

Local & State

Record February snowstorm piles up powder in Central Oregon

■ Bend records daily February record of 12.5 inches, with more in other places

By Kyle Spurr
WesCom News Service

BEND — February's historic snowstorm left thigh-high snow on the ground Tuesday across Central Oregon, kept plows running on streets, shuttered schools and offices and grounded flights at Redmond Airport.

National Weather Service meteorologists Tuesday were trying to better tally how much snow fell Monday.

La Pine had the most snowfall in the region, piling up 48 inches by 3 p.m. Monday, according to weather service reports. The reports also showed Redmond had 30 inches of snow and Sisters had 27.5 inches.

Bend totaled more than 25 inches in some areas. But the 12.5 inches recorded Monday morning is the highest one-day snow total in February since the agency started tracking it in 1901. It is also the highest amount recorded on Feb. 25, breaking the old record of 11 inches for that day in 1993.

More snow is expected. A winter storm warning is in effect until 4 a.m. Thursday, when another 5 to 10 inches of snow could fall, the weather service said.

Jim Smith, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Pendleton, said snowfall is common in Central Oregon in February, but it is rare to get this much.

"It is definitely a unique event for this late in the year," Smith said. "But it is not unusual to get snow in Central Oregon. If memory serves, it can essentially snow any month of the year."

Redmond Airport remained closed Tuesday and is not scheduled to reopen until 9 a.m. Wednesday. The winter storm damaged the airport's navigational system for pilots, according to airport officials.

The airport's closure upended travel plans for many people this week.

Retired Bend resident Toni Low had to scramble Tuesday when her flight out of Redmond for a vacation to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with friends was canceled. She was able to find a flight out of the Portland International Airport to her connecting flight



Victoria Arnold rides behind her two dogs — known as skijoring — Copper, left, and Apollo, in an east Bend neighborhood on Tuesday.

"It is definitely a unique event for this late in the year."

— Jim Smith, National Weather Service

in San Francisco, but she had to borrow a friend's pickup truck and drive U.S. Highway 20 over the snowy Santiam Pass, which was closed Monday due to an avalanche.

The unexpected road trip to Portland and airline travel will be worth it when Low makes it to Puerto Rico, where she plans to snorkel, paddleboard and celebrate a friend's 70th birthday in 80 degree weather.

"We are determined to get there," she said. "We are not giving up."

Bend-La Pine Schools, Redmond School District schools, Redmond Proficiency Academy, Jefferson and Crook County school districts, Sisters School District, Culver School District, Central Oregon Community College and OSU-Cascades were closed Tuesday and will remain closed Wednesday.

Rainier Butler, spokesman for Redmond School District, said staff is closely watching M.A. Lynch Elementary, which has a flat roof that sags under heavy snowfall and is a concern for the district.

Heavy snow on flat roofs is a major focus for local school districts, especially after the

gym at Bend's Highland Magnet at Kenwood School collapsed from heavy snow in January 2017.

"We're closely monitoring it for signs of weakness," Butler said. "We don't see any issues. There's a lot of snow, but it's light and fluffy, so not a great deal of impact."

Corky Wray, owner of Central Oregon Disaster Restoration, said he has not heard about heavy snow damaging homes in the region.

"This snow is pretty light," Wray said. "It's not causing structural damage from too much weight on the roof, at least not yet."

If the snow sticks around for a few more days, it could start causing ice dams on people's roofs, Wray said. An ice dam forms on the eave of a sloped roof when heat from inside the building melts the snow and it freezes on the roof.

During the historic snowfall two years ago, Central Oregon Disaster Restoration received more than 500 calls over a two-month period, almost as many as it gets in an entire year. The majority of the calls were for ice dams, Wray said.

Wray's crew just recently finished fixing all the buildings damaged from the relentless snowfall two years ago. And now the crew is bracing for more calls with record snowfall again.

"We are having flashbacks," Wray said.

The city of Bend is working at full capacity to clear streets, said spokeswoman Anne Aurand. Thirty-four plows are being used, a fleet that includes equipment from private contractors, she said.

The city may declare a winter parking emergency, where cars parked on some city streets could be towed, Aurand said. But that emergency was not issued, as of Tuesday afternoon.

"We're still evaluating that idea," Aurand said. "For now, we're staying focused on continuing to clear the main streets and neighborhood streets."

Aurand said the city received complaints about snow plows blocking driveways with berms, which must be shoveled by residents. While acknowledging it was an inconvenience, Aurand said the city does not have the manpower to alleviate the problem.

Peter Murphy, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation, said the state agency is using every available piece of equipment to clear highways across the state.

Early today Highway 20, the main link between Bend and the mid-Willamette Valley, was closed due to an avalanche on Hogg Rock just west of Santiam Pass.

CARBON

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Some people resorted to live streaming the hearing on their cellphones.

"I had 300 more people out there that couldn't even begin to talk to you or hear you, so we would like another venue to do this better," said Baker County Commission Chairman Bill Harvey as the hearing closed.

Harvey was the first to testify. Speakers were given two minutes each.

The committee has had two public hearings on the bill in Salem, where most people supported the bill.

That was not the case Monday in Baker City. All but one speaker opposed the bill. Most said they're concerned that Ash Grove Cement, which owns a plant near Durkee that employs 115 people, would not be able to comply with the carbon limit and would have to close.

Terry Kerby, who manages Ash Grove's Durkee plant, said 65 percent of the carbon the plant produces comes from the resources they mine when making cement, and this would prevent the plant from meeting the carbon reduction benchmarks in the current version of the bill.

"In the event that this bill passes and results in the shuttering (of the Durkee plant), the irony would be the (carbon dioxide) emissions would globally increase," Kerby said.

Several other speakers repeated Kerby's claim that the closure of the Durkee plant would result in more cement being made in China, which has less stringent emissions laws.

Malheur County officials said they're concerned that passage of the bill would prompt businesses to move from Ontario to Fruitland, Idaho, just across the Snake River. Idaho is not proposing a carbon cap-and-trade system.

Several speakers also expressed concerns about increases in the cost of gasoline and natural gas that some lawmakers say would result if the bill passes.

Suzanne Fouty of Baker City was the only person who testified in support of the bill.

However, Fouty emphasized that she favors a version of the bill that doesn't lead to Ash Grove closing its Durkee plant,

or that threatens local farmers and ranchers.

"I support the strong Clean Energy Jobs Bill (the official name of HB 2020), one that brings funds and jobs to rural Oregon, one that jump-starts innovation by leveling the economic playing field," Fouty said.

Although Monday's event was the only public hearing scheduled in Baker City, residents could also submit testimony prior to the meeting.

Ten Ash Grove employees submitted letters, as did Fred Warner Jr., Baker City manager.

Warner's letter also expressed concern about how the bill could affect the Ash Grove plant.

Dan Shaffer, the manager of Dykman Electrical in Boise, which does work at Ash Grove, also submitted a letter, writing that if Ash Grove closes the Durkee plant, his company would have to lay off some employees.

If the bill passes, Oregon would become the second state to pass a statewide carbon emissions law. California is the only other state that has passed multi-sector cap-and-trade legislation. Some states have cap-and-trade systems specifically for power companies.

The virtual hearing was split between Baker City and Newport. The hearing in Newport started just after the Baker hearing.

Hearings are scheduled Friday at The Dalles and Saturday at Bend.

Those who wish to comment on the bill, but weren't able to give testimony can submit comments by email at jccr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov. Those who testified are also able to submit additional comments via email.

The Baker City Council also discussed the bill during its Tuesday meeting.

Near the end of Monday's hearing, state Sen. Cliff Bentz, whose district includes Baker County and who is a vice chair of the Joint Committee For Carbon Reduction, announced that Gov. Kate Brown will be visiting the Ash Grove Durkee plant on Friday afternoon. Brown's visit to the plant is a private tour.

Brown will be making an appearance with the Baker County Chamber of Commerce at the Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St., at 3:30 p.m. Friday, which is open to the public.

HEART TO HEART

Trailer thieves harmed county's kids, Trail Ride volunteers

Last week a cargo trailer was stolen from 3720 10th St., then burned on Broadway. This trailer belonged to the Baker County Mounted Posse. Some people in the community know what the Posse is all about, but for those that don't, we are a nonprofit organization of dedicated volunteers who enrich the community and its kids. Many Baker County adults went on the annual Kids Trail Ride as kids and when we talk to them they always tell us what a wonderful time they had and will always remember the adventure.

You will see our chuckwagon — you can't miss it — around town serving up hamburgers and all the trimmings at events such as Miners Jubilee, Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, demolition derby, truck pull and November's gun show. This is all done by selfless volunteers who put in long hours, but believe in helping our community and its kids. All funds

made by these adventures are put right back into our program that funds the annual Kids Trail Ride in June. As from the very first trail ride in 1964, we still only ask the kids of our community, up to 50 boys and girls ages 12 to 15, to pay only \$2 per person. The rest of the funds come from our year-round projects and generous donations from our wonderful community members and businesses. If a kid wants to go and doesn't have all the money there will be a scholarship available. The Posse believes that every kid should have the opportunity for this weekend adventure of learning, making lifelong friends and just enjoying what the Eastern Oregon outdoors have to offer.

The Posse and community are just so very disappointed in the people who stole our trailer and burned it on Broadway. This was not your property and you showed no morals and total disrespect for our whole community. This trailer contained all the tents, awnings, games, tables, chairs, boots, trash cans,

coolers, water containers and a generator, all key elements to making our weekend ride work for the kids. We, the Posse volunteers, will have to work extremely hard to try and replace everything that was stolen and destroyed, so that we can conduct the annual kids trail ride in June.

This was a senseless cruel

act not only against the Posse and the kids who participate, but against the good citizens of Baker County. If anyone has information on the incident, no matter how small or simple you think it is, please contact Officer Wood of the Baker City Police Department.

Thank you very much.

Jodie Radabaugh
Baker County
Mounted Posse

Jayson Jacoby? I also read and re-read the recent letter by Peter Jeffs in which he expressed his appreciation of Jayson Jacoby's writing. I could have said the same things. No, I couldn't — Mr. Jeffs said it so well. Thank you, Mr. Jacoby and Peter Jeffs.

Janet Mitchell
Baker City

Agree with reader's recent letter

A fan letter: "Relaxing in my living room, after shoveling my walk from today's snowfall, I re-read some very pleasant articles by the paper's editor,

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