

Gems fall to AppleSox

Klamath Falls lost Game 2 of its series against Wenatchee, 2-1, Wednesday night
See page B1



Agriculture

KBREC releases infected larvae to kill cereal leaf beetle
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Waffle Hut Eatery
\$5 for \$10 Worth of Food and Drinks
heraldandnews.com/superfly

THURSDAY
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Water shutoffs

Effects felt on area's farms and ranches

Cattle, hay come at steep premium

By LACEY JARRELL
H&N Staff Reporter

BLY — Arms stretched above his head, Mike Illemorini clutched the handle of his irrigation headgate and gave it a tug. The valve is the main shutoff to a diversion ditch flowing from Fivemile Creek into River Springs Ranch in Bly, and the final few drops that squeezed under the gate could be the last his pasture receives.

Illemorini sealed the headgate earlier this month when he received a yellow slip from the Oregon Water Resources Department. The notice told him the Klamath Project had made a call for water based on its 1905 state-sanctioned water right, and River Springs will have to curtail water use until the Project's needs are met. Some of the 8,000-acre ranch parcels have water rights dating to the early 1900s, some as early as 1864. The 400-acre parcel Illemorini received the notice for has a 1953 water right and will go without water until the call is lifted.

"The only thing I'm allowed to do is keep water coming for the cows to drink," he said.

In 2013, the first year water adjudication was implemented, blanket water shutoffs across the upper Basin caused several ranch owners — Illemorini included — to move cattle to other locations or to sell. As River Springs Ranch manager, Illemorini has had to rethink the ranch's business model, and he has made several cutbacks to keep from going under.

"We had to lay off one man. It's still going to downgrade our income



H&N photos by Lacey Jarrell

This water marker measures the amount of irrigation water flowing from Fivemile Creek into pastures at River Springs Ranch in Bly. Water shutoffs have caused the level to drop well below the ranch's 2.3-foot maximum limit.

"You can only spend so much without going plumb out of business."

— Mike Illemorini, Bly rancher

and we'll just have to put off repairs on equipment that we might send into Klamath to get fixed. You kind of put Band-Aids on some stuff, instead of having surgery done on it," he said.

Economic trickle down

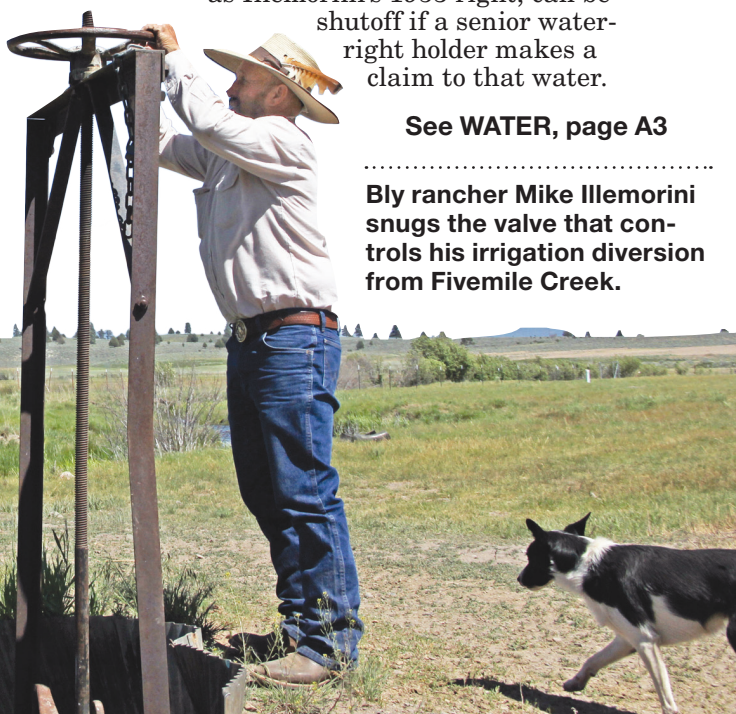
Between 1991, when Illemorini joined River Springs, and 2013, the ranch's Black Angus herd swelled from 150 to 1,100. River Springs' 3,000 irrigated acres are enough to supply

feed for those cows plus some, but after last year's shutoffs and future water uncertainty, Illemorini was forced to sell 250 cows, reducing the herd to 850.

The adjudication shutoffs are governed by the "first in time, first in right" principle, which assigns water priority based on property claims. The older the property claim date, the more senior the water right. Landowners with junior claims, such as Illemorini's 1953 right, can be shutoff if a senior water-right holder makes a claim to that water.

See WATER, page A3

Bly rancher Mike Illemorini snugs the valve that controls his irrigation diversion from Fivemile Creek.



New charges in Operation Gold Card

Food stamp fraud case leads to about 50 arrests

By TRISTAN HIEGLER
H&N Staff Reporter

New charges have been filed against several suspect in the wide-ranging Operation Gold Card food stamp fraud investigation in Klamath County.

After an amended indictment was approved by a grand jury Monday, the three primary suspects are facing 40 criminal counts each. The three men suspected of leading a scam that traded cash for electronic state benefits — with a 50-cents-on-the-dollar rate — are Jose Moreno-Hernandez, Rafael Ortega-Vargas and Severo Toro-Castellon.

Moreno-Hernandez and Ortega-Vargas were present in Klamath County Circuit Court Wednesday morning for a bail reduction hearing before Judge Marci Adkisson.

See CHARGES, page A5

Fierce feline who terrorized family stumps TV show host

Lux relapses after Animal Planet's 'My Cat from Hell'

PORTLAND (AP) — In what truly epitomized the title of his TV show, "My Cat From Hell," feline behaviorist Jackson Galaxy is calling his attempt to tame the Portland cat notorious for attacking a baby and boxing his panicked owners into a bedroom "the hardest case I have ever worked."

It got more difficult after the happy ending for the cat named Lux soon unraveled.

In the reality show that aired last weekend, Galaxy persuades another Portland couple to take Lux while the cat is treated with antidepressants and anti-seizure medication. A veterinarian diagnosed Lux with feline hyperesthesia syndrome, which can trigger violent behavior.

But after the episode's taping, Lux attacked his new guardians and they gave him up for their own safety.

See CAT, page A3

DAILY BRIEFING

Parts of East Rim Drive open for pedestrians

Bicyclists, walkers, runners and even baby carriages are expected to be at Crater Lake Saturday and Sunday when sections of East Rim Drive are closed to motorized vehicles. See page A4.

Bacteria levels rising in Jackson County creeks

Tests show bacteria counts in four Jackson County creeks with low water flows exceed state standards, and contamination has climbed to levels not typically seen until August. See page A8.

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OBITUARY

Edward Logan Case, Jr.
— See page A4



GET HEALTHY, KLAMATH!



UNDER PRESSURE

Smoking is linked to cancer, heart and lung disease. Nearly 1 in 4 Klamath County residents smoke cigarettes.

START NOW:

Just 20 minutes after your last cigarette, your blood pressure drops. You can quit the addiction today.

Visit healthyklamath.org for resources.