

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer
Volume 140, Issue 1 www.Polkio.com January 6, 2016 75¢

First snow



LUKAS EGGEN (TOP) EMILY MENTZER (RIGHT)/Itemizer-Observer

Kids enjoyed an unexpected snow day on Sunday, the first widespread snow Polk County has seen since February of 2014. Total precipitation amounted to 0.29 inches, but it was enough to keep the sleds moving and the laughter coming.

Above: Alexandria Cavan (left) and Sadie Pond enjoy a trip down a hill at Dallas City Park on Sunday morning. The pair went sledding until their sleds broke, along with Sienna and Zoey Pond.

Right: Caleb Duncan, 4, doesn't have to go far for a wild ride. The driveway on his quiet street in Monmouth will work just fine. He and his siblings played with friends and family on Sunday, throwing snowballs and making the trip up the driveway to sled back down.



IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Greg Ellis works to market Dallas to residents and outsiders alike.

»Page 6A

FALLS CITY

Dallas Police and Polk County Sheriff deputies serve a search and seizure warrant at a Falls City residence.

»Page 14A

INDEPENDENCE

Monmouth-Independence YMCA restructures membership dues to reflect household incomes.

»Page 3A

MONMOUTH

Casa Burrito Tequila Grill offers a range of Mexican dishes, from combination plates to offerings at the taco cart in front.

»Page 5A

SPORTS

Former Western Oregon wide receiver Tyrell Williams caught his first pass in the NFL. The San Diego Charger scored on an 80-yard touchdown against the Denver Broncos.

»Page 11A

SPORTS

Central sophomore Krista Omlid has transitioned quickly from inexperienced newcomer to a leader.

»Page 12A

Dallas fire put out quickly

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — A small fire was mostly extinguished by a resident of a recreational vehicle at 573 E. Elendale Ave. on Friday, but when personnel from Dallas Fire & EMS responded, it was still smoldering. The fire department was on scene for about an hour working to completely extinguish the fire. The occupant was assessed by Dallas medics for possible smoke inhalation.

The fire appears to have been started from smoking materials, said April Welsh, Dallas Fire & EMS community liaison. "There was no information as to how much damage there was to the RV," she said.

Soggy December weekends means fewer trees sold

All in all, it's a good year for Christmas tree growers, big and small, as owners get ready to replant

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The record December rains — 15.24 inches in all, 6.86 above what's considered "normal" — didn't spoil the Christmas tree harvest too much. "We had a pretty soggy year with all the rain," said Ken Brown, co-owner of Brown's Westwinds Farms in Dallas. "We were down a little bit on the number of trees sold, but it was really a good year."

The long, hot summer did not hurt the fir trees much, Brown said, because they got enough moisture in spring. "We do worry if it stays particularly dry into the harvest season," he said, adding that the fall rains was enough so trees didn't suffer. However, the heavy rains, particularly during the weekends, kept a few cut-your-own-tree folks away. "Of course, that slows things down pretty dramatically," Brown said.

But overall, he said, "We were only down maybe 20 trees from the year before." With a U-cut farm, any trees that don't sell aren't wasted, Brown said. "Not like somebody on the (parking) lot that has a few trees leftover," he said. "They're not worth a thing the day after Christmas. Mine, I can use mine again." The wholesale tree growers weren't as affected by the late rains, as their harvests were already in trucks and on boats to retail sellers.

The summer heat affected some trees, said Tom Norby, past-president and member of the Oregon Christmas Tree Growers Association. "Those first trees that we sent overseas really needed a bit more moisture for them," he said. "The ones we cut in November for domestic were a lot healthier." Wholesale tree growers start their harvests in late October and keep pushing right through Thanksgiving, Norby said.

See TREES, Page 13A

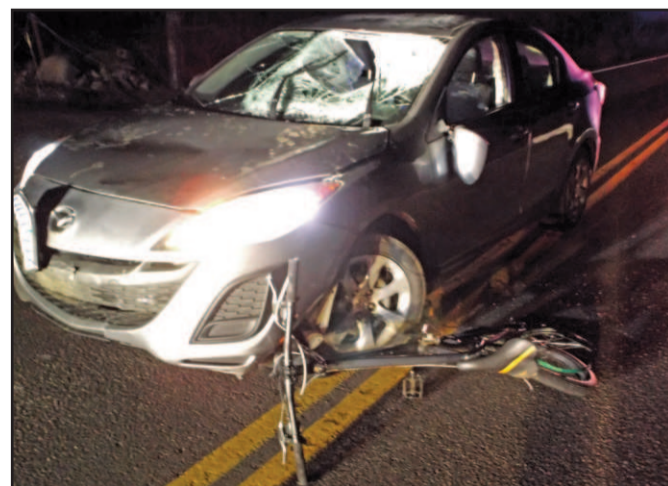
Cyclist dies in car accident on Hoffman

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — No citations have been issued, but the investigation is ongoing in Dec. 30's fatal accident involving a bicyclist and car.

Polk County Sheriff's Office said bicyclist John Shapley, 52, of Independence died in the accident that occurred in the 9000 block of Hoffman Road, on the outskirts of Monmouth city limits.

At about 6:40 p.m., Polk County deputies responded to what was reported as a vehicle versus pedestrian crash on Hoffman Road between 16th Street North and South Highway 99W. Deputies were told CPR was in progress.



Courtesy of the POLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A man died in an accident on Hoffman Road on Dec. 30.

Additionally, officers from Monmouth and Independence responded to the call. Polk County Fire District No. 1 EMS personnel arrived on the scene at 6:46 p.m. and soon determined that Shapley had died as a result of the crash. Police said Shapley was

struck from behind while riding a bicycle west on Hoffman Road, causing significant damage to both the bicycle and the involved vehicle, driven by Daniel Major, 40, of Falls City.

It was believed Shapley was killed upon impact.

The investigation showed a secondary impact with Shapley's body by a separate vehicle had occurred, but it was not thought to be a factor in his death.

All parties remained at the scene and cooperated with investigators, police said.

Sheriff Mark Garton said that stretch of Hoffman Road is dark with no street lights. It has very little shoulder with no bike lane. Shapley had been wearing

dark clothing, Garton said. Speed didn't appear to be a factor in the crash.

No criminal charges have been filed thus far in the investigation, which is ongoing, Garton said.

Both the Polk County Medical Examiner's Office and the Polk County District Attorney's Office had personnel respond to the scene.

Law enforcement arriving on scene closed Hoffman Road between 16th Street North and South Highway 99W.

The road was closed for several hours while deputies conducted an investigation, which included assistance from Oregon State Police, at the request of the sheriff's office.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
	Pick up your knitting needles and crochet hooks and join others making clothing and accessories for those in need. 3-5 p.m. Free.	The Dallas Lions Club welcomes everyone to its twice-monthly meetings at Hong Kong Restaurant. 11:30 a.m. Free.	Bring your new electronic devices to free community technology courses at Dallas United Methodist Church. 10-11:30 a.m. Free.	Pentacle Theatre will present "Mary Poppins" at Central High School, a fundraiser for the community theater. 2 and 7:30 p.m. \$15-20.	Head to Buell Grange Hall, just off Highway 22 north-west of Dallas, for all-you-can-eat breakfast. 8-11 a.m. \$6.	With the excitement of resolutions and holidays behind you, it's time for National Clean Off Your Desk Day, the second Monday of the year.	Are you a caregiver, or know someone who is? A support group meets at West Valley Hospital to offer help. 2-3:30 p.m. Free.
	Showers Hi: 39 Lo: 32	Cloudy Hi: 40 Lo: 31	Partly cloudy Hi: 41 Lo: 31	Showers Hi: 40 Lo: 31	Partly cloudy Hi: 41 Lo: 30	Showers Hi: 40 Lo: 33	Showers Hi: 43 Lo: 36