

EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2017

141st Year, No. 67

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Ice encrusted snow forms interesting shapes in Portland on Tuesday. A winter storm left a layer of ice on Oregon from Portland to Pendleton on Tuesday night.

AP photo by Don Ryan



Ice covers much of Oregon

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon transportation officials shut down two stretches of Interstate 84 on Tuesday as yet another storm pummeled residents who have been grappling with record snowfall and an unusually harsh winter in a place more known for its rain. The 45-mile closure between Troutdale and Hood River came as an ice storm swept into north-

More inside

The weather has canceled school and other meetings Tuesday and Wednesday. For the full list, see Page 3A.

west Oregon, including parts of Portland, in the early afternoon hours. The closure from Pendleton to Ontario in the evening

came as the storm moved east and temperatures stayed below freezing. An ice storm warning was in effect in the east Portland metropolitan region and the Columbia River Gorge until 10 p.m. Portland was expecting one-tenth to one-quarter of an inch of ice, but areas east of Interstate 205 and See ICE/8A

PENDLETON Lawsuit against Hamley's co-owner tossed out

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The lawsuit seeking to oust Hamley's co-owner Parley Pearce from the downtown Pendleton business has failed.

Circuit Judge Lynn Hampton of the 6th Judicial District dismissed the third part of the lawsuit from Hamley's co-owner Blair Woodfield, who in September 2016 sued to expel Pearce from all things Hamley's and dissolve the four limited-liability companies that make up and control the company's operations and brand. Pearce and Woodfield each own 50 percent of the Hamley's companies.

Pearce called the dismissal good for Hamley's and for Pendleton. He said it keeps the business in hands that care about it.

"The whole premise of the lawsuit was to force me to sell when I'm not interested in doing that," Pearce said. "I'm kind of passionate about the company myself."

Hampton at a hearing in December dismissed two-thirds of Woodfield's lawsuit. One claim sought to dissolve the companies, but Hampton said she lacked the jurisdiction to act on a company the partners formed in Washington. She also dismissed a legal maneuver that would have allowed Woodfield, as a shareholder, to sue when the company would not.

Hampton, though, said See HAMLEY/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The HART (Hermiston Area Regional Transit) bus run by Kayak Public Transit drives down its route on West Moore Avenue Tuesday in Hermiston.

Hermiston catches the bus

HART saves residents from long walks in the snow — when it's running

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston's new bus system is a big hit with the people who have used it in its first two weeks of operation.

"I just think it's wonderful," said Rik Pedro, who was riding the HART home from visiting friends on Tuesday afternoon. "There's a lot of people who don't get around as well as I do, and I read all the articles leading up to it and couldn't wait for the second (of January) for it to get started."

Pedro doesn't own a

car, so he said he normally gets around by "any means possible," including rides from friends, bicycling and walking. He said the bus was saving him a long walk through the snow in neighborhoods where many people still have not shoveled their sidewalks.

The HART (short for Hermiston Area Regional Transit) is a white Kayak Public Transit bus that makes four loops, each about an hour and a half long, around Hermiston between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. It started the first

week of January via a partnership between the city of Hermiston and Kayak Public Transit, which is run by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The bus is free and open to anyone.

Pedro was one of five people who used the HART to get from one part of town to the other during the last loop of the day on Tuesday. William Cowan, a retired Hermiston resident, was another.

Cowan owns a car, but it broke down and he hasn't gotten it fixed yet. On

Tuesday he needed to pick up medication from the hospital, but said it had gotten too hard to ride his bicycle across town on icy roads with piles of snow blocking the bicycle lanes.

"For now this is my best option," he said. "It's a real blessing."

Tuesday was Cowan's first time riding, and he said he was planning on taking a full loop around town to learn the system and see where all the stops are.

Telesforo Ortiz and a friend got on at S.W. 11th Street and W. Division

Avenue. They were headed to the library, where Ortiz said he was going to use the printer and make copies for a job application he was submitting. He doesn't own a car and is excited to no longer have to walk to the store or other errands.

"I'm feeling happy to have a bus in Hermiston," he said. "I feel excited when I see it."

Despite being in operation for two weeks, the bus has had multiple snow days. It didn't run last week and was off for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Kayak Public Transit reported on its Facebook page that it had 12 riders See BUS/8A

HERMISTON

AgriNorthwest adds Hale, Riverpoint farms to stable

Terms of December deal with tree farm buyer not disclosed

By GEORGE PLAGEN
East Oregonian

One year after purchasing two-thirds of the 25,000-acre Boardman Tree Farm along Interstate 84, AgriNorthwest is expanding its reach deeper into northeast Oregon.

The company confirmed Tuesday it has acquired Hale Farms and River Point Farms, which together operate nearly 30,000 acres and employ 700 people near Hermiston. River Point

Farms is the largest producer of onions in the country with customers including Subway, Chipotle and Costco.

Todd Jones, president of AgriNorthwest, said the deal with Hale Companies closed late last year. He did not discuss financial terms of the sale.

"This is a chance for two strong producers to come together," Jones said in a statement. "The Columbia River Basin is a great place to grow food. That's why AgriNorthwest has been farming here for more than 45 years."

Based in the Tri-Cities,

AgriNorthwest was established in 1968 in southeast Washington. Last year, the company bought the majority of the Boardman Tree Farm, which is now being converted to irrigated corn and wheat fields.

AgriNorthwest also grows potatoes and carrots throughout the region.

Hale Farms started out in 1972 with 500 irrigated acres purchased by brothers Doug, Bob and Rick Hale in the Butter Creek Valley near Echo. In an email to the *East Oregonian*, Bob Hale said he and his brother Rick are "excited about passing along our teams and customers

at Hale Farms and River Point Farms to AgriNorthwest," but declined further comment.

In his statement, Jones said the Hale brothers have made the most of the land and built effective teams at both Hale Farms and River Point Farms.

"We're looking forward to integrating these productive farms into our row crop operations," he said.

A spokesman for AgReserves, the parent company for AgriNorthwest, said none of the companies involved in the deal would be commenting further. It remains unclear how the

sale may affect operations moving forward.

River Point Farms is headquartered in Hermiston, harvesting 6,000 acres of onions around the area. It recently invested in a new \$17 million fresh pack facility off Westland Road, which opened in August 2015.

Hale Farms features a diverse range of crops including potatoes, carrots, peas, corn, blueberries, alfalfa, wheat, barley and grass seed.

Contact George Plagen at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

