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A vehicle passes through water, in spite of signs warning not to, on Riddell Road near Monmouth Avenue on Monday afternoon.

EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Record rainfall fills creeks, rivers, causes flooding on county roads

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The weather system moving through the area has created quite a stir already, with record rainfall Monday, causing road closures and early releases in schools throughout the county.

"It's kind of a typical Pacific Northwest active-weather pattern," said Will Ahue, meteorologist for the Portland National Weather Service. "We have another system coming through (Tuesday) afternoon and (Tuesday) night that will bring another shot of rain to the area."

Ahue said Tuesday's rainfall would likely not be as heavy as Monday's, but would probably push rivers back to full or above flood stage.

Tuesday morning, the Willamette River was at 16



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Rickreall Creek levels in downtown Dallas were high because of the heavy rainfall. Record rainfall on Monday caused road closures and early releases in schools.

feet at Salem, and was expected to rise to a peak of 23 feet tonight (Wednesday).

The Luckiamute River at Suver was higher than 30 feet Tuesday morning.

Flood stage is 27 feet.

Monday's precipitation measured 1.66 inches, a record for the day, bringing the total rainfall for the year to 31.15 inches — still 3.36

inches below normal for the year.

Ahue said at this point, the potential is there to have above-normal precipitation for the year.

"The bad news is our temperature is forecast to be above normal," he said. "It's not going to do a lot for the snowpack. It doesn't mean there won't be a storm or two that comes in and dumps a lot of snow, but the chances for that tend to be lower."

The strong El Nino forecast for this winter is expected to bring warmer temperatures throughout the Northwest, Ahue said.

Monday's high temperature of 61 degrees ties the record set in 1938. The normal high is 47 degrees.

Monday's low temperature of 50 degrees is quite warmer than the average 35. The record low is 4 below, set in 1972.

A wind advisory ended at 4 a.m. Wednesday (today). A flood watch will continue through Thursday.

For more information: www.weather.gov.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

American Family Video to close once inventory is gone.

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FALLS CITY

Falls City students head to Ugo's Pizza to make their own pies as part of an after-school program field trip.

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INDEPENDENCE

"Seussical the Musical" is sure to please the whole family with comedy, morals.

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MONMOUTH

Monmouth council OKs 8 percent rate increase to garbage collection services.

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SPORTS

Elizabeth Dressel discovers her love for swimming.

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EDUCATION

Central School District Board of Directors considers a bond to help pay for improvements and additions to facilities.

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Falls City's 'go-to guy' makes the season bright

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — If students at Falls City's high school or elementary school have problems, they know they can go to John Gilbert.

If you are having an emergency in and around Falls City, Gilbert is likely to be among the first responders to answer the call.

And when it comes to helping families during the holidays, Gilbert is once again the "go-to guy."

As president of Falls City's volunteer firefighter association, he's responsible for coordinating all the group's volunteer activities during the holiday season.

That includes collecting gifts for Toys For Tots for children in Polk County, assisting Dallas Christmas Cheer on collecting and helping Santa deliver gifts to

families in need in Falls City, distributing Christmas Cheer food boxes on Christmas Eve, and added this year, bringing gifts donated by the Oregon Army National Guard to all students in Falls City schools.

"It's a busy month for us," Gilbert said, smiling.

To hear him talk about those Christmas activities, though, it sounds more like he views it as a privilege rather than responsibility.

"It's a great thing. I wish there were more Christmases in the year," Gilbert said. "About every six months — I don't like putting the lights up and down — but having everyone come together."

Saturday, Gilbert and his fellow fire volunteers braved the chilly rain outside Wal-Mart in Dallas asking for toys or donations for Toys for Tots. About every few



minutes someone would hand over a bag of toys or drop bills into the donation jar. By noon the booth was getting a little crowded, but Gilbert loved it.

"Oh wow a skateboard. We haven't gotten skateboard yet," he said as a woman handed over an armful of toys.

"None of us have done anything like this in the past," he said.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

John Gilbert, center, talks with an Oregon Army National Guard member Saturday at Wal-Mart while the Falls City Fire Department collects donations for Toys for Tots.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Help Toys For Tots and mingle with fellow business people at the MI Chamber monthly luncheon. Light refreshments. Noon. Free.	James2 Community Kitchen offers free meals for all who are hungry at Dallas United Methodist Church. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.	Celebrate the Dallas Fire and EMS remodeled entry-way with a ribbon cutting, coffee and refreshments. 10 a.m. Free.	How many items can you spot in Christmas light displays in town? Join the Grove's scavenger hunt. 6 p.m. Free.	Have breakfast with friends at Buell Grange Hall. Select from pancakes, eggs, French toast, and hash browns. 8-11 a.m. \$6.	Mid-Valley Christian Academy will hold its Christmas program with a children's musical, "The Christmas Clinic." 6:30 p.m. Free.	France School of Dance students will perform their annual dance recital and canned food drive at Talmadge. 6 p.m. Donation.	
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