

There will be no foot, horse or vehicle access until significant rainfall occurs or until further notice. The decision is a result of high fire danger in inland Oregon. Compounding the problem, there is a lack of fire-fighting resources because most are committed to battling major blazes in other parts of the state.

Beef council trims budget

BOARDMAN — Faced with declining revenue, the Oregon Beef Council had to make across-the-board cuts in its budget plan for FY 02-03. At the beef council's annual meeting, the board members approved a budget total of \$498,501 that was \$72,074 or 12.6 percent below the previous fiscal year. Lower than anticipated, actual checkoff collections for FY 01-02 coupled with even lower projected revenue in FY 02-03 necessitated the cutbacks.

The Oregon Beef Council is funded by the dollar per head of cattle sold, checkoff mandated by Oregon state statute (ORS 577) and the Beef Promotion and Research Act. Fifty cents of the dollar is sent to the Cattlemen's Beef Board in Denver for nationally-funded programs. The remaining 50 cents funds the Oregon Beef Council. The state's funding level has been at 50 cents since 1981. The council uses these funds for education, promotion and research on behalf of Oregon's beef industry.

Club News

Junction City TOPS

By **BEV KIRK**

The Junction City TOPS Group met Thursday at the United Methodist Church with 28 members weighing in. A poem was read from THE POET and then Spy's letter was read. The group is still participating in the weight loss contest with a group in Mountain City Tennessee. The winner will take possession of a TOPSI trophy at the end of August. We had a visitor, Mabel Nelson's sister, Eva Chispman. Barb Bickel received a charm for five pound loss, and a charm for being below goal for 12 weeks. Mabel Nelson also received a charm for being below goal for 12 weeks. Great job, ladies! Toni Russell called bingo but no winners this week, and the Flower Contest ended with five winners. KOPS winners were first place Bette Allan and Pauline Rear and Marge Peterson tied for second place. TOPS winners were first place Bev Kirk and second place Ezzie Larson. The special gift was won by Flo Murkin. We sang Happy Birthday to Melanie Reetz. Joy Miles and Shirley Brown gave the program and Betty Skinner gave a talk about encouragement of fellow members. We then celebrated Marge Peterson's fifth KOPS anniversary with cards and gifts. Visitors are always welcome. For more information, please call Bev at 998-6227 or Sallie at 998-1358.

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The Tri-County News welcomes letters on topics of general interest. Letters must be signed with the writer's full name, an address and a daytime telephone number. Only the writer's name and city of residence will be published in the News. Letter length is limited to 250 words. Letters may be subject to editing. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday.

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In Lane, Linn or Benton Counties, one year \$27, two years \$51, three years \$76, five years \$105.
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Wednesdays and Fridays (except holidays) at 11:30 a.m. A lighter lunch offering is now available.

The menu for August 5-9 is as follows (third entree only available on Wednesday and Friday for dining room participants): Monday, Aug. 5 — Caribbean spiced chicken or country pork patty with gravy; Wednesday, Aug. 7 — pasta salad with ham, pasta salad with chicken or beef and rotini ranch salad with cream of broccoli soup; Friday, Aug. 9 — no meals because of Scandinavian Festival.

Those wishing to participate in the program may call 998-5367 before noon two serving days ahead to reserve a meal.

Long Tom Watershed

By **DAN GLEASON** August 1, 2002

The silhouette of a solitary hunter stands patiently along the margins of ponds, rivers and streams in search of prey, standing nearly four feet tall and weighing just over five pounds the veiver quickly identifies the hunter as the Great Blue Heron, largest of all American herons. While the Great Blue Heron sometime stabs its prey, it prefers to catch it between its mandibles bt lighting-fast strikes of its long, dagger-like beak. After all, a stabbed fish must be first removed before it can be eaten, and the heron risks losing a fresh meal in the process of removing the prey from its beak.

The Great Blue Heron's diet consists primarily of fish, but it will capture a wide variety of prey including frogs, salamanders, snakes large insects, small rodents and birds and even the occasional small turtle. This varied diet probably helps the Great Blue Heron to spend winters farther north than any other North American heron. In our area Great Blue Herons may be found at any time of the year. In flight, the legs are held straight back. The heron takes slow, deep wing beats with wings that measure six feet from wingtip to wingtip. Like all herons, it tucks its neck back in against the body in a tight "S" curve in flight, instead of holding it outstretched like a crane. (Cranes are not closely related to herons.)

You may observe a Great Blue Heron standing on a tree branch looking very out of place. This is not at all unusual and, odd as it seems, Great Blue Herons build their nests in trees making a large platform 20-60 feet or more above the ground. Great Blue Herons are colonial-nesters forming small colonies of only two to three while some form large colonies of over forty nests. Heron pairs usually work together to create a nest with the male gathering large sticks and the female weaving them into a nest platform. Nests are frequently reused from year-to-year. Both parent birds take turns incubating the eggs, a process that takes 25-30 days before hatching, and both will feed the three to five nestlings by regurgitating fish or other prey. Chicks leave the nest between two to three months after hatching and, once out of the nest, they are on their own and are no longer fed by the parents.

Great Blue herons can be found along any point of the Long Tom River where there is good habitat within close proximity to water. The next council meeting will be Tuesday, August 27. For more information, contact Dana Erickson at 683-6578.