

Snowpack simpers despite spring storm

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Despite the sudden and unexpected April snowstorms, snowpack levels aren't quite back on track to where they need to be.

Snow has been falling since early this week, breaking records across the state for the latest snowfall in Oregon's history with 1.6 inches falling Monday, April 11, on parts of the Portland-metro areas, according to the National Weather Service in Portland.

And while snow isn't unheard of this far into spring in the Blue Mountains — the latest snowfall recorded at Pendleton was April 20, 1963, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton — it is a hopeful sign for an area still gripped by drought. However, the recent snowfall might not be enough to put municipalities and agriculturalists at ease.

Scott Oviatt, a hydrologist and snow survey supervisor at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service for Oregon, said while the recent addition to the snowpack is welcomed, it won't fix the rapid melt-off that started in late March.

"We've started the process, and it's really not going to stop," he said. "We're adding to the snowpack, of course,



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Snow adorns the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton on Tuesday, April 12, 2022. A surprise snowstorm throughout the beginning of April isn't enough to rectify the dwindling snowpack levels, according to snow survey experts.

adding water content to it, but eventually it's going to warm up, and it will melt out rapidly."

The snowpack had been at healthy, above-average levels for January and February before rapidly declining in March — between March 22-31, the Grande Ronde Valley region lost nearly 25% of its snowpack. Many parts of the state, including the southeast region encompassing Harney, Grant and Malheur counties, have experienced drastically reduced snow water equivalent levels, having dropped below 40% of the median

value for early April.

Water content in the snowpack for the Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha region remains at 76% of median as of April 12, while the Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow region is at 93% of median values. Nearly 90% of the state remains under drought conditions as of April 12, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Oviatt said that despite the rapid melt-off, chances for flooding are unlikely as temperatures are forecast to remain below normal until later in April.

Because there isn't enough time for gradual melt-off of

the newly acquired snow and overnight freezing to take place, snowpack levels won't become as dense, according to Oviatt. That means what fell over the week will likely melt off quickly without the chance to develop glacier-like pockets of moisture content.

"We're almost too late to make up the deficit we have," he said. "This didn't solve our problems. It just delayed it. But, you know, obviously the additional water content is good, but I don't think it's going to come out in terms of additional volume that's of use to municipalities and agricultural uses."

Redmond man offers server choice of keno tickets, wins \$80K

By TIM TRAINOR
Redmond Spokesman

REDMOND — Alma Rodriguez was midway through her shift at Ashley's Lottery Cafe in Redmond when a customer asked her to choose between two keno tickets. He was winning a little bit and wanted to tip his server, hoping to keep karma on his side and his good luck going.

There was a slip of paper in his left hand, one in his right. In a few minutes, one one them would be worth more than \$80,000. The other, nada.

Alma chose wrong. "We knew right off it was a big winner, but didn't know how much," she said. "We put it in the machine and it just said 'SEE LOTTERY.' That's when we knew it was really big."

They were playing 8-spot, a jackpot game where the payout for going 8-for-8 on keno numbers goes up with each bettor — until someone hits all eight and takes the pot. When the winning numbers were chosen at the Redmond cafe, the pot had reached \$80,022.

The winner was a

Redmond resident who chose to be identified only as Robert "Bobby" H. According to the Oregon Lottery, he plans to save some of his prize money and use the rest to buy a new truck.

He also recalled giving Rodriguez her choice between the two tickets.

"If she'd picked that one, she would have won," he told the lottery. "It must have been karma for me."

Rodriguez sees it as karma, too. She claims she is not pained by coming so close to a big winner. She felt excitement, not regret, even in the first moment when the magnitude of her choice became clear.

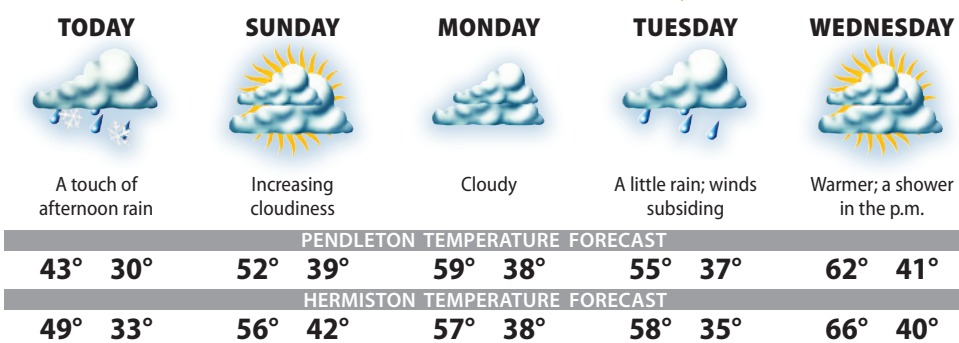
"I'd never seen anybody win so much," she said. "There was no way to not feel happy for him. He was such a nice guy, it was really cool to see him win."

She says, strongly, that she would have not kept the money if she'd chosen the winning ticket instead of the loser.

"I would have given it back to him and asked him to cut me a share," she said. "I don't want to take his money, take his winnings."

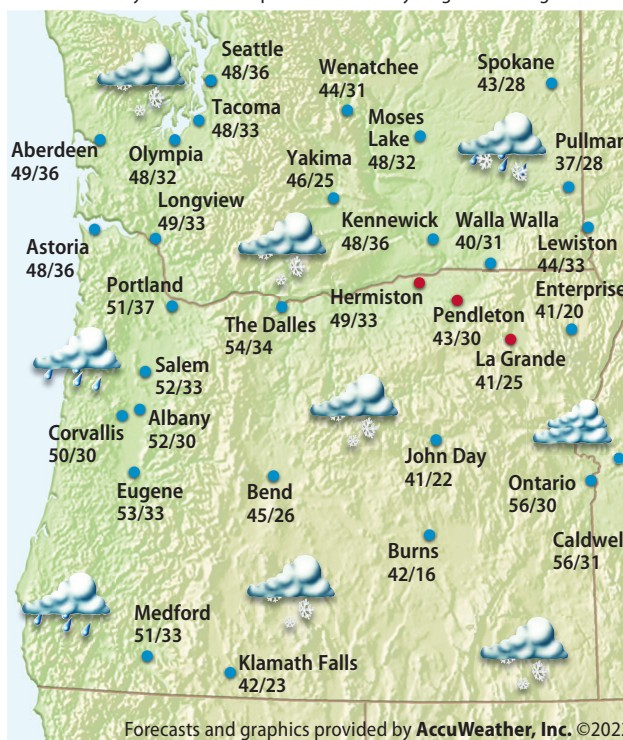
Rodriguez did receive a \$100 tip.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



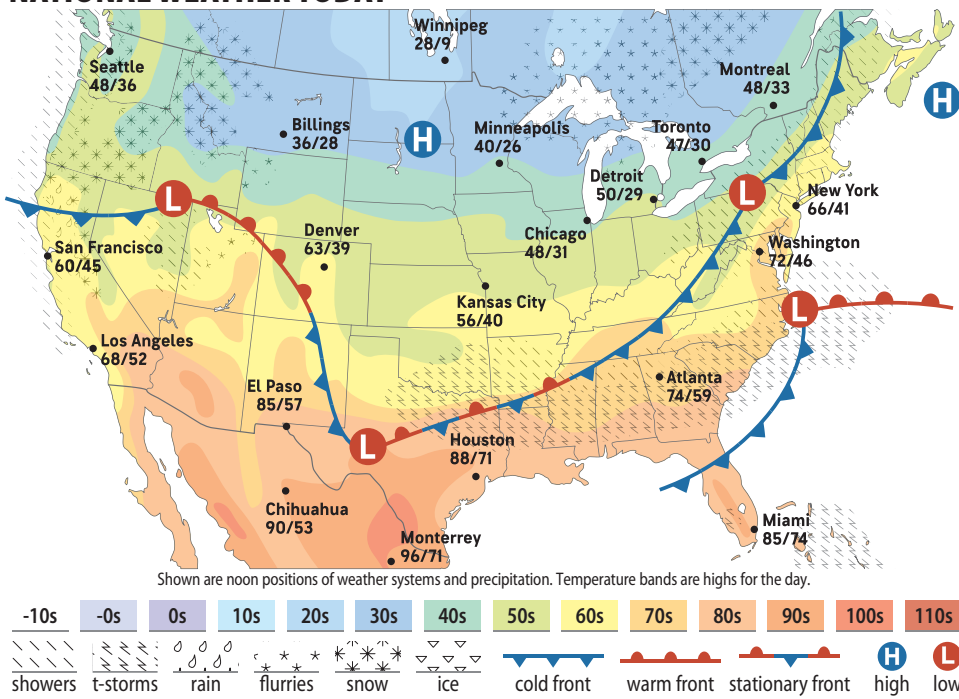
ALMANAC

| PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 48° | 30° |
| Normals | 62° | 39° |
| Records | 89° (1926) | 26° (1903) |
| PRECIPITATION | | |
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.04" | |
| Month to date | 0.64" | |
| Normal month to date | 0.69" | |
| Year to date | 4.24" | |
| Last year to date | 3.34" | |
| Normal year to date | 4.76" | |
| HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 51° | 30° |
| Normals | 66° | 39° |
| Records | 86° (1936) | 27° (2005) |
| PRECIPITATION | | |
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | Trace | |
| Month to date | 0.74" | |
| Normal month to date | 0.40" | |
| Year to date | 2.69" | |
| Last year to date | 1.73" | |
| Normal year to date | 3.17" | |
| WINDS (in mph) | | |
| Today | W 7-14 | Sun. E 4-8 |
| Pendleton | W 8-16 | E 6-12 |
| SUN AND MOON | | |
| Sunrise today | 6:08 a.m. | |
| Sunset tonight | 7:43 p.m. | |
| Moonrise today | 8:00 p.m. | |
| Moonset today | 6:19 a.m. | |
| Full | Last | New |
| Apr 16 | Apr 23 | Apr 30 |
| | | May 8 |

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 97° in Sweetwater, Texas Low -6° in Big Trails, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Pete Candlish, a hobby miner from La Grande, and his service dog, Woodrow, appear in an episode of "Gold Rush: Freddy Dodge's Mine Rescue" airing on the Discovery Channel and subscription streaming services.

Reality TV show features man from La Grande and Baker County mine

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A popular Discovery reality show is bringing a La Grande man to the small screen.

Pete Candlish appears in an episode of "Gold Rush: Freddy Dodge's Mine Rescue" now airing on the Discovery Channel.

The reality program, which according to Dodge's Facebook page has an audience of at least 1 million viewers a week, features mining experts Dodge and Juan Ibarra who visit mines throughout the United States to show those operating them how to do so more effectively.

Dodge and Ibarra will be shown at the Sanger Mine in Baker County working with miners including Pete Candlish, who is helping operate the mine for its owners who live in Western Oregon, during the one-hour episode.

Candlish is a hobby miner who owns stakes near the Sanger Mine and has been a fan of "Gold Rush: Freddy Dodge's Mine Rescue" since the series began. He said he "was shocked" when the owners of Sanger Mine called

him up and offered him a chance to appear on the TV program.

"I couldn't believe it. I was totally surprised," said Candlish, who quickly took the owners up on their offer.

His wife, Stacey, and daughter, Adalynn, 7, were not at the mine when the program was filmed, but a photo of them is shown during the episode, titled "Dial F for Freddy."

The show was recorded at Sanger Mine in June of 2021 over a 10-day stretch.

"Sometimes they filmed for an hour and only a minute of the footage appeared in the show," Candlish said.

He said he learned a great deal about mining over the 10-day period.

"They showed me things like how the configurations of sluice boxes can make a big difference in how much gold you can get," Candlish said.

Sluices are long, narrow boxes that water passes through when put in a creek or stream. Sluicing is a method of separating and recovering gold from gravel by the use of running water.

Mining as therapy

Pete Candlish started

mining while with the U.S. Coast Guard 10 years ago in Alaska and does it as a hobby to help him cope with post-traumatic stress syndrome.

"It is great therapy for me. It helps me with physical and mental healing," said Candlish, who talks about this during the television show.

The program about Sanger Mine is available to watch on subscription streaming services, including Discovery Plus, and Candlish said he has received a number of calls and messages from veterans who have seen it.

They indicated that the program helped them deal with the challenges they are facing.

"That has been gratifying to hear," Candlish said.

Another reason Candlish is so drawn to mining is that each time someone spots gold they are doing something historic because the odds are no person has seen it before.

"You are probably the first person to ever see it," he said.

Candlish is optimistic that there is more to be found in the mines of Baker County.

"There is still gold out there that the old-timers didn't get," Candlish said.

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