

Low snowfall endangers summer water supplies

Record low snowfall in much of the West is endangering next summer's water supplies, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

In surveys conducted Jan. 1, SCS found there was less snow in many parts of the West than at the beginning of any January in the past 40 years. Normally, nearly half the year's snowpack has accumulated by this time.

Throughout the region, many snow survey sites were

bare and most others had less than 30 per cent of their normal Jan. 1 snowpack.

Nevada had no snowpack. New Mexico, Oregon, southern Washington, and much of Idaho had 5 to 15 per cent of their average Jan. 1 snowpack. Utah had 5 to 25 per cent, and Colorado, western Wyoming, western Montana, and the northern parts of Washington and Idaho had only 25 to 40 per cent. No Jan. 1 survey was conducted in Arizona.

Storms would have to yield

nearly double their typical snowfall between January and May to prevent summer water shortages, according to the conservation agency. Snowpack accumulated during winter and spring provides about 70 per cent of the western water supply.

Farmers, small communities, and others who depend directly on streamflow for water supplies would be most severely affected by a light snowpack.

Although reservoirs in most western states are full, the

supply meets less than half the summer irrigation needs of the region. In California, last year's record drought left most reservoir supplies depleted.

SCS, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations, is responsible for evaluating snowpack conditions at 1,600 sites throughout the West and Alaska. The Service issues summer water supply forecasts each month from February through May for irrigators and other water users.

The legal beat

Jury finding guilty in wheelchair case

Robert Allen Hughes, 22, of Lexington, was found guilty Tuesday of second degree theft in 6th District Justice Court at Heppner. Hughes was given a six month suspended sentence and placed on informal probation.

The three man, three woman jury deliberated about 45 minutes before returning the verdict. Hughes was charged in connection with the alleged Sept. 10 theft of an emergency room wheelchair at Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Hughes testified that he had been drinking and could not remember his actions during various periods of the afternoon and evening in question.

Hughes also received a six month suspended sentence on a charge of failure to appear. He changed his plea from innocent to guilty.

Hughes was alleged to have taken a wheelchair from the hospital and loaded it into the back of a pickup. The wheelchair was unloaded at a local apartment house and later used by another party to ride through a local bar.

District Attorney Dennis Doherty and defense attorney Mike Sweeney tried the case before 5th District Justice Court Judge Ernie Jorgensen after Sweeney moved to disqualify Justice Court Judge Dee Gribble on grounds of prejudice. The defendant had appeared before Judge Gribble on a previous occasion.

In other court and police action, Lawrence Barnes, age approximately 30, of Boardman, has been bound over to the grand jury following arraignment on a charge of first degree theft. Barnes, charged Dec. 30 in connection with an alleged shotgun theft from a parked vehicle in Boardman belonging to Mark Docken of Boardman, is free on \$1,000 bond.

Sentenced
On Thursday in 6th District Justice Court, Rick Dean James, 20, 14021 SE Stark St., Portland, was sentenced to 120 days in jail on a charge of driving while suspended. It was his second conviction on a like charge. James is serving his sentence at Wasco, Judge Gribble said.

Morning arrest
Billy Lawrence Beatty, Jr., 22, of Heppner, was arrested about 5 a.m. Jan. 29 and charged with first degree criminal trespass and third degree assault. Beatty is free pending arraignment on the charges in the next 60 days, according to District Attorney Dennis Doherty.

The arrest was made after an altercation was reported in progress at a Heppner apartment. Reports to authorities alleged that a man had entered through a window into an apartment occupied by a Heppner man and woman, after which a fight between the two men ensued.

Police, fire calls
Heppner firemen answered a call at 300 Chase Street at 7:43 p.m. Jan. 27 and extinguished fire in a frying pan on the kitchen range. No injuries or damage were reported.

Chris Davis of Heppner reported having an auto accident near Ruggs about 2 a.m.

County gross farm income estimate set at \$64,083,000

Gross farm income for Morrow County in 1976 has been estimated at \$64,083,000, according to statistics compiled by the Extension Service.

Total gross farm sales, according to the estimate, are down \$4,665,000 when compared with the 1975 gross sales of \$68,748,000.

Gross sales of all crops showed a decrease from 1975 according to the estimates. In the livestock sector, swine and other livestock sales did not keep pace with 1975, but beef cattle, sheep and lambs, and dairy sales were slightly higher.

In keeping with the national supply and demand picture, all hay and silage in Morrow County showed an increase, jumping from \$3,957,000 in 1975 to \$7,203,000 in 1976 with 4,500 acres in final production.

The primary county crops of potatoes and wheat experienced a decline, although more acres were in production.

The estimated gross sales for wheat for 1976 were placed at \$19,139,000 on 221,500 acres. This compares with 1975 gross sales of \$23,291,000 on 191,100 acres.

Gross sales of potatoes for 1976 are estimated at \$30,337,000 on 25,325 acres, compared with 1975 gross sales of \$32,803,000 on 20,150 acres.

The accompanying 1976 estimated gross farm income estimate for Morrow County was prepared by Harold E. Kerr and Michael E. Howell, Morrow County Extension agents, and Stan Miles, Extension economist in agricultural economics, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

1976 ESTIMATED GROSS FARM INCOME

Agricultural Commodity	MORROW COUNTY			
	1975 Acres	1975 Gross Sales	1976 Acres	1976 Gross Sales
Potatoes	20,150	\$ 32,803,000.	25,325	\$ 30,337,000.
Wheat	191,100	23,291,000.	221,500	19,139,000.
All Hay & Silage	25,300	3,957,000.	20,800	7,203,000.
All Feed Grains	13,400	1,383,000.	5,500	447,000.
All Other Crops: Dry Beans, Watermelons, Tree Fruits	3,780	1,637,000.	1,950	1,062,000.
TOTAL CROPS	253,730	63,071,000.	275,075	\$ 58,188,000.
Beef Cattle		\$ 4,730,000.		\$ 4,897,000.
Sheep & Lambs		463,000.		477,000.
Dairy		374,000.		450,000.
Swine		53,000.		31,000.
Other Livestock		57,000.		40,000.
TOTAL LIVESTOCK		\$ 5,677,000.		\$ 5,895,000.
TOTAL GROSS FARM SALES		\$ 68,748,000.		\$ 64,083,000.

News briefs

Morrow art sought

Blue Mountain Community College's annual review of the arts is now open to all residents of Morrow and Umatilla counties, according to co-editors Dave Peterson, Astoria, and Chris Simmons, Bonanza.

The publication was formerly restricted to BMCC students and staff.

Submissions are now being accepted in poetry, creative and non-fiction writing, photography, and art work that can be reproduced. A \$15 prize will be awarded for the top entry in each category.

Material should be submitted to Jim Burgess, Room 216, Pioneer Hall, or mailed to Runes, P.O. Box 100, BMCC P-216, Pendleton, OR 97801. Deadline is Mar. 4 for written material and Mar. 11 for other. A stamped self-addressed envelope should be enclosed to insure return of material to the sender.

Heppner woman appt.

Heppner City Library trustee Myrna Johnson has been appointed to a two-year term on the Oregon State Advisory Council on Libraries. The 13 members of the Advisory Council include librarians, trustees, and representatives of the library-using public.

The Advisory Council is responsible for planning for the development of library service throughout the state of Oregon. It also evaluates all requests for federal public library fund grants and recommends applications for funding.

PGE 80% owner

Pacific Northwest Generating Company (PNGC) is now a 10 per cent participant in the Boardman Coal Plant as the result of an agreement signed recently with Portland General Electric company.

The \$500 million project is now under construction near Boardman, Ore. It is scheduled for completion in July 1980 and will have an output of approximately 530,000 kilowatts.

PGE is sponsoring the project and has an 80 per cent share. Idaho Power Company is also participating and owns 10 per cent of the project.

The contract is subject to approval by Public Utility Commissioner Charles C. Davis; his staff has the matter under consideration.

"PNGC members are experiencing an extraordinary load growth on their systems," said PNGC president Russ Dorrnan, Manager of Umatilla Electric Coop. "As a result, our energy needs are not being completely met by our participation in the Washington Public Power Supply System nuclear projects. So we have decided to participate in the Boardman project."

In addition, Dorrnan said, "PNGC members are currently considering other resources to meet their needs, including possible participation in the Pebble Springs nuclear project." Fifteen per cent of the Pebble Springs units is still available.

Hay cubes ordered

An agreement to ship 24,000 tons of alfalfa hay cubes to Japan has been announced by Boardman Feed and Seed. It will be the largest single order of hay cubes ever shipped from the Pacific Northwest and one of the largest in the country. The order is worth more than \$2 million. The operation will run from June 1977 to June 1978, employing 10 people in two shifts.

Budget committee

The Blue Mountain Community College budget committee will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, in the first of a series of public meetings to review budget requests and prepare a budget for public vote. Since the college has no tax base, the entire amount must be approved by the voters each year.

College President Ron Daniels will present his budget message at the first meeting, to be held in the college board room. All budget meetings are open to the public.

The budget committee is composed of the college Board of Education and seven additional members appointed by the board, including Homer Hughes of Lexington and Ralph Skoubo of Boardman. Bob Rietmann, lone, is a board member.



Playing hide and go seek with a possible house fire wasn't exactly Heppner fire fighters' idea of fun and games. But, nonetheless, that's what happened in the great fry pan fire Thursday night.

Firemen were beckoned to a possible house fire on Chase Street. The trucks went one way, but the fire was the other. The trucks and firemen ended up knocking on doors on South Chase Street, trying to run down the report.

When all the knocking failed, they radioed back and received word to try the other end of Chase. Even when they finally found 300 Chase Street, it didn't look like much of a fire.

The firemen went in, one by one, numbering almost a half dozen, and emerged moments later carrying a smoking pan. The hoses were rolled up onto the truck and the firemen went home.

The smoking pan caught fire on a stove and evidently caught the occupant of the house napping.

