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The Humboldt Sun

Winnemucca, Nev.

Your Source for Community News

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 20

WEEKDAY EDITION



COMMUNITY NEWS

January marked the 25th anniversary of Winnemucca Police Chief Bob Davidson Jr.'s tenure with the local agency; an achievement held solely by him as no one else in the department has ever stayed on as long.

Pages 8-12



SPORTS

McDermitt High School senior Becky Kershner has signed a letter of intent to play volleyball for Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, Ore.

Pages 13-15, 22

IN FOCUS

A total of 114 medals for independent reading were awarded to Winnemucca Grammar School students during an assembly held at the school on Feb. 22.

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- Arts & Entertainment Page 5
- Community Calendar Page 6
- Northern Nevada Events . Page 7
- Classifieds Pages 20-21

Local Weather

Tue 3/9 42/24

Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 40s and lows in the mid 20s.

Wed 3/10 50/29

Triness of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.

Thu 3/11 57/33

More sun than clouds. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the low 30s.

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Interior Secretary: Sage grouse will not be listed as threatened or endangered

By Rudy Herndon
The Humboldt Sun

WINNEMUCCA — Greater sage grouse populations in Nevada and 10 other Western states will not be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced March 5.

Instead, the iconic bird will be managed in cooperation with state fish and wildlife agencies and private landowners as a "candidate species."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that the bird qualifies for protection under the act, based on years of scientific data it reviewed. But the agency ultimately decided it would not list sage grouse at this time because other species face greater risks of extinction, according to Tom Strickland, assistant interior secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The status of each candidate species is reviewed on an annual basis.

But Salazar said he hoped last Friday's announcement would give stakeholders a window of several years to better protect sage grouse populations and restore sagebrush steppelands. At the same time, he said that any management strategy they develop should help ensure that energy development, livestock grazing and other activities can continue on the nation's public lands.

"The smarter we are at planning on the front end, the fewer conflicts and controversies we will have on the back end,"



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

An adult sage grouse struts while performing a mating dance. Greater sage grouse populations in Nevada and 10 other Western states will not be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced March 5.

Salazar said. "At the end of the day, my hope ... is that through the smart actions that we take in partnership with states and private landowners, we will never have to list the sage grouse as a threatened and endangered species."

Sage grouse are perhaps best known for their showy mating rituals, when males puff up their

bright yellow chests and strut their stuff to attract females.

Although they've become symbols of the West, sage grouse populations have plummeted over the past century by an estimated 90 percent. Half of the bird's historic habitat has been lost, as wildfires, invasive species and agricultural

— See LISTING, Page Two —

NDEP issues air permit for proposed Jungo landfill

Waste/water permit still under review

By Heather Gula
The Humboldt Sun

WINNEMUCCA — The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) has issued the first of two required permits to Jungo Land & Investments, Inc. Following what NDEP referred to as a thorough analysis, the agency hosted a public hearing and fielded numerous written comments before issuing the air quality permit.

"We did do a thorough review of all state and federal requirements for the permit," said NDEP Public Information Officer Vinson Guthreau. "We are required by law to issue the permit. If it is the case that the company is meeting all of the standards, we have no choice but to issue those permits. But I don't think they (the opposition) should necessarily take it as a loss. We considered all of their comments when reviewing and making our final decision."

A press release issued March 5 indicated that NDEP had found the proposed project meets all applicable state and federal air quality standards and requirements and therefore NDEP was required under federal and state law to issue the permit.

NDEP's Bureau of Waste Management will still need to approve a waste/water permit

Boil water order lifted — Sun Staff Report

WINNEMUCCA — A boil water order affecting about 950 people in the Grass Valley area has been lifted.

Gold Country Estates announced March 5 that residents who are served by its water system can once again resume potable water usage without any restrictions.

The order was issued Feb. 28, after samples from one of the system's wells confirmed the presence of potentially harmful E. coli bacteria in the water supply.

However, the latest round of samples from two consecutive days of testing found no indication of any bacterial contamination, the company said in a March 5 statement to the Humboldt Sun.

The test results were forwarded to the Nevada Bureau of Safe Drinking Water, which lifted the restrictions.

before the project is given the go ahead. Guthreau emphasized that issuance of the air permit does not allow construction to begin right away and that there will be further public comment as the waste/water portion of the permit is vetted.

"The (waste) review hasn't been completed yet so we don't have a complete picture to present to the public at this time," he stated.

— See LANDFILL, Page Two —

Education officials relieved by lower state cuts

Local GBC campus likely to stay open

By Heather Gula
The Humboldt Sun

WINNEMUCCA — Collectively most consider education to have been spared the brunt of deep fiscal cuts following the legislative special session designed to mend the state's ailing financial situation by whatever means possible.

What could have been as high as 22 percent cuts to public schools and Nevada's system of higher education came in just under 7 percent.

Instead of \$211 million being the resulting loss of Gov. Jim Gibbons' proposed 10 percent reduction the 6.9 percent cuts to school districts total only \$116.8 million now.

Dan Klaich, chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education, said the cuts will cost the state's universities and colleges \$50 million over the next 18 months. But he was relieved.

"We're so much better on Sunday morning than we were on Tuesday morning" when the special session began, Klaich said. College presidents and the board of regents will decide how campuses will implement the reductions but, due to the reduced cut, it appears Winnemucca will likely keep its Great Basin College campus.

Mike McFarlane, vice president for academic affairs, who is acting as the administrator in charge while GBC President Carl Diekhans is out on sick leave,



HEATHER GULA • The Humboldt Sun

French Ford Middle School students and parents roam the halls during the annual student orientation day last August.

said he did not foresee the closing of any GBC campuses.

For Humboldt County the lower cut translates to an additional \$340,000. Superintendent Mike Bumgartner estimated that to translate into the equivalent of four teaching positions retained in the county.

"I guess you could say that we were relieved it was not a 10 percent cut, although it is still going to be close to a 7 percent reduction," he said. "At the same time one of the positive things is that I felt like there was a lot of support for trying to spare education as much as possible. I really think the legislature tried to do that."

Regardless of the intention to spare education, Bumgartner said that coming off the heels of two years of massive reductions there is simply not much left to cut. As they face this round of budget overhaul Bumgartner said that the same two goals will be kept

in the forefront; keep the cuts away from the classroom and avoid layoffs.

"Anything we can do to keep those two goals we are going to be moving toward," he said.

While he admits that the 7 percent could mean a loss of programs and people, one thing administrators are pushing for is a pay freeze.

"If we can get folks to agree to that then we think we can make it through this without a reduction in force. But that would be a huge concession on the part of the associations," he said.

One of the major tenants to come out of the special session was the state's new found commitment to providing individual districts with more flexibility to manage their own budgets.

Bumgartner said that on the one hand he does feel like that rang true, specifically with relief on the mandated textbooks and

class size. On the other hand, the flexibility they were hoping for — namely different provisions for collective bargaining — were seemingly overlooked, he said.

"But, I've got to tell you I think our associations have been fabulous to work with, so I think we are getting that flexibility anyway and I really feel like we are making some good moves with our association."

AB4 does allow school districts to increase first- and second-grade class sizes by two students, for a maximum of 18 per teacher. Third-grade classes can add three students, for a ratio of 21 students per teacher. The measure requires any money saved to be used to minimize budget cut effects on class sizes in other grades. Bumgartner

— See EDUCATION, Page 11 —

Local government officials surprised by quick compromise to end special session

By Heather Gula
The Humboldt Sun

WINNEMUCCA — As the six-day special legislative session came to an end March 1, the Nevada Assembly and Senate found compromises that closed the more than \$800 million shortfall — a feat local officials were concerned might not happen after discussions with both sides just weeks earlier.

In three separate meetings the Council of Mayors and commission chairmen from across

the state met with Gov. Jim Gibbons and minority and majority party leaders over the weeks leading to the special session.

"The point was to make sure that when they do all their cuts they don't come into the cities and counties and attack us," Humboldt County Commission Chairman Chuck Giordano said. "That was the biggest point that we were trying to get across."

Winnemucca Mayor Di An Putnam said she felt their message not to make the cities and counties pick up the slack of

state shortfalls was well received. However, she said majority leaders were so hard pressed to find funding sources that their bottom line was counties — particularly the more populous ones — would likely still sustain losses. Even so, Putnam said she did feel that the united voice of city and county representatives made a difference in the outcome of the special session.

"The meeting with each one of them was just totally different

— See CUTS, Page Two —

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 NEWMONT The Gold Company Spot metal prices New York Mercantile Exchange closing metals prices		
	GOLD	SILVER
Wednesday	\$1,139.60	\$17.19
Thursday	\$1,132.50	\$17.13
Friday	\$1,134.40	\$17.37

A note to our readers

Winnemucca Publishing is experiencing problems with our prepress computers

Readers may notice some temporary changes, including black and white pages and advertisements, some features unpublished and other issues.

Our entire staff is working diligently to insure that each newspaper is delivered to mailboxes and newsracks according to our promised schedule, and we hope you'll "pardon our dust" while we correct this matter. Our best guess is that it will take at least several weeks, perhaps more than a month to acquire and install the necessary equipment to get us back to our regular format.

Due to this unique circumstance, we have started earlier-than-usual deadlines for inclusion of public submissions, including calendar notices, classified advertising, obituaries and other announcements and some news items.

Please see below for a complete list of temporary deadlines:

• Deadline for display advertising: 3 p.m. Thursday for Tuesday edition; 3 p.m. Monday for Friday edition.

• Deadline for public submissions: 3 p.m. Friday for Tuesday edition; 5 p.m. Tuesday for Friday edition.

• Deadline for classified advertising and legals: 3 p.m. Friday for Tuesday edition; 5 p.m. Tuesday for Friday edition.

For more information call our office at 623-5011

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CUTS

(Cont. from Page One)
so it is nice that they all finally came together and were able to do something because they were so far apart when we were at the meeting and there was a awful lot of finger pointing," she said. Giordano had the same reaction, stating that the diversity between the two parties set the tone for the meetings.

"With the minority leaders they were very excited that there was such a good turnout. We were working with them and we had good conversations, a lot of suggestions bouncing around," he said.

He said that the meeting with the majority leaders was completely different with very little input, suggestions and discussion.

"It was a whole different atmosphere," Giordano said. "What I got out of listening to (Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley, D-Las Vegas) was that the state was in trouble but the counties will jump in, it's our job to bail them out, that was the attitude I was getting out of her."

One thing everyone seemed to agree on was that the fee hikes and cuts that came out of the special legislative session were merely a stopgap to plug Nevada's fiscal crisis, and they would not come without pain that has yet to be realized.

Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford, D-North Las Vegas, who wanted new or higher fees from casinos and other industries, said the agreement will tide the state over until the next regular legislative session in 2011.

"The challenge to come is even greater," he said.

State officials have projected the revenue shortfall to maintain

services could balloon to \$3 billion by next year.

Giordano said although he doesn't know how likely \$3 billion is, he fears more budget gaps will need to be addressed and blames the problem on legislative shortsightedness.

"They've had four or five years that they've known this issue was coming on, it is no surprise to me," he said. "It should have been handled last year during the regular session, that's when they had time to look at these things closely."

He viewed the result of the special session as merely a patchwork to cover the current hole that will surely tear even deeper in the future.

"By sweeping your funds you are taking your money away for the future and using it all at once," Giordano said. "It looks good up front, but what happens to those revenue sources that you have taken away for next year? That concerns me. How are you going to plug that hole next year?"

Putnam also attributed the state's problems to a reactive nature rather than a proactive one and feels they will likely struggle in coming years while the city and county may maintain a healthy ending fund balance.

"We know what it's like to be down," she said. "We went through it with mining so we know we need to prepare for our down times," she said. "This is the first time the state has been down and they were not prepared for it."

"I think they need to be proactive and looking at the future because today is already gone," Putnam added.

In an attempt to close the gap-

ing hole in this year's budget, lawmakers raided dozens of agency reserve accounts for a \$200 million infusion into the general fund. At the same time, about \$300 million in cuts were made, said Assembly Minority Leader Heidi Gansert, R-Reno.

The agreement includes new fees for annual mining claims on a tiered scale, depending on how many are owned. The fee will generate another \$25 million. Financial institutions also will pay more for filing foreclosure actions, from \$50 to \$200, to raise another \$13.8 million.

Putnam said she felt the mining fees may have some element of fairness but thinks the foreclosure fees are aimed at struggling financial institutions.

"It seems like we are dinging somebody in an industry that is down — although the banks are having some comeback — I think the theory was to see if it would reduce foreclosure and make them go to the table and work something out instead of just automatically foreclosing," she said.

If the measure accomplishes that, she thinks it will be a good thing. However, Putnam has fears that the fees will be passed on to the consumer.

While Giordano said he was relieved to see some of the measures such as a tiered scale for mining fees he doesn't feel they went far enough to raise revenues that will carry the state into a prosperous future.

He brought up the fact that Nevada has some of the lowest property taxes in the country and while he understands that is being preserved as a means of attracting new business to the state, he questions how a state

with no revenue and no services will be appealing to newcomers of any kind.

While he agrees with the effort to preserve Nevada's lower cost of living he also argues that a more equitable tax base needs to be constructed.

Another money-saving action the legislators approved was a bill implementing a four-day, 10-hour work day for most state agencies, and extended the same authority to local governments if they determine it would save them money. This was part of their effort to provide local governments more flexibility to manage their budgets.

Putnam said she agrees with this initiative to allow the local level more control but that the city will be looking closely at every aspect before they implement such a change.

In the end they have to determine not only if it will save money but also if it is in the best interest of the city.

One thing she said they will consider is that the reduced work week may work better in some departments than in others and it would likely need to be done in collaboration with the county offices.

One thing Giordano thinks will come out of the state's struggle is a renewed sense of frugality on both a personal and governmental level.

"The best part of this downturn in the economy is that it has made us all think," he said. "Even individuals are out there reevaluating how they spend money in their own life. That might be the good side is maybe we will wake up and be a little sharper with our finances."

LISTING

(Cont. from Page One)
development have swept across the West's sagebrush steppelands.

To this day, ongoing fragmentation of sagebrush habitat continues to put the bird's future at risk, Salazar said.

Researchers believe that sage grouse populations in northern Nevada are relatively stable. But the bird's habitat has been repeatedly stressed by a combination of factors, including wildfires and the spread of highly flammable cheatgrass, according to Nevada Department of Wildlife Public Information Officer Chris Healy.

Humboldt County's Montana Mountains remain a sage grouse stronghold, with an esti-

mated 11,070 birds living there in 2003. In comparison, the entire sage grouse population in Washington state has dropped to 640 birds, according to the most recent estimates.

Salazar lauded the voluntary steps that Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal and other regional leaders have taken to protect the bird's breeding grounds, noting that they have made a difference.

"We have seen sage grouse populations now at a point where they are relatively stable over the last decade," he said.

But scientists suggest that the long-term prognosis for the sage grouse is "not good," he said.

"That's why we must, and we will, expand

our support for local and state conservation efforts," he said.

The agency's latest findings are expected to boost federal funding for those programs, giving state agencies and private landowners the technical and financial assistance they need to protect sage grouse populations.

Ultimately, though, states will retain control of their individual conservation programs, Strickland said.

"Management of the species will continue to be a state, rather than a federal, responsibility,"

For more information about the agency's findings, go to: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/>.

LANDFILL

(Cont. from Page One)
Like the waste/water permit, the air permit outlines guidelines and requirements that NDEP will follow in assuring compliance with operating standards for the protection of public health and the environment.

Guthreau stated that NDEP does not have significant concerns over their ability to enforce state and federal guidelines set forth in the permit, including issues of fugitive dust and particulate matter emission that were points of concern in public comment.

While the air quality permit does not account for the amount of water rights needed to mitigate these concerns, Guthreau is confident that NDEP's enforcement arm has the leverage to ensure compliance.

"Water rights are not part of the air permit review," he explained. "However, they will be responsible to truck in water just like any project. They have

to comply with state and federal regulations, they have to comply with the requirements of the permit. If construction were to begin, if their waste permit was approved — and these are all big if's — if they do construct and operate this facility, they will be required to comply and we will enforce those provisions."

While they are required to perform a minimum annual review of the project, Guthreau emphasized that is a minimum requirement and that monitoring, either by NDEP or internal reporting, will continue in a manner that is sufficient to enforce regulations.

In all a total of 50 written comments were received during the permit process. While Guthreau stated that quite a few of them either did not pertain to the permitting process or were regarding issues that will be addressed through the waste permit, each was carefully considered prior to final approval.

"We do consider them before we issue the final permit," he said.

In fact, there was one area of the permit that was altered as a direct result of public comment. Guthreau said that Jungo Land and Investment Inc. has been asked to submit plans for their carbon gas capture equipment prior to the beginning of operation.

Carbon is one of the main areas reviewed by air quality regulators and is generally the main emission from a landfill site. Guthreau stated that this added requirement allows them to implement controls earlier in operation. The permit issuance is contingent on those plans being submitted and construction cannot begin until that occurs.

While they will not know the percentage of capture until they have reviewed the plans, "obviously it will have to fall within guidelines as they are outlined

when we either issue or deny a permit," he said. "In that sense it is similar, but EIS does undertake a more full scale approach. They assess endangered species, they assess a variety of things, so it is not that one is better than the other, they are just designed for different things."

For further information, including permit application, NDEP review and project status, visit the NDEP Web site dedicated to the Jungo Landfill at <http://ndep.nv.gov/wm/jungo.htm>.

Thank You

On March 4th, Las Margaritas hosted a farewell celebration for Dr. David Rivas.

We would like to thank restaurant owner Jose Mesa, Pastor Manuel Magana, and the community in general who participated in this event.

We want to thank Dr. Rivas for the effort to provide quality healthcare to the community of Winnemucca and especially to the Spanish-speaking patients. He indeed a good humanitarian. For a rural town like Winnemucca it was a tremendous loss. We lament losing such a fine physician.

Gracias

Este 4 de Marzo de 2010 en el prestigiado Restaurante "Las Margaritas" se celebró la despedida del Dr. David Rivas.

Agradecemos mucho al dueño de dicho restaurante, Jose Mesa, Pastor Manuel Magana y a la comunidad en general que participo en este evento.

Le agradecemos mucho al Doctor Rivas por su esfuerzo en proveer un buen cuidado medico a la comunidad de Winnemucca y especialmente a los pacientes de habla Hispana. El de verdad es un buen humanitario. Para una area rural como Winnemucca, esta perdida fue muy grande. Lamentamos mucho perder tan buen medico.