

Color contest winners announced PGE asks for 5.1 percent rate hike



Winners of the Soroptimist Christmas coloring contest were announced recently. Cash prizes were awarded to: Pre-school-Kindergarten: first-Krystal Nairns, second-Heather Yocom, third-Kaitlyn Lowe. First and second graders: first-Sheena Shank, second-Chelsea Bredemeier, third-Stefani Shank. Grades three and four first-Kendra Schmeltzer, second-Julie Proctor, third-Samuel VanLiew.

OSU announce local honor students

Betty Tanner, Heppner and Rochelle Neal, Boardman are among students who made the scholastic honor roll fall term at Oregon State University.

A total of 293 students earned straight A (4.). Another 1,398 earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to

make the listing. To be on the honor roll students must carry at least 12 graded hours of course work.

Tanner is a liberal arts freshman and Neal is a sophomore in business.

Portland General Electric Co. (PGE) has asked permission from the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) to increase retail electric prices beginning January 1, 1995. The increase would average 5.1 percent over all customer classifications. This would be PGE's first general price increase since 1991.

"We have entered a new era at PGE, delivering on our promise to aggressively cut costs and to pursue the least-cost options for future power generation and services," says Ken Harrison, PGE chairman and chief executive officer. "The modest size of our rate request reflects our commitment and ability to deliver on those promises."

"Prices for goods and services in Portland have risen more than 40 percent since 1984," said a PGE news release. "Medical care costs have nearly doubled in that period. During the same 10 year period, the average monthly bill for PGE's residential customers has risen about 10 percent."

If approved by the OPUC, bills for residential customers using an average of 1,000 kilowatt hours per month would increase by \$4.19 going from \$53.17 to \$57.36. The proposed price change reflects the fixed costs of service including, for residential customers, an increase in the

monthly service fee from \$5 to \$7. Overall, residential prices would increase an average of 7.8 percent, with an average increase of 3.2 percent for commercial and industrial customers.

The increased cost of power, driven by higher prices for purchased power and fuel, is the single largest factor for the rate request. Other key elements of the 1995 rate request include: increases in federal taxes; improvements to PGE's distribution system and investments to increase the reliability of PGE's generating plants.

According to the news release, factors that helped hold down the amount of the requested increase include: decrease in nuclear operating costs; increasing revenues from a growing customer base; increased performance by PGE generating plants; property tax reductions under Ballot Measure 5; and acceleration of return to customers of profits from a 1985 sale of a portion of the Boardman plant.

An important component of the filing will be an OPUC confirmation that the closure of Trojan was the least-cost option for PGE customers.

The OPUC will review PGE's 1995 rate request and schedule public hearings. The decision-making process could take up to one year.

Wheatland Pomona installs officers

By Delpha Jones

Wheatland Pomona Grange officers and subordinate officers were installed at the Lexington Grange hall by the installing team of Umatilla County. The work was under the direction of Jack Davis, installing master and was "most impressive" with the group in black pants and white shirts.

There were 52 people present enjoying a potluck dinner at 1:30 p.m.

Following the installation a group singing Christmas carols was enjoyed, along with a short reading. A silent auction of the centerpieces was enjoyed with a volunteer auctioneer, who auctioned off the tie bid.

Those winning door prizes were Gladys Biggerstaff, Clarence Buchanan, Martha Baker and Eleanor Bailey.

The Salvation Army was generously remembered with many things left by "goodwill Santas".

As the farmer's life touches most everyone, so does the grange both in the order with many benefits and in the community and businesses. The Grange membership is open to most everyone and people are welcome to join.

Roll call of grange members was as follows: Greenfield, nine; Willows, nine; Lexington 15; White Eagle, four; Tillicum, three; Cold Springs, three; Stanfield three.

Around the County
By Earl Woods, Jr.

Unfortunately a piece of Morrow County history will fade away by July 1, 1994. Union Pacific will begin tearing up 45 miles of railroad track between Heppner and the Columbia River. Union Pacific informs us that it costs \$231,389 per year to operate the line with

two locomotives, and that the line is no longer profitable. This has prompted the decision to discontinue service. Union Pacific will vacate approximately 654.5 acres, of which 222.43 will likely revert to adjacent property owners. An additional 386 acres will probably not revert, and 45.8 acres is still under consideration. I'll keep you posted.

The Morrow County budget process begins January 3 with the first meeting of the budget committee. All departments have submitted proposed budgets. Lisanne Currin, Morrow County's capable budget officer, is busy with Gail Gutierrez putting the composite budget together. I note that the proposed operating levy must be submitted to the election clerk (as well as any other measure) by January 20 in order to appear on the March ballot. Between now and January 20 I'll be providing (hopefully) some insight to the process.

The citizens of Ione will be pleased to hear that the county road department has commenced survey work on the long-awaited Ione/Boardman market road. This is a good news-bad news scenario. Taggares Farms, P.G.E. and Boeing are against the construction of the road and as a result are putting restrictions on its construction in order to make it expensive to build. The county, as part of this deal, would have to accept Tower Road into its maintenance scheme and bear the cost of all new road construction, fencing and maintenance. The expense is so great that the road will not be constructed unless the Operating Engineer School out of Boardman provides the labor and equipment. In order for this to happen, the operating engineers must be convinced that they're not depriving other road contractors of work. I can tell you that unless the operating engineers provide their service and support, the road won't be built. It will also not be built unless the citizens of Morrow County support the project and are willing to pay for it. Let the County Court know what you think.

Cattlemen's Assoc elects officers

Mack Birkmaier, cow/calf producer from Wallowa, has been elected the new head of Oregon Cattlemen's Association during its 80th convention. Mack brings with him a wealth of experience in the cattle industry as well as an aggressive agenda for the organization," said an Oregon Cattlemen's Association release.

"We have a story to tell and we plan to put together a public relations program to help get it out to the public," Mack said as he announced his formation of a new public relations committee.

Joining Mack as new officers are president-elect Fred Otley of Diamond and treasurer Ken Knott of Cove. First term district vice presidents Bob DeBraga of Lakeview and Rod Childers of Enterprise join Dave Umbarger of Pendleton, John Lillcrop of Mitchell, George Sandberg of Roseburg, Larry Cauble of Eagle Point and J.C. Oliver of Seneca.

The mission of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association is to promote environmentally and socially sound industry practices, to promote a positive, contemporary image of the industry, to improve and strengthen the economics of the industry and to assure a strong political presence in all areas affecting the industry, continued the release.

Oregon CattleWomen elected Delores Scott of Junction City to lead their organization during this year. "Delores brings to the group a rich heritage of work on the ranch combined with association activities," the release said.

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Boosters to meet

The Heppner High School Booster club will hold their monthly meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. in the home ec room at the high school.

Agenda items include finalizing plans for the chili feed to be held Jan. 22. Anyone interested in helping is urged to attend.

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