

# Senior project targets those in need

## Imbler senior raising steer, will donate meat to food bank

By **DICK MASON**  
*The Observer*

SUMMERVILLE — The Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank is set to receive a one-of-a-kind 1,200-pound bonus thanks to the generosity of an Imbler High School senior.

Tel McBride is raising a steer for his senior project and plans to donate all of the meat from it to the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank, which is operated by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon. McBride said he wants to make beef available to those in need because the price of meat has gotten so high during the past year.

Audrey Smith, manager of the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank, is delighted about the prospect of receiving meat from the steer.

“Beef is our No. 1 requested item,” she said.

Unfortunately, the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank rarely can provide beef because the cost makes it prohibitive. Smith said in



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

**Tel McBride poses with his cattle at a Summerville ranch on Jan. 17, 2022. He is donating the harvested meat from one of the steers to Community Connection of Northeast Oregon as a part of his senior project.**

the five years she has been manager of the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank, it has been able to offer beef only a couple of times.

Smith is McBride’s mentor for his senior project and said she is impressed by the steps he has taken to make sure the meat from the steer will be able to be distributed by the food bank. The Imbler senior is ensuring the meat processing company is properly certified so the meat meets government health standards for public distribution.

The steer is one of five McBride is now raising

and among about 30 he has raised altogether.

McBride started raising cattle at his family’s home more than a decade ago. He stopped for a few years and then started raising cattle again in 2017. He said raising cattle is a process of perpetual discovery.

“It is fun. Everyday I learn something new about them,” he said.

McBride, whose mother, Susy, works for Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, added cattle can be unpredictable.

“They keep you guessing,” he said.

McBride said when cattle

make up their mind to do something they are hard to stop.

“If they want to go somewhere they will go there,” he said.

McBride’s interest in cattle dates back 15 years when he was visiting a ranch in North Powder run by Butch Mascall, who offered a free calf to him if he could lasso the animal with a rope.

“I lassoed it on my first try,” McBride said.

McBride’s family took the calf home and proceeded to help raise it. McBride went on to raise more cattle, while receiving guidance from Mascall and former La Grande Police Chief John Courtney.

McBride plans to sell off his cattle after graduating from high school so he can have a chance to attend a school in Hermiston for railroad conducting. After graduating from there he plans to pursue a career in the railroad field.

He will be following the lead of his father, Kevin, who works for Union Pacific Railroad.

McBride said that he will likely return someday after high school to again raise cattle at some level because it is in his blood.

“It is something I really enjoy,” he said.

# DOC settles lawsuit with the former diversity manager

By **NOELLE CROMBIE**  
*The Oregonian*

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Corrections has paid \$350,000 to a former manager who alleged the department eliminated his job after he helped prisoners and workers pursue discrimination claims against the agency.

Gary Sims of Salem managed the Department of Corrections’ diversity and inclusion office. He previously worked as a religious services administrator and a human resources manager.

In 2013, he became head of agency’s Diversity and Inclusion Office, where he said he was expected to address racial disparities among other inequities within the prison system.

In his 2019 lawsuit, he said the office was intended to provide workers and prisoners with “an avenue to internally raise concerns of discrimination and to correct those disparities.”

According to his lawsuit, Sims “went beyond simply

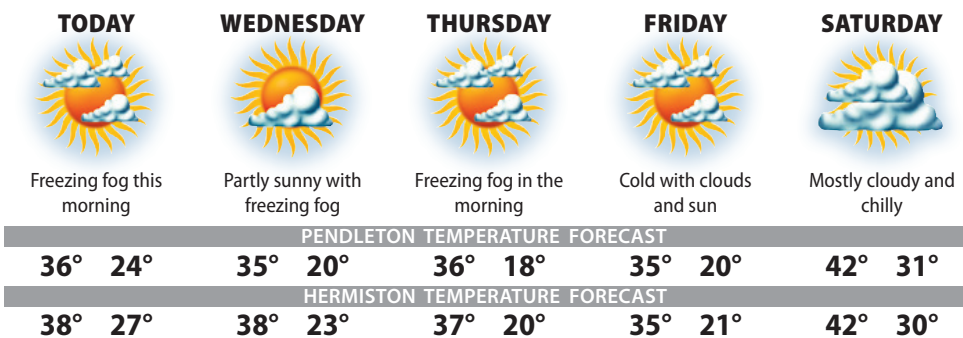
shuttling employee and inmate complaints of discrimination” through the prison bureaucracy. He claimed he helped staff and inmates advance those claims and advocated on their behalf.

He alleges his efforts didn’t go over well with corrections brass — including Director Colette Peters, who in 2017, he said, told him “in no uncertain terms to cease” his advocacy and reminded him his job was to forward complaints to human resources.

Later that year, he said he was told the Diversity and Inclusion Office would be closed and those duties would be taken on by another division. He said the decision was prompted by budget concerns. Sims alleges a human resources manager told him he had “nothing coming” from the agency and he should look elsewhere for work.

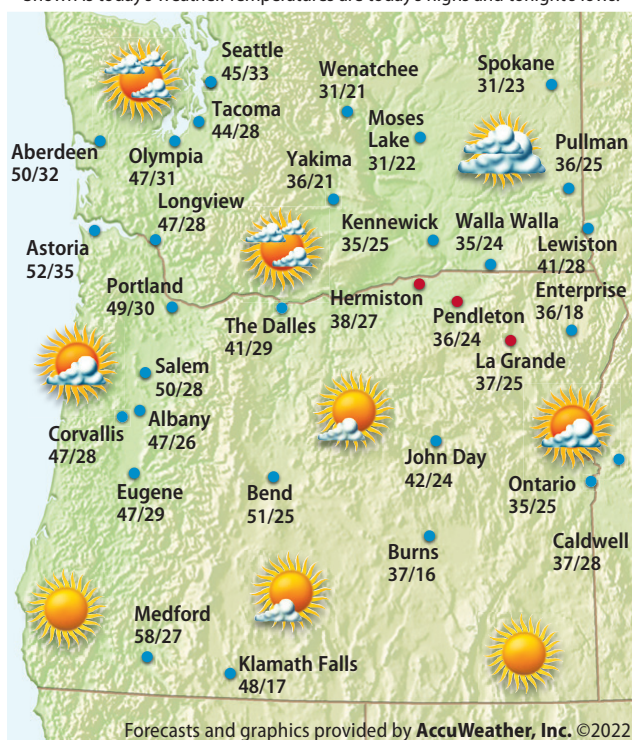
Sims, who works as a supervisor for spiritual care at Salem Hospital and clinics, said his salary at the time he left was about \$125,000.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



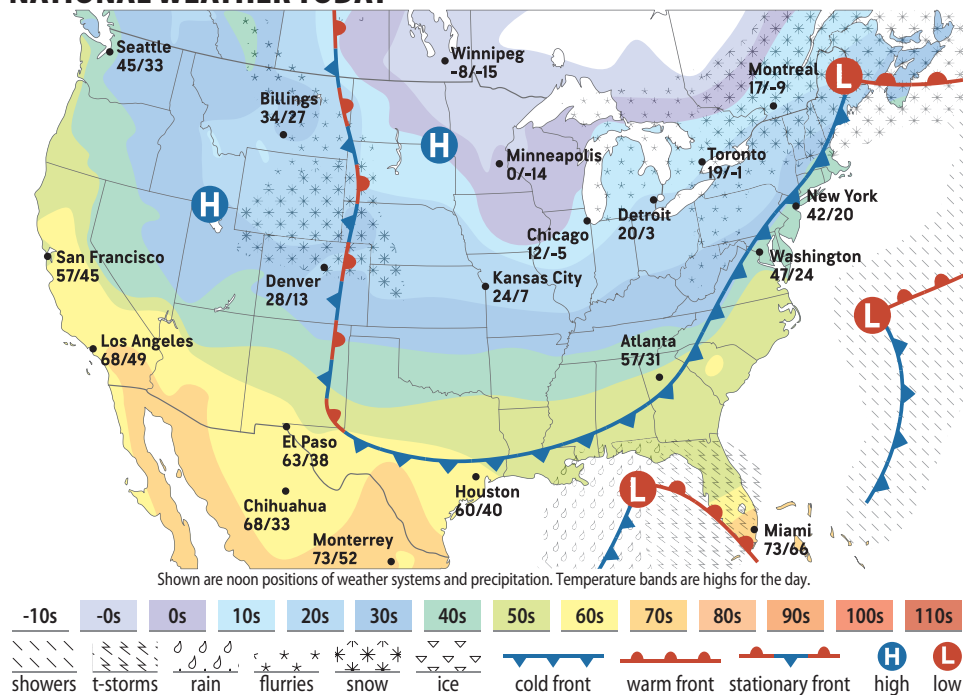
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	31°	29°	
Normals	43°	29°	
Records	71° (1935)	-15° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	1.47"		
Normal month to date	1.21"		
Year to date	1.47"		
Last year to date	0.67"		
Normal year to date	1.21"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	33°	31°	
Normals	44°	29°	
Records	63° (1935)	-16° (1949)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.89"		
Normal month to date	0.90"		
Year to date	0.89"		
Last year to date	0.46"		
Normal year to date	0.90"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	W. 4-8	W. 4-8	
Wed.	NE 4-8	NNW 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:24 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:51 p.m.		
Moonrise today	12:25 a.m.		
Moonset today	11:08 a.m.		
Last New First Full			
Jan 25	Jan 31	Feb 8	Feb 16

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 80° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low -32° in Clayton Lake, Maine

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# Cross-county commuters account for more than a third of regional workforce

By **ALEX WITTWER**  
*EO Media Group*

SALEM — More than a third of Eastern Oregon’s workforce commuted across county lines for their jobs in 2019, according to federal census data.

In some areas, that percentage is even higher.

“It’s a product of the economy,” said Christopher Rich, regional economist with the Oregon Employment Department, “and places people are and the jobs that are available, and the housing market that’s available.”

Roughly 38.5% of Union County residents commute for work in a different county, while 41% of Grant County residents commute for work. In Umatilla County, 35.8% of residents commute across county lines for work, while 24.4% of Wallowa residents commuted to other counties for work.

A staggering 58.7% of Morrow County residents worked in other counties, according to the data.

Rich said the data does not distinguish between commut-



East Oregonian, File

**Late afternoon traffic begins to get heavy on Highway 395 on June 26, 2018, in Hermiston. Data from the Oregon Employment Department shows more than a third of Eastern Oregon’s workforce commuted across county lines for their jobs in 2019.**

ers who travel between counties on a daily basis and those who might travel for seasonal work, such as nurses or wildland firefighters.

“There’s likely to be some more long term commuters that come in for maybe a season,” Rich said. “The data doesn’t specifically say that.”

Most of the workers who cross county lines do so to neighboring counties, though a fair few will skip more than one county, such as living in

Baker and working in Pendleton, but that could be due to imperfect data, according to Rich, who has been updating articles on Oregon’s economic data website, qualityinfo.org with data from 2019.

“I think in general, people are looking for jobs that fit with their skill sets and their lifestyle,” Rich said. “They’re also looking for homes that fit the same thing, so in some cases, you end up having to commute a little longer.”

## IN BRIEF

### Wallowa County population continues slow increase

WALLOWA COUNTY — Wallowa County’s population had a growth rate during 2021 that put it in the middle third of the state’s counties, according to a Portland State University report.

The state’s population increased by .54% to 4,266,560, PSU’s Population Research Center showed. Eastern Oregon counties, including Wallowa, had a combined increase of .45%. The eight counties — Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa — had a combined population as of July 1, 2021, of 190,444.

In Wallowa County, the increase was .43%, or 32 people, to a total of 7,433. Its growth rate was fifth among the eight counties, and overall

was 22nd in the state. Neighboring Union County had the lowest growth rate in the state, as it actually saw a population drop of 1.62%, or 434 people.

By city, Enterprise has a population of 2,080. Joseph’s population has moved to 1,158, and Wallowa is at 799. Lostine, the only other city named in the study, has a population of 242.

The breakdown by age shows the county with 1,406 youths under the age of 18, which makes up 18.9% of the population. Adults 18-64 account for just more than half (50.2%) of the population, or 3,730 people. And adults 65 and older make up 30.9% of the population, or 2,297 people.

The county has the fourth highest rate of individuals 65 and older, and is tied for 25th in terms of its youth population.

—EO Media Group

**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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