

# Cold weather continues to blast Eastern Oregon

By ALEX WITTWER  
EO Media Group

PENDLETON — The National Weather Service in Pendleton reported an Arctic air mass will hold its grip on much of the Pacific Northwest through the remainder of the work week with prolonged subfreezing temperatures and bouts of snow.

Daytime highs could reach into the 20s and low 30s while lows will be in the single digits and low teens.

Meteorologist Colby Goatley said a series of low-pressure systems originating as continental air masses rather than marine air masses is pushing through, bringing temperatures more arctic in nature.

He also said the pattern is typical and doesn't bear the characteristics of a polar vortex. Still, the temperatures will drop significantly overnight.

Friday, Dec. 31, looks to have the coldest temperatures, with Pendleton dipping to 4 degrees overnight, Hermiston hitting 8 degrees and Milton-Freewater dropping to 6.

Areas in the mountains, and those that receive heavier snowfall in the lower elevations, may even see temperatures slip below zero overnight and in the early morning hours, the Weather Service reported, which also is warning people to be wary of wind chill.

While winds should remain light, even winds of 10 mph will make single-digit wind chills common, with some areas seeing wind chills below zero.

"These extremely cold



Hoyt McEwen blows snow off the road behind his driveway Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021, on the North Hill in Pendleton. The National Weather Service reports a series of low-pressure systems are pushing through the region and bringing cold air that will drop temperatures into the single digits for lows on New Year's Eve.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

temperatures can lead to rapid onset of frostbite and hypothermia for those without adequate clothing and protection from the cold," according to the Weather Service. "If outdoors, remember to dress in layers and cover exposed skin. Due to the prolonged nature of sub freezing temperatures,

uncovered pipes will be susceptible to freezing and bursting. Take steps to ensure pipes are protected and outdoor faucets are covered." Installing pipe sleeves or simply running water through the night — even just a trickle — can prevent pipes from bursting, according to the American Red Cross.

Goatley also said drivers should take precautions and wind chill can harm animals as well. "Make sure any animals have adequate shelter or are brought indoors," he said. The heaviest of the snow with the current weather system already occurred, the Weather Service reported.

However, there will continue to be light snow over the foothills of the Blue Mountains and the Blue Mountains themselves. The weather systems are tapering off the morning of Dec. 31. But the system coming in Dec. 30 has the potential to produce heavy snow over the Blue Moun-

tains and the foothills, the John Day highlands and the Cascades, especially in Washington, according to the National Weather Service, so more winter storm warnings or winter weather advisories are likely to come. — The East Oregonian contributed to this report.

## OUR NEW NEIGHBORS

### Victory Baptist pastor, family arrive in Hermiston

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian



Pastor Nick Coleman poses for a portrait Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2021, at Victory Baptist Church in Hermiston. He is the new lead pastor at the church having arrived Dec. 18.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Coming to Hermiston from the outskirts of the Portland area, Nick Coleman, 39, is new to Eastern Oregon.

Coleman is the new lead pastor for Victory Baptist Church, 193 E. Main St., Hermiston. He has been in Hermiston only since Dec. 18. Still, he said he had seen enough of the town to be impressed. Also, he added, his family was enjoying the area. Coleman's wife and two children are with him in Hermiston.

"We have loved it so far," he said. "We come from a small town, and we've come to appreciate the community of a small town, the feel and the pace of life."

Coleman has been married for 16 years. His children, ages 15 and 12, soon will enter Hermiston public schools.

He admitted he has an advantage not shared by all newcomers to town. As a pastor, he immediately enters a community of people who support him and give him direction. When placing his children into schools, for example, he has spoken with members of his congregation who are teachers in the district.

"We're getting to know people in the church, and they have been awesome," he said.

After only a few days in Hermiston, Coleman had been shown around town. The meal at Hale's Restaurant & Lounge was "really, really

good," he said, and the omelet was so big he could not finish it. He said Shiki Hibachi Sushi was "outstanding."

Coleman also said he soon plans to hike the Hermiston Butte and looks forward to exploring Funland Playground, local parks, golf courses, the McNary Dam and more. He even said he would be open to going fishing, though he said he does not have much experience with it.

Born in Olympia, Washington, he is not a complete stranger to the area; Eastern Oregon is not like a foreign planet to him, he said. His family did move to Vienna, Austria, for a while, though, before returning stateside to live in the Tri-Cities, where he attended Richland High School.

He spoke of finding his

religious path in high school. He had a religious retreat in which he felt "convicted" of his sin, and he suddenly experienced a need to change his life and follow God. He, then, started leading religious groups.

Coleman attended Corban University, a private Christian university in Salem, before going on to do graduate work in theology, ministry and biblical studies.

Victory Baptist is his first church as lead pastor. He said he likes the church, which he said regularly pulls in around 100 congregants for a typical Sunday service. He said many are committed to volunteering and making things work.

"That gives us a lot of potential to impact our community," he said. "We're downtown, and we want to serve our community and

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

This story is part of an annual series by the East Oregonian called "Our New Neighbors," which introduces the community to people who have moved here in the past year.

be a presence and act with gospel love to our friends and neighbors."

Still, he has good feelings for the place he has left. He called it a fantastic community, where he gained experience with church work, made friendly connections with community members and raised his children.

"It was hard to leave, but we thought that this move was right for our family," Coleman said. "I think God was calling us here."

### UEC brings on new VP

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Umatilla Electric Cooperative on Monday, Dec. 27, announced it hired an experienced utility professional as vice president of power supply, a new position at the Hermiston-based cooperative.

Robert Cromwell, originally from Tucson, Arizona, will support the creation of UEC's Power Supply team, help meet the power and transmission needs of the membership and help position UEC for the future, according to the press release from the cooperative. He begins his new role Jan. 3.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to join Umatilla Electric and look forward to supporting the cooperative's membership in meeting their power supply and transmission needs, now and in the future," he said in the press release.

Cromwell spent 14 years as an attorney practicing law, including six years as a utility consumer advocate with the Washington State Attorney General's Office and then with the Seattle City Attorney's Office, where he represented both the electric utility and the water, sewage and solid waste utility in transactional and litigation matters. In 2007 he joined Seattle City Light, where he worked for

the past 14 years.

During his time at Seattle City Light, Cromwell directed work ranging from regional affairs, power and transmission contracts, including with the Bonneville Power Administration, and acquired renewable resources.

He also has been involved in regional solutions to problems faced by the Northwest power industry, working with industry partners and stakeholders across the West. His most recent role was as director of the Customer Energy Solutions team delivering energy efficiency, renewable resources and related programs to Seattle's retail customers.

Robert Echenrode, UEC general manager and CEO, said in the press release the power provider is excited about Cromwell joining the team.

"His experience with electric utilities and power supply will prove to be an asset to the organization," Echenrode stated. "Robert's experience and skills will be utilized to support the needs of our membership."

Cromwell holds a bachelor's degree and a juris doctorate in law from the University of Arizona in Tucson. In his spare time, he loves to travel with his family and serves on his local school district's board.



Cromwell

## LOCAL BRIEFS

### Affordable Family Eyewear has new owner

HERMISTON — Affordable Family Eyewear, 298 E. Gladys Ave., Suite B, Hermiston, has changed hands.

Marica Lambert owned the downtown Hermiston business for 14 years. Nick Page is the new owner.

According to Affordable Family Eyewear's website, Page is a Washington state licensed dispensing optician and graduate of Oregon State University.

Page on Dec. 23 said business has

been busy. People are trying to use the last of their 2021 insurance benefits and are visiting him more than usual, he said.

### County COVID-19 death toll rises to 187

UMATILLA COUNTY — The total number of fatalities in Umatilla County due to COVID-19 now stands at 187.

The county's public health department on Monday, Dec. 27, reported the 187th death is a 69-year-old man who tested positive Oct. 5 and died Nov. 1 at Prov-

idence Medical Center, Portland.

The county's death toll increased by around 10 in a little more than a month. Most of the recent additions were of older residents, including an 89-year-old woman who was the 177th fatality, a 98-year-old man who was the 180th death, a 96-year-old woman who was the 184th death and a 95-year-old woman who was the 186th fatality.

The 89-year-old woman tested positive Aug. 24 and died Sept. 20 at a private residence. The 98-year-old man tested positive on Nov. 10 and died Nov. 18 at Good Shepherd Medi-

cal Center, Hermiston. The 96-year-old woman tested positive on Nov. 3 and died Nov. 21 at a private residence. And the 95-year-old woman tested positive Nov. 9 and died Dec. 14 at Guardian Angel Homes, Hermiston.

But COVID-19 also killed a 35-year-old woman who tested positive Sept. 19 and died Nov. 19 at a private residence, according to Umatilla County Public Health.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County was 15,371 as of Dec. 21.

—EO Media Group

**WILDHORSE**  
RESORT & CASINO  
**12/31-1/6**  
**Cineplex Show Times**

Theater seating will adhere to social distancing protocols  
Every showing \$7.50 per person (ages 0-3 still free)

**American Underdog (PG)**  
4:10p 6:50p 9:20p  
extra 1:20p show 12/31 thru 1/2

**Spider-Man: No Way Home (PG13)**  
4:20p 7:40p  
extra 1:00p show 12/31 thru 1/2

**Sing 2 (PG)**  
3:50p 6:30p 9:10p  
extra 1:10p show 12/31 thru 1/2

**The King's Man (R)**  
3:40p 6:40p 9:30p  
extra 12:50p show 12/31 thru 1/2

**The Matrix Resurrections**  
4:50p 8:10p  
extra 1:30p show 12/31 thru 1/2

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