

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Warning: Ice-slick roads

The cold, dark days of winter often bring ice-slick roads and streets to our area. No matter how hard they try, road crews cannot apply enough sand, gravel or de-icer to make the roads safe.

The primary responsibility for safe travel lies with the person behind the steering wheel so BE PATIENT! If a driver in front of you is traveling slowly, it probably is because they need to do so, so BE PATIENT! Allow 15 minutes more than you would when the weather is good and BE PATIENT!

Drivers should be aware that there have already been several weather-related accidents this week, so BE PATIENT, or you may BE A PATIENT!

Join the holiday festivities

The cold, dark days of winter also make the lights and colors of the holidays welcome. This weekend will bring holiday lights, music and shopping. The Boosters and the Seniors bazaars will open Saturday morning. In the evening, the Community Tree lighting will include music and the lighted truck parade is beautiful and imaginative.

Be sure to check local shops; you will have fun and find a remarkable array of gifts for all occasions.

Sidewalks are for walking

Since holiday shopping brings more people downtown, this is a good time to remind everyone that it is illegal to ride a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, etc., on Bridge Street sidewalks between Weed Avenue and California Avenue. They are also illegal on Jefferson and Madison Avenues between Bridge and Maple Streets.

The safety of both pedestrians and riders is the reason for this ordinance. Because downtown sidewalks are narrow, it is very easy to hit someone leaving a store. A bike rider could be seriously injured, too, by darting into the street to avoid a pedestrian.

Riders may use alternative routes, including the linear trail and Maple Street, or walk their bikes.

— CORRECTION —

Bill James was misidentified as president of the Vernonia Lions in a picture caption in the Nov. 17, 2005, issue. James is past president. The current president is George Tice.



Ike Says

By Dale Webb, member Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Elk season, this year, was a little different. We had all the wind and rain before the first season, then it started to break for the first season opening day. This made for some prime hunting conditions, not only from the standpoint of being able to sneak around in the woods, but the elk were also wanting to come out and feed in the clearcuts and fields. The word around town and other areas on the coast is that a lot of bulls were taken during the first season. The second season was just the opposite, it had been dry for the whole week prior to opening day and there were tracks everywhere; the trouble with that, though, was that some of them were a week old! Lack of rain and the fact that the elk had already been hunted, contributed to much tougher conditions for the second season hunters. Even with these conditions, bulls were taken.

This year also seemed to many of us, to be the year for younger hunters. Many young sportsmen took bulls this year and some very fine ones at that! Maybe it is just because some of us are getting older and everybody seems younger now!

Another change occurred this year – the funding of a five-year wildlife officer enforcement program, through the Oregon Fish & Wildlife

(ODF&W) Access and Habitat (A&H) program. A \$2.00 surcharge added to each hunting license is used to gain or ensure hunting access, and also to improve habitat for wildlife. There are two A&H programs for Northwest Oregon; the first one encompasses Benton, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Polk and Yamhill counties. The funding total for the five year program comes to \$697,306 and is used to hire and equip six retired Oregon State Police (OSP) wildlife officers to patrol these six counties, in addition to the existing officers in this area.

The second program encompasses Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Tillamook and Yamhill counties, with a grant totaling \$577,680, to fund five retired OSP wildlife officers. One of the primary goals of this program is to enforce access issues on private lands in the funded units. What this means is, to catch people who are sneaking into closed lands or roads. A good example of this would be the people who sneak into closed areas to hunt during high fire danger, and those who sneak around gates or barricades. Lands closed due to logging operations will also get extra enforcement.

Generally the officers are out there to see that everybody is following not only hunting and fishing regulations, but also the regulations that timber companies lay out for everyone to follow. With this additional manpower, timber companies are more willing to allow access on their lands. Now, if you see somebody doing something that they should not be doing on private