

# EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022

146th Year, No. 111

WINNER OF THE 2022 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

**OREGON WILDFIRES**

## Largest wildfire burning in Wallowa County

Double Creek reaches almost 43,700 acres Monday; more than 400 personnel fighting the blaze

By **JAYSON JACOBY**  
*Baker City Herald*

BAKER CITY — Additional resources continued to arrive on Sunday, Sept. 4, including task forces from the Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal, to help battle the both the Double Creek and Eagle Cap Wilderness fires.

The Double Creek Fire in Wallowa County is the largest wildfire burning in Oregon.

The fire has now burned 43,668 acres, according to the Sept. 5 update, up from the more than 37,800 acres reported on Sept. 4. The blaze is still 0% contained, and there are more than 400 personnel assigned to fight the fire.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act on Sept. 3 in response to the Double Creek Fire.

Strong winds, hot temperatures and humidity that dipped into single digits in places Sept. 3 also enabled two lightning-caused fires in the Eagle Cap Wilderness to grow substantially.

According to a press release from the Type 1 overhead team that's managing the Double Creek and the wilderness fires, task forces from the State Fire Marshal's office initiated structure protection on the Double Creek Fire, cleared brush and increased defensible space around homes along the Freezeout and Innaha roads.

Firefighters secured a private inholding (Section 36) along Grizzly Ridge between Buck Point and Pumpkin Creek. Dozers cleared vegetation along the power line in the Innaha River corridor. All the known hunting parties were safely evacuated from the area.

According to a release from the governor's office, the declaration allows the Office of the State Fire Marshal to take unified command immediately. Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish has issued Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1 evacuation orders for homes near the fire.

Firefighters on Sept. 5 were scouting for additional options on the northern and southern portions of the fire. Crews will mop up and patrol around structures along

See *Wildfire*, Page A10

**MILTON-FREEWATER**

## FIRE GUTS FOUR MOBILE HOMES



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

From left, Manuel Lopez, his daughter Juliet Lopez, wife Catalina Deloera and older daughter Giselle Lopez look Monday, Sept. 5, 2022, for valuables in the remains of their mobile home after a fire the night of Sept. 3 in Milton-Freewater burned through their home and three others.

## Families, occupants face immediate needs, with housing at top of the list

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
*East Oregonian*

**M**ILTON-FREEWATER — Fire ravaged four trailer homes Saturday, Sept. 3, in Milton-Freewater, leaving families and occupants homeless and with only the clothes on their backs.

Residents at the trailer park at 1501 N. Elizabeth St. just north of the Milton-Freewater city limits said the fire swept through four trailers and may have claimed the lives of a few pets and some poultry, but everyone who was in the homes escaped unharmed.

The Lopez family sifted through the blackened, melted and twisted debris of their home's remains Sept. 5 searching for valuables. Oldest daughter Giselle Lopez said the fire happened around 9:40 p.m.

"We heard a pop," she said, but recently these sounds became more common, so it did not raise an alarm.

Lopez and her family — younger sister Juliet, father Manuel and mother Catalina Deloera — were out in the living room, she said, but her brother, Richard, was going to bed



Andrew Cutler/East Oregonian

A fire erupted Saturday night, Sept. 3, 2022, at this mobile home park in Milton-Freewater, where some residents Sept. 5 returned to sift through the remains in search of valuables.

early for work the next day. He then glanced out his bedroom window.

"He just screamed 'fire,'" Lopez said. "And chaos broke out."

The trailer just north of theirs was blazing

and the tree overhead was in flames. Lopez said they suspected the fire climbed the tree and spread to their shed's roof and beyond.

See *M-F fire*, Page A10

## 'Labor Day Spectacular' starts its engines

4,000 gather for annual event at Hermiston Raceway

By **DAKOTA CASTETS-DIDIER**  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — With a ground trembling roar, cars rocketed past a packed house Saturday, Sept. 3, on the first day of Hermiston Raceway's Labor Day Spectacular.

"Labor Day Spectacular is one of our signature events for the season, it brings tons of competitors from all over the northwest, some from Utah," Lacy Walden said.

She, her brother Jody, and her father Greg Walden all participate in running the Hermiston Raceway, which has been in operation since 1967 and has seen its share of racing royalty battle it out on their pavement.

"Tom Sneeva, Indianapolis 500 winner, raced here," Greg Walden said. "Hershel McGriff also raced here."



Dakota Castets-Didier/East Oregonian

Cars of the modified class enter the grandstand straight after a race restart Saturday, Sept. 3, 2022, at the Hermiston Raceway in Hermiston. Donovan Barr in car No. 65 went on to win.

See *Races*, Page A10



7 294671 10002 2