

Wide Variety of News Held Oregon Interest During 1955

By UNITED PRESS

A potpourri of Legislature to liquor and crime to Christianity made the news headlines in Oregon during 1955.

And, as usual, the weather made an almost daily page one story in Oregon's newspapers.

The weatherman launched the year with gale winds along the coast and heavy snow in the mountains and ended it with some of the worst flooding in recent history. In between, Oregon had one of the hottest summers on record. The thermometer reached 107 degrees at Medford and roasted golfers competing in the Southern Oregon Open tournament. It was correspondingly hot throughout the rest of the state. Forest fires in southern Oregon destroyed valuable timber stands.

Temperatures Skid

In November a cold spell hit Oregon and temperatures dropped to new record lows for that month. Then followed torrential rains which melted snow and ice saturated the ground and caused flooding and slides in

eastern Oregon which resulted in 13 deaths and untold thousands of dollars damage to property and highways. The worst single disaster of the floods wiped out five members of the Marion E. Neal family when a huge mud slide engulfed their home near Remote the day after Christmas.

Legislature Makes News

The Legislature provided grist for the news mill by defeating a sales tax proposal, establishing Portland State College as a full-fledged autonomous, four-year liberal arts institution, increasing personal income taxes, enacting a cigarette tax which subsequently was attacked by initiative petition and held in abeyance, created a water resources board and a new ground water code, increased unemployment compensation payments but stiffened qualification requirements, and guaranteed women equal pay for equal work.

An investigation into practices of employees of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission created a stir when Attorney Gen-

eral Robert Y. Thornton demanded the governor's files in the case. The governor refused to grant Thornton's request. The Liquor Commission also made news for the thirsty when it raised prices of liquor 25 cents a fifth and 15 cents a pint.

One of the two most sensational crime stories was the car-bombing death of Kermit Smith, young Portland attorney. The confessed killer, Victor Lawrence Wolf, was found guilty of second degree murder at a court hearing and sentenced to life imprisonment. Smith's widow, Marjorie, who was accused by Wolf of helping plot the murder, was acquitted by a Yamhill county Circuit Court jury.

Store Bombed

The other top crime story also involved a bomb. It was the dynamite charge set off April 14 in the Meier and Frank Company department store in Portland. The blast shook the huge store, shattered glass, slightly injured a passer-by and emptied the store of "Friday Surprise" sale shoppers. The explosion came just as Aaron Frank, store president, was reading an extortion note demanding \$50,000. The case was solved in December when police arrested Clarence Peddicord, a 38-year-old blind chemist, who confessed touching off the bomb. He implicated his sister-in-law, Mrs. Joyce Keller, 28, as his "eyes" in the abortive extortion attempt, but Mrs. Keller has denied any part in the bombing.

Airliner Ditched

A Pan American Airlines plane on a flight from Portland to Honolulu ditched in the Pacific ocean off Coos Bay March 26 and four of the 23 passengers and crew were drowned. The others were rescued by a Navy ship which was in the vicinity.

The bitter Hells Canyon dam dispute continued to make headlines during 1955. The fight by proponents of a high federal dam at Hells Canyon appeared thwarted when the Federal Power Commission granted Idaho Power Company permission to construct three low-head dams on the Snake river. But, even as construction was begun

at Brownlee site by Idaho Power, public power advocates filed a petition with the U.S. Court of Appeals asking reversal of the FPC decision.

Danny-Una Story Told

The story of a modern-day Enoch Arden caught the fancy of editors and the Danny and Una Schmidt tangle was served up in detail. The tale began when Danny, an airman, was captured by the Chinese Reds in Korea. Una, his wife, said she thought he was dead and took up life with Alford Fine, a California lumberjack. When Danny returned and learned of the mix-up, he filed for divorce and came to Portland to visit his mother. This brought Una and their two-year-old son flying to Portland with a tearful reunion with Danny.

The longest story of the year was the Fong murder trials in Portland. In January Wey Him and Sherry Fong were indicted for the murder of 16-year-old Diane Hank. They were tried jointly and found guilty of first degree murder. The judge set

aside the conviction. Sherry then was tried separately and a mistrial was declared. Finally, in December Sherry was tried again and found guilty of second degree murder. She was sentenced to life imprisonment. Her husband still has to be tried.

An example of Christian generosity which touched the hearts of all Oregonians was the adoption by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Holt of Creswell of eight American-Korean orphans, who came to live with the Holts in their ample farmhouse after much red-tape had been untangled.

Ex-President Visit

There were other ex-president's visits page one stories in 1955: Two former presidents visited the state. Herbert Hoover dedicated his boyhood home at Newberg and Harry Truman rode in the Rose Festival parade. Twenty-two persons were killed in the state during Labor Day week-end. Portland held a test evacuation. Construction of a natural gas pipeline into Oregon was begun, and uranium was discovered in Lake county.

14.9 Increase In Phones Here In '55

Telephones in the Medford area increased 14.9 per cent during the past year, from 17,101 to 19,665, according to J. H. Creager, Medford and Ashland manager of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company.

Telephones by towns through November of this year included Medford, 13,599; Ashland, 3,830; Jacksonville, 400; Gold Hill, 448 and Central Point 1,388.

With an average of one telephone for every three persons, the United States had more than half of the world's 94,500,000 telephones on Jan. 1, 1955, according to PT&T's annual survey.

Oregon was in line with the national average with 536,576 telephones for the 1,662,680 population.

Despite national telephone growth, Iceland replaced the United States as the second talking nation in the world, according to the report.

Canada is in first place with 417 conversations per person; Iceland next with 394; and the U. S. with 393 per capita. Telephone service is supplied by some 4,800 private companies. In Oregon there are 69 independent telephone companies besides PT&T.

Southern Oregon Men Buy Large Yreka Mill

Ashland—The Oregon Shasta Lumber company, Yreka, Calif., has been purchased by two southern Oregon lumbermen, it was reported last week. The transaction is said to be one of the largest business transactions of the year. It becomes effective Jan. 15.

Purchasers are Richard Reyner, of the Fir Milling and

planing company, Ashland, and L. E. Edmonds, Medford, former owner of Medford and Ashland mills. The two will form a California corporation, Edmonds-Reyner Lumber company, to operate the property. Purchase price was not announced.

Both in Business

Reyner has been in the lumber business in Ashland for nine years, and will continue with Fir Milling and Planing. Edmonds was the owner of a mill which burned earlier this year. The Yreka mill has been in operation for five years, and includes an electric sawmill and planing mill on an 11 acre site on Highway 99 just south of the city. Substantial timber holdings are included in the transaction. Annual production of the mill is about 12,000,000 board feet.

The sale was made by Kenneth K. Foster, Yreka, who acted on behalf of shareholders who included Drew Lamb, Zelma Lamb, William Briggs and Harry A. Skerry, all Ashland.

List Recreational Uses in Withdrawing Public Domain Lands

The intention of withdrawing about 5,500 acres of O & C and public domain lands along a 120-mile front of the Rogue river has been announced by Virgil T. Heath, state supervisor for the bureau of land management.

The bureau plans to withdraw for recreational purposes public lands along the river between Prospect and Agnes. A few tracts along the Applegate river below the Star Ranger station also are included in the proposal.

Purpose Listed

The purpose of the proposed withdrawal is to ban mining claims and other forms of entry under public land laws except the lease and sale of public domain lands under terms of the Recreation act of June 14, 1926.

Present plans are to leave most of the river frontage between the mouth of Grave creek in Josephine county and Illahee in Curry county in a wild and primitive state with access only by boat or trail, according to E. K. Peterson, BLM district forester at Medford. The section of the river is bordered by land now almost exclusively under federal ownership.

Above Grave creek, however, scattered tracts of federal land along the river are intermingled with private lands. The BLM lands will, in appropriate instances, be made available for public camp grounds, public river access sites, and homesite leases to individuals.

Developed Parks

In previous years some sites below Grants Pass have been made available to Josephine county for development. Several sites along the upper Rogue between Bybee bridge and Prospect have been made available to the state highway commission and are now developed state parks.

The proposed withdrawal will not prevent timber management activities which can be conducted without damage to recreational values.

For about 25 years most federal lands along Rogue river have been withdrawn for power site purposes. The withdrawal prevented valid location of mining claims. In April, 1955, the BLM took action to preserve lands within one-half mile of the Rogue river for recreational use by filing an application for recreational reservation with the Oregon land office.

Preserve Area

Despite passage of a congressional act in August, 1955, which reopened power site lands to mineral entry, the April, 1955, action by the BLM has effectively preserved Rogue river lands for recreational purposes pending a final decision by the secretary of the interior. Similar action has been taken to protect national forest lands along Rogue river.

The recommendation for the withdrawal was made by the BLM Medford district advisory board several years ago. Since then it has been included in recommendations of the national park service for recreational development of the Rogue river basin.

Notice Published

Notice of the proposed withdrawal was published in the Federal Register Dec. 22. Persons having cause may present objections in writing to the state supervisor of BLM within 30 days after Dec. 22. If circumstances warrant, a public hearing will be scheduled.

Detailed descriptions are posted in the county courthouses in Grants Pass and Medford and in the BLM district offices in Coos Bay and Medford.

General Campaign For Memorial Hospital To Start Here Next Week

The general money-raising campaign for the proposed Rogue Valley Memorial hospital will begin at a school of instruction dinner Wednesday, Jan. 4. A total of 175 men who make up the general campaign organization will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Elks club basement.

Final plans for the drive were made Friday at a meeting of 12 group managers and assistants for the campaign.

Campaign Goal

Goal for the campaign is \$850,000, a rise of \$136,000 over the first amount for community subscription, according to Otto J. Frohnmayer, general chairman. He explained the additional amount was added through revised plans for the building and special equipment necessary "to make Jackson county a great medical center," and to meet any possible increase in building cost.

Of the \$1,900,000 originally estimated cost, federal aid from the Hill-Burton funds will cover one-third of the expenses and a recent grant from the Ford foundation will add \$26,300.

"Anything the community can raise above that will be most welcome for operating capital and unforeseen emergencies," Frohnmayer said.

"Considerable success" was achieved through the advanced campaign, but construction of the hospital rests on the outcome of the general campaign, according to Frohnmayer.

Instructions Given

Instructions for the fund-raising were given at Friday's meeting by Walter G. Garner, chairman of the general organization, and James J. Dunlevy, associate.

Present at the Friday conference were the division managers and assistants. They included Robert D. Dames, V. W. Hammond, Ford McCormick, L. B. Mayfield, Elliott Becken, G. F. Brittsan, Fred Beck, John Graff, Jennings Pierce, Allan Pierce, Gilbert S. Tummy, Jim Shaw, Frank Morgan, Thad Hatten, Dwight Houghton, Chet Leonard, Cliff Hanson, Leon C. Boomer, Chester Irish, Frank Benesh, Victor Milnes, Don McNeil, Fred

4-H Club News

Livestock Club

Oak Grove Livestock Club held its first meeting of the year at the Oak Grove school December 14. The leader, K. N. Hockersmith, presided.

Election of officers was held. Elected were president, Jim Thomas; vice-president, Tom Turpin; secretary-treasurer, Susan Wright; reporter, Craig Wright and social chairman, Susan Wright.

Sharon Forde is a new member.

Meeting dates were discussed and it was decided to have fewer meetings during the winter and meetings oftener in the summer when they are needed.

The tentative plan is to have school and to complete them by 8 o'clock.

Reporter, Craig Wright.

Sewer Line Repairs Are Under Way Here

Diversion of a portion of Bear creek back to its old channel to repair a section of interceptor sewer line washed out by high water has been completed.

A bulldozer and a drag line were used to divert the creek back to its old channel. It will be necessary to move a large quantity of dirt and rocks washed out by the flood waters back into place to make a fill four or five feet deep so that the new section of sewer line will connect with remaining lines, according to Public Works Director Verne Thorpe.

Repair of the sewer line, which was washed out behind Henry's Drive-in, the O. K. Market and McDuffies Coffee Pot Drive-in, will be completed some time this week, Thorpe said.

There is a critical shortage of nurses in the U.S., and medical authorities now estimate by 1960 the shortage may reach about 50,000.

McLaren School Boys At Home For Holiday

Approximately 200 boys from McLaren school at Woodburn spent a five-day Christmas holiday with their families throughout the state, according to F. G. Crowell, parole officer. Seven were in Jackson county.

All were accounted for by the school Tuesday night, when they were due back, Crowell said. There were no law violations reported, although many of them are at the school for major crimes, he said.

Preceding their vacations, parents participated in the school's annual Christmas program and gift presentations. Private sources contributed funds for gifts to some.

Due to flood conditions, many of the youngsters were transported to their home by staff members.

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University Develops 'Frisky, Fighting Fish'

Ithaca, N. Y.—(U.P.)—Cornell University has come up with a couple of "frisky fighting fish."

In a project designed to develop hybrid trout which will live longer in farm ponds, the experts discovered that two of the experimental hybrids are spunky fighters against rod and reel.

One of the hybrids, a cross between the brook trout and the brown trout, is a spectacular "surface fighter." The other is a cross between the brook and the larger lake trout. However, the experts claim the brook-brown hybrid is the spunkier of the two.

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