year to date 0.34" Last year to date 0.25" Normal year to date 0.72" HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yesterday TEMPERATURE HIGH LOW Yesterday 38° 33° Normals 41° 28° Records 60° (1945) -7° (1993) PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.14" Month to date 0.22" Normal month to date 0.53" Year to date 0.22" Last year to date 0.15" Normal year to date 0.53" SUN AND MOON Sunrise today 7:33 a.m. Sunset tonight 4:36 p.m. Moonrise today 10:12 a.m. Moonset today 10:28 p.m. First Full Last New Jan 16 Jan 23 Jan 31 Feb 8

REGIONAL CITIES Today Fri. Astoria 47 43 r 51 46 c Baker City 34 26 sn 36 19 c Bend 38 29 sn 42 34 pc Brookings 50 44 r 53 47 c Burns 30 24 sn 33 17 pc Enterprise 35 25 c 35 20 sf Eugene 47 42 r 51 44 c Heppner 41 30 r 43 32 pc Hermiston 45 33 r 45 35 pc John Day 38 31 sn 40 32 pc Klamath Falls 34 25 c 36 30 c La Grande 40 31 c 40 26 sn Meacham 37 29 c 38 27 c Medford 47 37 r 52 42 c Newport 49 44 r 51 46 c North Bend 53 44 r 56 49 c Ontario 38 27 c 39 23 c Pasco 47 33 c 44 33 pc Pendleton 45 33 c 45 35 c Portland 46 41 r 50 43 c Redmond 40 31 sn 45 32 pc Salem 46 43 r 51 45 c Spokane 36 28 c 35 30 sf Ukliah 37 29 c 38 25 pc Vancouver 45 42 r 49 43 c Walla Walla 47 37 c 42 35 c Yakima 41 27 r 39 32 pc

WORLD CITIES Today Fri. Beijing 37 14 s 37 17 pc Hong Kong 65 59 r 65 61 r Jerusalem 58 44 s 55 41 pc London 42 32 sn 41 31 sh Mexico City 66 41 pc 70 41 pc Moscow 26 1 sn 13 -2 c Paris 46 32 sh 42 31 sh Rome 57 51 c 57 38 c Seoul 32 21 s 38 23 s Sydney 99 60 t 70 64 r Tokyo 51 39 pc 48 39 c

WINDS (in mph) Today Friday Boardman 5-3-6 SW 4-8 Pendleton 5-6-12 SW 6-12 UV INDEX TODAY 0 1 1 1 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. ©2016

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. National Summary: Areas of snow will extend from the central Appalachians to the Cascades today. Rain will fall from San Francisco to Seattle. Rain will also soak South Florida, coastal Texas and southern Louisiana. Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states) High 73° in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Low -24° in Clam Lake, Wis. NATIONAL CITIES Today Fri. Albuquerque 45 25 s 44 27 c Louisville 52 40 s 48 32 r Atlanta 59 41 pc 53 42 sh Memphis 60 49 s 60 34 c Atlantic City 45 38 pc 52 42 pc Miami 73 68 r 81 64 t Baltimore 47 29 pc 49 36 sh Milwaukee 36 31 c 38 19 sn Billings 41 21 sn 32 18 c Minneapolis 31 21 c 21 -3 c Birmingham 60 45 pc 55 40 c Nashville 59 43 s 54 34 r Boise 41 30 c 40 25 c New Orleans 67 54 r 68 48 pc Boston 33 26 pc 41 36 pc New York City 38 34 pc 48 40 c Charleston, SC 62 43 s 64 46 r Oklahoma City 62 33 s 53 30 pc Chicago 50 32 pc 53 34 c Omaha 43 26 pc 48 40 c Cleveland 39 34 sf 44 32 r Philadelphia 43 32 pc 51 39 pc Dallas 67 43 pc 61 39 pc Phoenix 64 44 pc 63 43 c Denver 43 16 pc 35 17 pc Portland, ME 29 17 pc 34 30 pc Detroit 35 33 c 41 26 r Providence 33 24 pc 44 35 pc El Paso 59 34 s 59 39 s Raleigh 55 34 s 48 39 r Fairbanks 4 -7 pc 5 -6 pc Reno City 42 20 sn 32 13 sn Fargo 25 -2 sn 1 -14 c Sacramento 54 47 r 58 47 pc Honolulu 83 69 pc 80 67 sh St. Louis 56 44 pc 44 25 r Houston 64 53 r 66 43 pc Salt Lake City 34 25 sn 34 23 sn Indianapolis 42 36 pc 43 25 r San Diego 62 52 pc 62 54 pc Jacksonville 60 47 pc 69 48 r San Francisco 55 50 r 58 52 pc Kansas City 53 29 s 35 17 c Seattle 49 41 r 50 42 c Las Vegas 57 40 pc 60 40 pc Tucson 64 37 pc 64 36 c Little Rock 62 48 s 60 33 r Washington, DC 47 34 pc 52 38 sh Los Angeles 64 47 pc 62 48 pc Wichita 56 31 s 45 25 pc Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.