

"Everybody talks about the weather"

# Ice has collected at higher elevations during the past week's cold spell

Photos courtesy of C.B.E.C.



Frost build up near Cutstorth Park

As many of us have gone about our business and complained about the cold weather during the past week, we may have paused for a moment to enjoy the enticing beauty of an icy tree or frost laden bush, but if we live and work in Heppner, Lexington, or Ione, we may not realize that, not so far away, the cold weather is causing much extra work just to keep activities at a normal level.

Ice generally begins to form near the 2,600 foot level which includes all of the Condon area, the Blackhorse canyon area to Sandhollow, Gleason Butte, Jones Hill, Franklin Ridge, Social Ridge, and the Hardman-Eightmile area. The elevation at the Heppner depot is 1,869 feet but looking toward the hills surrounding Heppner, a frostline has been distinctly visible during the week's 20 degree temperatures.

Ranchers sometimes face difficulties in taking care of cattle when the severe cold lasts more than a couple of days. The main problem, according to Valby area rancher Don Peterson whose herd includes approximately 150 cow-calf pairs and 100 yearlings, is that the animals require more feed during the colder weather. Since the ground is mostly covered with ice, animals are unable to graze normally and must be given a protein and vitamin A supplement which is usually alfalfa hay.

Beginning in November, when the calves are smaller, Peterson estimates that they feed an average of six pounds of hay per day per animal, but by March, when the calves are much larger, it is necessary to have increased the supplement to as much as about 12 pounds per day.

Chaff dumps which some farmers leave in their wheat fields following grain harvest help to lower the cost of supplementary feeding, Peterson

## Arts Assoc. to meet Jan. 28

The Morrow County Arts and Crafts Assoc. will hold its next no-host dinner meeting Monday, Jan. 28 at 6:30 at Kate's Pizza and Pastry in Heppner.

## City Planning Commission sets meeting

The Heppner City Planning Commission will meet on Monday, January 14, 1985 at 8 p.m. at Heppner City Hall.

## JV Fillies fall prey to TigerScots

By DANAREID  
The junior varsity girls basketball team went up against the Weston-McEwen TigerScots Saturday Jan. 5. The game was played here at the Heppner High School gym.

The starters for the Fillies were guards Beth Forrar and Tina Davidson; forwards Cindy Stroeber and Theresa Lindsay; and center Tarena Nash.

Weston-McEwen received the tip off to start the game. They took the

says, because when the rest of the ground is covered with ice, the chaff remains free of frost.

You have to watch the animals during calving, he says, but the chaff dumps "seem to serve as insulation enough" when the calves lie on them, if the temperature is around 10 degrees. If the temperature drops to around zero, it is necessary to help every calf to warm up when it is born. Although January is usually cold, it is still the usual calving time because the animals need to be large enough to eat grass during the summer which means that they will grow faster, gain more weight and be more desirable animals, says Peterson.

Of course, water for the animals, about 10 gallons per animal per day must also be kept from freezing. Generally some sort of propane tank heater is used in the watering troughs to prevent the water's freezing. Of course, if water pipes are not below the frost line or wrapped in heat tape to prevent freezing, water must be hauled for the animals from other sources which means that the water tank must be filled and emptied again before it freezes.

As a rule of thumb, Peterson says that the cold weather will double the normal chore time.

Another rancher in the same area, Roger Palmer, says that his situation is a little different from Peterson's because he does not use chaff dumps, but plans a regular daily supplement of about 50 bales of alfalfa hay for 130 cows. He says that unless the temperature is below

zero, he does not notice too much stress among the animals. "We can get around easier when it's frozen to feed every day."

Also to consider are times when there is no electricity at the ranches because power lines become coated with ice which cause problems for Columbia Basin Electric Co-op.

Generally the condition occurs over an area of about 200-300 square miles when freezing fog sticks to the metal conductors, says Mark Lovgren of C.B.E.C. The freezing fog which we have been experiencing happens when the weather report says it will be "generally clear but with patches of fog" which means that the air is not moving. Wind, sunshine, and warmer weather will all help to eliminate the ice problem on the wires.

Lovgren says that C.B.E.C. generally uses an aluminum conductor with a steel reinforced core about a half inch in diameter. Since ice weighs 57 lbs. per cu. ft., when it has collected around the conductor to a radius of one inch, the co-op becomes concerned. The conductors (wires) can reach a diameter of three to six inches says Lovgren which not only causes them to sag sometimes from the normal 21 ft. height of about three feet which can be dangerous if they come in contact with fences. Also, if the conductors sag too much, they will break or cause mechanical failure on a pole. Sometimes the ice falls off the wires by itself and the weight imbalance may cause the conductors to snap and either come in contact with other conductors thus causing a power outage or the force from the snap may cause a pole to break which would also cause an outage.

When the icy situation occurs, Lovgren says that it's important to get the ice off the conductors before damage occurs. All regular C.B.E.

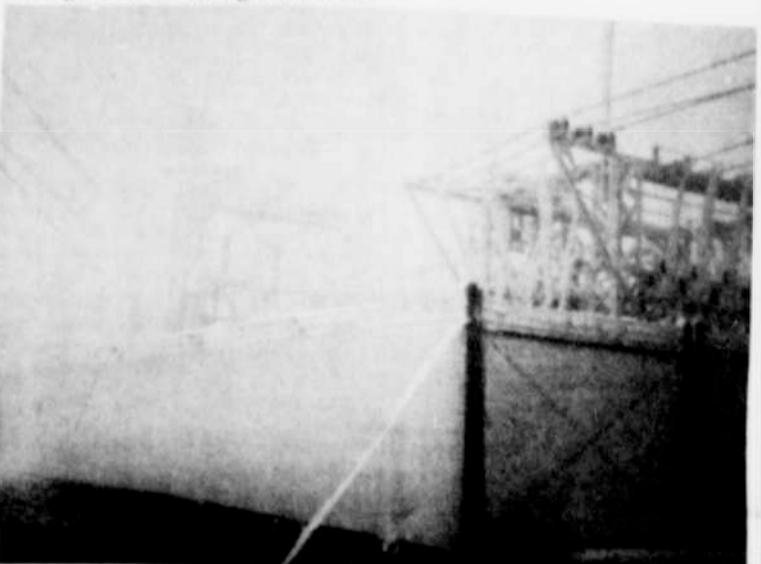
C. crews and trained, supervised volunteers are out working as many hours as possible sometimes having problems just getting to the lines because of road conditions, and then working in heavy clothing to protect themselves from the cold.

Crews must use extra precautions not only because of the danger from the storm but also to protect against the normal dangers from improper use of electricity. For example, the ice not only makes the poles more slippery to climb, but also a conductor of electricity, so the electricity must be turned off before work is begun. Which means that anyone served by that line must wait until the lines are clear for the power to be restored. On the other hand, if crews did not clear the lines, and they broke, electrical service could be interrupted for a longer period of time because of the amount of time involved in locating and repairing the damage.

Even with the interruption, electrical service still has a high reliability with only one hour of down time out of every 8,760 hours of service, Lovgren explains. "A car or a furnace won't start more often than that."

Earlier this winter, he says, crews worked on lines in the Hardman area from 8-10 a.m. and because of weather conditions, the work had to be re-done again by 1 p.m. Sometimes, however, the entire area can be icy and the weather will change and the problem gone in only a few hours.

It is still early this winter and although there was another storm before this more recent one, the extent of damage so far is no where near the extent of the 1978 storm which resulted in the loss of over 800 electrical poles in the Condon area which the co-op subsequently rebuilt to withstand future ice situations.



Ice-covered fence at Snipton Substation



Removing ice from lines near Cutstorth Park



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