HEPPNER 50¢

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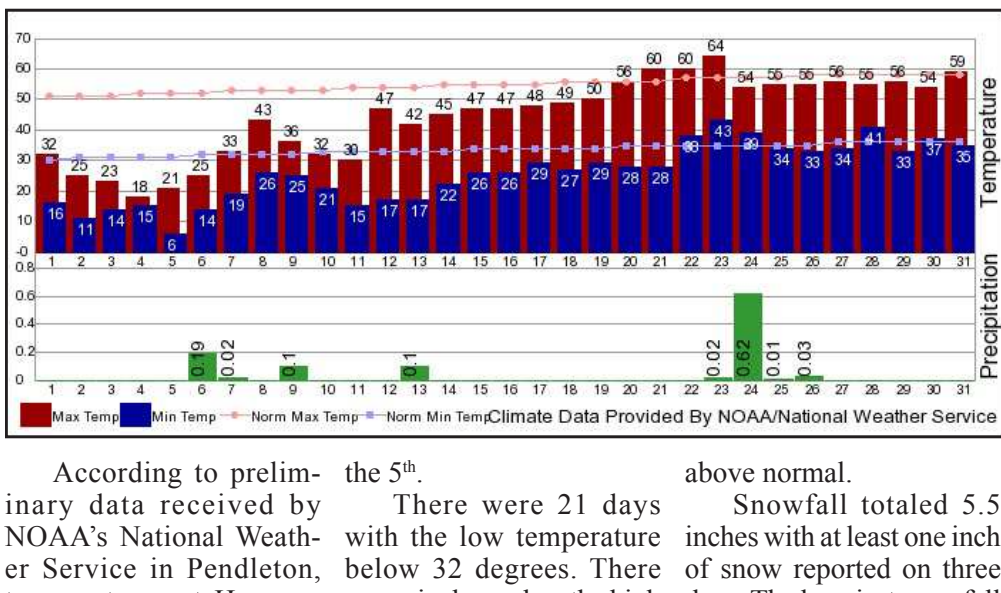
Heppner experiences coldest March on record



According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged much colder than normal during the month of March. This was the coldest March on record. The previous coldest was 37.0 degrees in 1917.

The average temperature was 35.1 degrees which was 9.1 degrees below normal. High temperatures averaged 44.4 degrees, which was 10.5 degrees below normal. The highest was 64 degrees on the 23rd. Low temperatures averaged 25.7 degrees, which was 7.8 degrees below normal. The lowest was 6 degrees, on the 5th.

There were 21 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees. There were six days when the high temperature stayed below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 1.09 inches during March, which was 0.43 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation, at least .01 inch, was received on eight days with the heaviest, 0.62 inches reported on the 24th.

Precipitation this year has reached 5.35 inches, which is 1.24 inches above normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Heppner has been 9.36 inches, which is 1.19 inches above normal.

Snowfall totaled 5.5 inches with at least one inch of snow reported on three days. The heaviest snowfall was 3.0 inches reported on the 6th. The greatest depth of snow on the ground was 13 inches on the 1st.

The outlook for April from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner rise from 59.0 degrees at the start of April to 64.0 degrees at the end of April. Normal lows rise from 36.0 degrees to 40.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.51 inches.

Wind blades - meet sheep herd

Photos by Cathy Smith

What happens when three semis hauling three wind turbine blades meet a sheep herd on the road past Cecil? Just ask Cathy Smith who spent 45 minutes in a "sheep jam" last Friday.

Cathy, who lives in Goldendale but spends quite a bit of time in Heppner visiting her friend Gary Schonbachler was good enough to share these photos with the Heppner Gazette-Times.

She also had a good sense of humor about the incident saying: "300 to 400 sheep heading west; three semis hauling three wind turbine blades heading east; six escort vehicles; three sheep dogs; two sheep herders – and me" she wrote. "45 minutes in a Sheep Jam. Priceless"

CREZ II dollars awarded to Morrow County organizations

The Columbia River Enterprise Zone II (CREZ II) board of directors awarded a total of $3,242,545.71 to local services in Morrow County on Jan. 28. The following organizations received funds:

Morrow Education Foundation (Includes Workforce Training & High School Internship Program), $545,000; Boardman Police Department (School Resource Officer), $75,000; Morrow County Health District (new ambulance monitors), $100,407; Boardman Rural Fire Protection District (computer upgrades and truck upgrade), $57,828.28; Boardman Community Development Association, $961,081.07; City of Irrigon, $837,865.54; Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group, $665,363,82.

On February 14, the CREZ II board of directors awarded a further $176,207.95 as follows:

Boardman Police Department, $50,000; Boardman Rural Fire Protection District, $50,000; Morrow County Health District, $50,000; Morrow Education Foundation, $26,207.95

The Columbia River Enterprise Zone II (CREZ II) was established in 2009 after the success of the Columbia River Enterprise Zone I. Enterprise zones are a unique resource for Oregon communities and provide benefits both for businesses locating within an enterprise zone and the region surrounding it. CREZ II is sponsored by the City of Boardman, the Port of Morrow and Morrow County.

Qualifying businesses who locate or expand within CREZ II must meet certain criteria. If approved, businesses will be exempt from local property taxes on new investments for a certain amount of time, typically 3-5 years. Incentives are determined on local approval and require minimum levels of investment size, job creation and employee compensation.

Benefits to the community include increases in economic activity, property tax income over time and employee compensation. In addition, in-lieu payments and bond payments within CREZ II are used to enhance local services with a primary focus on education, community enhancement, emergency services and infrastructure, and housing.

These two actions have disbursed the monies that were collected in 2018 in accordance with agreements made with various businesses and the CREZ II Board.

The CREZ II Board requests that the entities receiving these awards provide a written report at the end of 2019 as to how the funds were used. The CREZ II manager will notify the entities when the report is due.

Contact Greg Sweek, CREZ II manager with any questions or concerns at ezmanager@co.morrow.or.us or 541-945-9064.

Fire destroys Heppner home

An early morning fire destroyed a Heppner house Monday and there were no reported injuries from the blaze. The house at 485 Linden Way, and owned by Megan Futter, was completely destroyed by the 2:30 a.m. blaze. Futter was reportedly out of town at the time of the fire. There was also some minor damage reported to the neighboring home. *-Photo by David Sykes.*

Alleged armed robber requests a new lawyer

Deng Peter Makuey, 25, of Portland recently requested a new court-appointed attorney and the judge granted his request. Makuey was arrested on June 23, 2018 by the Morrow County Sheriff's Office for allegedly taking part in an armed robbery of the Sinclair station in Boardman.

Deng Peter Makuey

According to Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson Makuey was moving towards a settlement conference when he requested a new attorney. "He asked his attorney to remove himself from the case," Nelson said of the defendant. "The term he used when we had court on this motion to withdraw from the case was that he couldn't communicate with his attorney – that they weren't understanding each other."

Nelson said it will take time for the new attorney to be brought up to speed on the case and it appears that a settlement is off the table.

Charges against Makuey include first-degree robbery, three counts of unlawful use of a weapon, three counts of menacing, three counts of harassment, one count of disorderly conduct, one count of third-degree theft (less than $100) and fourth-degree assault. His bail is set at $405,000.

An Immigration and Naturalization Service hold has also been placed on him. His country of birth is not known.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.