

Record-breaking heat expected

Thursday, Friday expected to break records in Hermiston

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
STAFF WRITER

Break out the fans and crank up the air conditioning — this week is gonna be a scorcher across the Columbia Basin.

Temperatures are expected to hover above 100 degrees and may set record highs as a massive heat wave grips the Pacific Northwest. Jim Smith, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Pendleton, said the two hottest days will be Thursday and Friday before temperatures gradually begin to drop back down into the high 90s over the weekend.

Hermiston is primed to break the record on both Thursday and Friday. The forecast for Hermiston calls for 105 degrees Thursday and 107 degrees Friday, beating the record highs of 103 degrees and 105 degrees, respectively.

That intense heat has certainly caught the attention of local health and recreation officials, who are urging precaution when heading outdoors.

Dr. John Hitzman, Umatilla County public health officer, said kids and the elderly are the most vulnerable to heat-related injuries. He emphasized the need to stay hydrated in such sweltering conditions, and no, alcohol and caffeine drinks do not count.

“Dehydration is the biggest danger people run into in the hot weather,” Hitzman said. “They may not realize how dehydrated they’re getting until it’s too late.”

When people become dehydrated, Hitzman said



Children play in the Columbia River near McNary Beach on Monday in Umatilla.

they may feel dizzy, lightheaded and eventually become delirious or pass out. It is important to monitor sweat losses closely, he said, and drink plenty of appropriate fluids to avoid a potentially life-threatening situation.

“Some people actually die from heat-related injuries,” Hitzman said. “When their body stops sweating, they’re already starting to get into some pretty big trouble.”

Hitzman also recommended people wear plenty of sunscreen and lightweight clothing if they plan to go outside, and take frequent breaks from direct sun exposure. Otherwise, Hitzman said people should stay inside especially during the heat of the afternoon if they don’t have to go out.

“There’s obviously a whole lot of common sense that has to take place,” he said.

On Monday, Oregon OSHA reminded employers in labor-intensive industries such as construction and agriculture to monitor their employees closely for any signs of trouble. Penny Wolf-McCormick, health enforcement manager for Oregon OSHA, said those workers need to be provided with drinking water and given shaded areas to take breaks in order to prevent

heat exhaustion.

“Employers and workers in Oregon need to be especially aware of the dangers of working high heat,” Wolf-McCormick said in a statement. “That’s because workers here tend to be used to working in mild weather and are frequently not acclimated to this type of heat.”

If someone is suffering from heat exhaustion, the American Red Cross recommends moving the person to a cooler location, loosening or removing clothing, applying cool, wet towels and providing fluids such as a sports drink to restore both water and electrolytes. If the condition worsens or the person loses consciousness, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Tom Roberts, Umatilla County emergency manager, said his office will be sponsoring a number of misting fans at next week’s Umatilla County Fair to keep the crowds cool. As for this week’s triple-digit onslaught, he is urging people to heed the warnings and protect themselves.

“We’re not taking the heat lightly,” Roberts said. “Extreme heat causes a lot of death each year. By simply taking some precautions when the temperatures start to rise, you can mitigate a lot of that.”

Where to go to beat the heat

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
STAFF WRITER

Looking for places to escape this week’s stifling heat wave? Here are a few suggestions:

- Hit the pool

Public swimming pools are open in Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Free-water, Boardman, Heppner and Helix. However, just because you are surrounded by water doesn’t mean you shouldn’t still be hydrating.

“It’s important to monitor sweat losses and maintain hydration, even at the pool,” said John Hitzman, Umatilla County public health officer.

So make sure to keep drinking plenty of fluids. And, of course, wear lots of sunscreen to protect your skin.

- Cool out in the Columbia

Some popular recreation areas around the Columbia River near Hermiston and Umatilla include McNary Beach, Hat Rock State Park and Sand Station, where visitors can put in their boats or go for a dip. But swimming in a river isn’t the same as swimming in a pool, and certain precautions need to be taken.

“It’s always unpredictable,” said Gina Baltrusch, spokeswoman for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Walla Walla. “Just because the water is calm at the surface doesn’t mean it’s not moving at a good flow.”

In other words, be aware of undercurrents and floating hazards, such as logs and debris. Water temperatures in the Columbia also remain low year-round, and hypothermia is a possibility no matter how scorching the air temperature.

Lifeguards are not on duty at the river, even within designated swimming areas.

Boaters should wear life jackets, Baltrusch said, and be aware of fluctuating water levels when anchoring or tying up their boats.

- Go camping

The Umatilla National Forest offers plenty of lakes and campsites around the Blue Mountains to cool down, including Jubilee Lake near Tollgate, Olive Lake in the North Fork John Day Ranger District and Penland Lake in the Heppner Ranger District.

“I imagine a lot of our water recre-



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

A man pushes a boat away from the shore of Lake Wallula on the Columbia River on Monday at McNary Beach in Umatilla.

ation campgrounds will be receiving a lot of use,” said forest spokesman Darcy Weseman.

A few reminders for the public — fire danger has been bumped up to extreme in the forest, and Phase B public use restrictions are in effect, meaning campfires are allowed only in developed recreation sites. The restrictions also prohibit chainsaw use, off-road vehicle travel and limit smoking to cleared areas or enclosed buildings and vehicles.

- See a movie or visit a museum.

Sometimes the best answer for the cooling off is to stay inside and find some air conditioning. Cinephiles have two choices for movie theaters in Umatilla County — Hermiston Cinema or the Wildhorse Cineplex at Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

Nothing good playing? How about visiting one of the area’s fine museums? Here’s a few recommendations:

Tamástlikt Cultural Institute, 47106 Wildhorse Blvd., Mission. Learn about the history and traditions of the Umatilla, Cayuse and Walla Walla tribes through interactive exhibits and special events

SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. Highlights agriculture and energy around the Port of Morrow and Eastern Oregon.

Umatilla County Historical Society, 108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton. Photographs, books, exhibits and genealogy information available to explore Umatilla County’s history.

Children’s Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. Bring your child to learn and explore through hands-on play.

Stanfield plant shuts down for repairs

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

The 3D Idapro dehydration plant in Stanfield briefly halted operations Monday to make minor repairs to the facility.

They expect to resume working by Tuesday, but would stop again on Tuesday afternoon and evening to accommodate the nearby National Night Out picnic.

The temporary pause on factory activities is a result of weeks’ worth of complaints from residents about odors from the factory and, most recently, a fire at the plant on Wednesday.

Kevin Anderson, Idapro’s platform leader for non-grains, said in a press release the company is

also taking some steps to mitigate the odors.

“On Monday, we are installing a mobile odor control system that is designed to neutralize smells from the plant,” he said. “While not perfect, we are hopeful that this temporary measure will help to reduce ongoing odors.”

Anderson said the company is in the process of building a new filtration system that will be installed in November.

He also said the company has changed the way they purchase and handle raw potato products to reduce the smell coming from those materials.

“We want to be a good neighbor for this community,” he said. “This situation is clearly frustrating

to everyone, and we are doing everything we can to resolve it so that Stanfield can continue to be a great place to live.”

Stanfield residents have been complaining about the smell for weeks to Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality and, most recently, are concerned about an explosion that caused the factory’s bag house to catch fire. The fire injured one employee.

Anderson said the employee needed a short hospital visit for his minor burns but has since been released.

A spokesman for Idapro said the initial smell was caused when the plant had a fire in January, which burned some of the facto-

ry’s air purification equipment.

Several weeks ago, representatives from Oregon’s DEQ said the company had responded quickly to their requests for answers about the plant and that they were working on a solution.

At a Stanfield city council meeting two weeks ago, citizens showed up in droves to protest the factory’s continued operations. Council members directed Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen to begin fining the factory and seek a court order to shut the factory down.

Survey seeks input from Echo residents

The city of Echo wants to receive input from its residents.

A survey is available with questions ranging from information about city-maintained streets and dealing with junk cars and debris to thoughts about recreational facilities and housing needs. Residents are asked to fill out the form and then drop it off at a locked box at Echo City Hall.

The survey can be anonymous. When return-

ing the form, people can take an item from a basket, which includes local soaps, sunscreen, flashlights and garden gloves. Also, those who fill out a raffle ticket will be entered to win a \$50 gift certificate from Kopacz Nursery.

The survey is available at www.echo-oregon.com by clicking on “August Edition” of the Echo Newsletter. For more information, call 541-376-8411.

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* Study conducted at the University of Northern Colorado, 2015, examined the effectiveness of primax by collecting and analyzing ongoing EEG data while subjects performed speech testing. For both primax features SpeechMaster and EchoShield, the objective brain behavior measures revealed a significant reduction in listening effort when the feature was activated.
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