

Ione students inducted into National Honor Society



Students were recently inducted into the National Honor Society at Ione High School. New members are (left to right): Jeremiah McElligott, Allison Halvorsen, Shelby Krebs, Molly Barrow, Jennifer Thompson, Charissa Gates, Jeremy Rietmann, Adrienne Swanson, Corey Bennetto, and Ashley Carnack.

Chemical weapons facility marks second year

With the two-year construction anniversary of its chemical weapons disposal facility on June 10, the Army is one year closer to destroying its stockpile of chemical weapons at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, near Hermiston, according to a news release.

"If you haven't seen the construction site since last June, it's changed dramatically," says Army project manager Raj Malhotra. "But we haven't changed our emphasis on safety and environmental compliance—those are still our top priorities."

Construction of the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility is about half-complete.

To date, the Army and its contractors have installed four facility incinerators. Two will handle liquid chemical agent. The other two will process explosives and empty weapons casings. Other accomplishments include finishing the major concrete work, installing 2,600 tons of rebar, and installing structural steel for the major buildings, continued the release.

"The quality of the construction is excellent, and we have a design that has been proven to safely dispose of the chemical weapons," says Chuck Galloway. Galloway is the resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the agency overseeing the construction.

In 1997, the Army awarded a contract of \$567 million to Raytheon Demilitarization Company to build, test, operate and close the facility. There are currently about 1,200 workers on site. This number includes both construction and office workers. The project is running two construction shifts.

"We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of the highly capable work force in the area," says Raytheon project manager Jay Bluestein. "The result is the very high quality of the construction on this site."

During the year, the

construction completion date shifted from April 2000 to February 2001. However, the disposal start date is still on schedule to begin in October 2001. The project is also on schedule to destroy the depot's chemical weapons by the end of 2005.

"We're a year closer to the goal of ridding the world of these weapons and having a much safer environment," says depot Commander Lt. Col. Martin Jacoby.

Among the milestones in the last year is the depot/community monitoring program. The Army and its contractors have begun quarterly sampling of the air, soil and water on the depot and at several locations in communities surrounding the depot. These baseline results will be compared with sampling done throughout disposal

operations. Based on computer modeling, a state health risk assessment determined that the facility would have no harmful impacts on people or the environment, the release stated.

Army officials are gearing up for disposal facility equipment testing, beginning in the fall. Residents in the area may see steam coming from the facility's stack, as the boilers are fired up. No chemical agent will be used in those activities. The Army will soon publish a toll-free number people can call to find out what testing activity is taking place.

The Army is encouraging local citizens to come and see the depot and the disposal facility. Tours can be arranged by calling the Umatilla Chemical Disposal Outreach Office at (541) 564-9339.

Man sentenced to 18 months for sex with juvenile

Jack French, who plead no contest to a charge of sexual abuse in the first degree was sentenced June 10 to 18 months in the custody of the Oregon Department of Corrections by Morrow County Circuit Court Judge Jeff Wallace, according to a news release from Morrow County District Attorney David C. Allen.

French, 60, was convicted for knowingly subjecting a developmentally disabled 11-year-old girl to sexual contact in 1994. He will be registered as a sex offender and will be on post-prison supervision for 10 years.

According to Allen, French avoided the mandatory minimum sentence of 70 months prescribed by Measure 11 because the criminal incident occurred in 1994, before Measure 11 was passed. Under the sentencing guidelines, 18 months in prison was the maximum sentence allowed without a departure.

French fled Oregon in 1995, shortly before trial on charges of Rape in the First Degree and Sexual Abuse in the First Degree. He avoided prosecution until he was located and arrested on March 4, 1999, in Clifton, Arizona. He was then extradited back to Oregon. Allen said that they long delay in securing French's attendance created several difficulties in prosecuting the original charge of Rape in the First Degree, which would have carried a prison sentence of 36 months under the guidelines. Allen said that the Rape in the First Degree charge was further compromised because French "was prepared to have medical experts testify at trial regarding his erectile dysfunction."

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Irrigators should have plenty of water

Oregon's farmers and ranchers who depend on irrigation shouldn't have to worry about having enough water for irrigation this summer.

Snowpack, soil moisture, stream flows, and reservoir storage—key indicators of the statewide water picture—all point to a plentiful supply for agriculture and other beneficial uses of water, according to and Oregon Department of Agriculture news release.

That hasn't always been the case in Oregon this decade.

"This is a good reminder that Oregon's climate comes in cycles," says Phil Ward, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. "A few years ago, we were worried about having enough water for agriculture, recreation, wildlife and municipal uses. Now, things look very good for the summer of 1999. There seems to be plenty of water for everyone. However, the dry times will come back at some point as the cycle continues."

Of course, it is impossible for the weather to please everyone. That especially holds true for agriculture as some producers like it on the dry side, others wet. This year, at least, the wetters are having it their way.

"The first part of the season really piled up the snowpack and soaked us good throughout the whole state," says Jon Lea, hydrologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. "It bodes well for agriculture. The soil moisture has been good all year. We've had very good to excellent snowpack. With demand for water not too great yet, there is still plenty of water stored in the reservoirs."

Temperatures have been cool, keeping crops from developing as fast as some farmers would like. But looking ahead to any long period of hot and dry conditions this summer, most areas of the state should weather the weather very well.

How did things get so good? It started with some heavy snows in the mountains and plenty of rain in the lower elevations last fall and early winter. Combined with a strong carryover of water in Oregon's irrigation reservoirs from last year, and a slow but steady snow melt this spring, and you have all the ingredients for a sunny outlook when it comes to water. "Most every user should have an adequate or better than adequate water supply this summer," says Lea.

The numbers back up his claim. Triple digit percentages are commonplace.

Year-to-date precipitation numbers around Oregon range from a low of 99 percent of average in the Owyhee-Malheur Basin to a high of 127 percent of average in the Willamette Basin. Snowpack figures remain very high for this time of year, with the Willamette, Hood River and Rogue Basins reporting large amounts of snow still on the ground, in excess of 300 percent of average.

It's June and snow still has been falling in higher elevations.

In fact, as of June, of the 19 sites in the Willamette Basin in which mountain snowpack is measured, record high amounts have been established at 14 of them. A few records have also been established in the Rogue and Mt. Hood drainage areas.

Cooler than normal temperatures have kept the statewide snowpack from melting as fast as normal.

Officially, the water year begins every October. For this year, it started off with a bang.

"October, November, December were all very wet months for the most part and really piled up the snow," says Lea. "We also had a lot of rainfall during that time."

Reservoir storage is also high. Lake County's Thompson Reservoir reports 129 percent of average. Reservoirs in the Lower John Day are "only" at 94 percent of average. Nearly all reservoirs report a better than 100 percent of average amount of water.

"Most of the reservoirs had very good carryover from last year," says Lea. "They had a decent summer in 1998 in which they didn't utilize all of the water in the reservoirs. They refilled them over this winter and are now at or near capacity. The demand on those reservoirs is just now starting to take place. We'll soon start seeing diversions to irrigation systems." For the rest of the summer, an ideal scenario would include a limited number of real hot days and a little bit of rain every once

in awhile just to keep things from getting too dry. Lea would like to see another sizable carryover of water in Oregon's irrigation reservoirs.

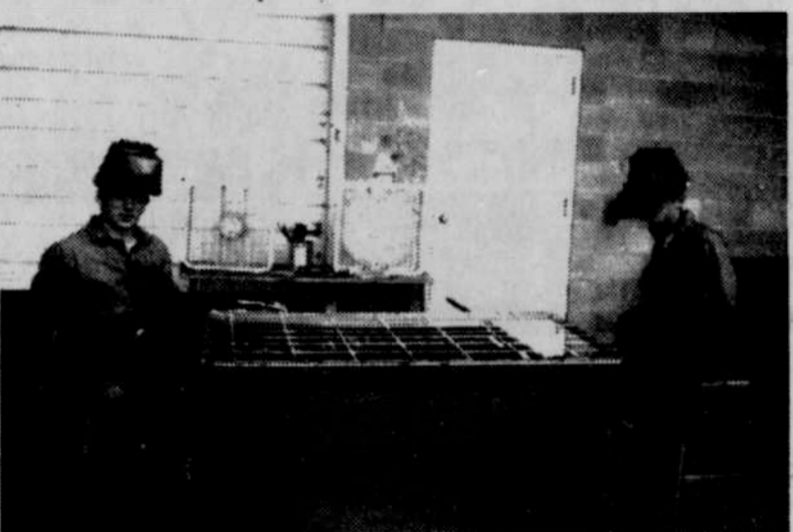
All factors considered, Lea and company are forecasting a range of very healthy stream flows for Oregon this summer: Klamath Basin, 169-271 percent of average; Rogue-Umpqua, 148-269 percent of average; Lake County, 173-256 percent of average; Harney County, 162-208 percent of average; Upper Deschutes-Crooked, 122-186 percent of average; Willamette Basin, 111-164 percent of average; Mt. Hood, 130-147 percent of average; Upper John Day, 118-130 percent of average; and Owyhee-Malheur, 89-121 percent of average.

Even though Oregon appears to be in a wetter cycle, Lea is not about to predict with certainty just how the rest of this year, let alone next year, will turn out.

"Things are considerably different than a decade ago when we were having drought situations," he says. "But there is nothing that says that next year will be a repeat of this year or maybe it will be a dry year again. You take what you get when you get it and go from there."

Even though most Oregonians appreciate sunshine, it is probably better for agriculture to receive too much water than not enough. That shouldn't be a problem heading into the summer of 1999.

High school students weld panels for fair



Chris Peck (left) and Kyle McDaniel weld animal panels for the Morrow County Fair.

State conservation Field Day

The 1999 Oregon Wheat Growers League State Conservation Field Day will be held on June 23 at the Grande Ronde Angus Ranch in Cove.

Grande Ronde Angus Ranch is owned and operated by Bob and Sharon Beck, along with their son and daughter-in-law, Rob and Tish Beck. The Grande Ronde Angus Ranch is located in rural Union County.

The ranch is a diversified and vertically integrated crop and livestock operation. Crops grown include wheat, grass, lettuce and spinach for their seed; peppermint and evening primrose for their oil; oats, barley, wheat, alfalfa, grass and sugar beets.

In addition to the farm crops, they have a beef cattle operation and timberland that provides grazing as well as the benefits of a managed forest.

The field day includes a barbecue lunch at noon hosted by the Union County Crops and Conservation Day sponsors and the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Following lunch are

remarks from Judy Rea, Wheat League president and others.

A tour of the timber management lands will complete the day, showing the management practices the Becks are involved in with their cow herd.

The morning tour of Union County farms will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Western Farm Service and bus transportation will be provided for those wishing to go on the tour. The public is invited to attend the activities on June 23 to view the conservation efforts of the Union County farmers.

For additional information, contact DuAnn McCarty at the OWGL office (541) 276-7330.

The Union County Crop and Conservation Tour is also scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, beginning at 7:30 a.m. at Western Farm Service at their Island City Branch (2.6 miles NE of Island City on Highway 82 - Booth Lane). Bus transportation will be provided for those wishing to go on the tour.

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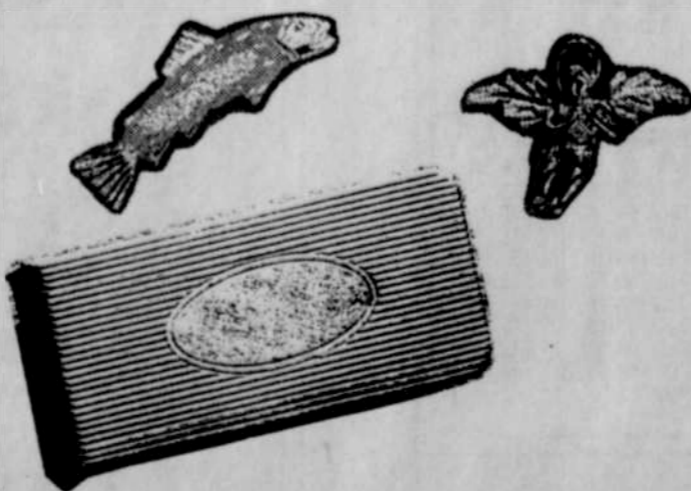
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