

# Dike removal spawns wetland return

CREST project seeks to restore farmland to its natural state

By KATE RAMSAYER  
The Daily Astorian

**E**arly farmers along rivers in Clatsop County spent much time and energy building dikes to protect their lands from high tides and storm surges.

But now the effort is devoted to the opposite — to breaching dikes to create and enhance wetlands, providing habitat for fish and other native plants and animals.

At a bend in the Lewis and Clark River, the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce and other organizations are removing a dike to allow water to flow in and out of a natural wetland. And on the Klaskanine River, near the spot where it meets Youngs River, conservation programs are turning a field into a wetland marsh.

The Lewis and Clark site, now owned by the city of Seaside, was never successful with crops or cattle, even with the dikes in place, said CREST watershed coordinator Todd Cullison.

"They tried to make it into farmland, but my understanding is that it was too wet," he said. So the dikes built to separate the river from farms instead acted as barriers between the river and wetlands dense with cattails and other vegetation.

"It was a pretty good, functioning wetland, but we're establishing a connection between the river and the floodplains and the wetlands," Cullison said. Funding for the project came from sources including the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, which in turn got the money from the Bonneville Power Administration.

Workers with **Nehalem Marine Manufacturing** took 4 to 5 feet off the dike, lowering the river bank to about 8 feet — a bit below the high-tide level. Even on a dry, late-September day, a recent high tide had covered the newly leveled land, leaving puddles in the excavator tracks.

The idea is to let high tides and storm surges carve channels in the site, joining the historical channels that still snake through the area, and creating a kind of equilibrium between the river and the wetland, Cullison said. The river will bring in sediments and help sustain a native plant community, and the channels will hopefully provide habitat



DAMIAN MULINIX — East Oregonian Publishing Group  
Randy Van Hoy, regional engineer with Ducks Unlimited, is helping oversee the Lewis and Clark River project that will allow water from the river to flow into the wetland at high tides and with storm surges, which they hope will help create channels that provide fish habitat.

**'They tried to make it into farmland.'**

— Todd Cullison  
CREST watershed coordinator

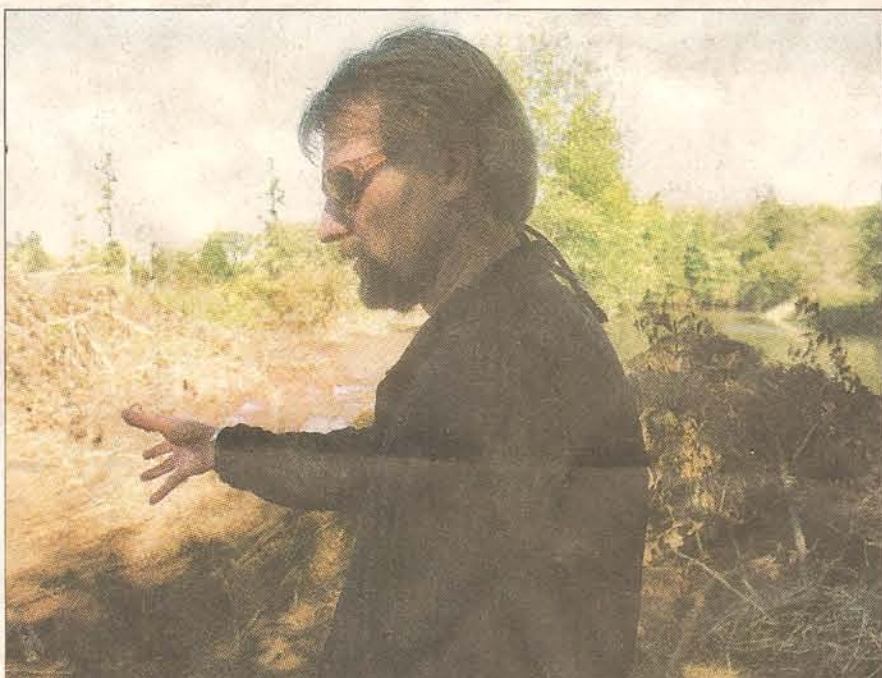
and food for juvenile salmon bulking up before their trip to the Pacific Ocean.

Cullison describes it as a passive restoration project — the workers "remove the dike and let hydrology do its own thing."

In a small slough to one side of the site, however, the project planners are helping nature along with the placement of six spruce logs, donated by Weyerhaeuser.

"They're high quality wood; they'll provide habitat for a long time," said Randy Van Hoy, a regional engineer with Ducks Unlimited working on the restoration. Placing the wood is "very much an art," he said, crediting the excavator operator. The logs and branches should bring shelter and

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Todd Cullison, the CREST watershed coordinator, talks about the work being done on the banks of the Lewis and Clark River.

THE DAILY ASTORIAN • MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2005

## CREST: 'Little inlets are really important'

Continued from Page 1

sources of food for fish.

The woody debris and the channels are designed to add some complexity to the natural surroundings, said **Leo Kuntz**, owner of **Nehalem Marine**.

"Overall, what we've done is simplify a lot of our waterways," he said. "These little inlets are really important, and that's what we've lost."

While the Lewis and Clark project is mostly a passive restoration, the project to create wetlands along the Klaskanine is definitely more active, Cullison said.

Converting the farmland to wetlands is a three-year process. Last year, biologists and volunteers monitored the site, this year workers constructed a crossdike to protect a neighboring field, and next year they will remove more than 900 feet of the existing dike to create a marsh. Through the National Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program, a conservation easement ensures that the land, owned by Wildlife Rehab Center director Sharnelle Fee, will remain a wetland. An Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant helped provide the funds.

Because the site is now a flat, mowed field, it doesn't have the historical channels that the Lewis and Clark site does. So workers with Big River Excavation are digging a wide, winding channel to get the process started. Once the dike is removed, the channel will always have water in it, and the surrounding field will be flooded twice daily with the tide.

Smaller sections of the dike upriver will be removed as well, to allow river waters to seep into more forested land.

The project is designed to create wildlife habitat, especially for salmon, but these restoration methods are not an exact science.

"There's no agreed upon science in design for these projects, it's to some degree experimental," Cullison said. But CREST will do extensive monitoring of the site for five years following construction — it's not enough



DAMIAN MULINIX — East Oregonian Publishing Group  
Leo Kuntz, owner of **Nehalem Marine Manufacturing**, uses a track hoe to remove land mass from along the banks of the river, allowing the water to come into the wetlands as the water levels rise.

to simply say whether fish are using the habitat, Cullison said, so monitors will count fish, mark juveniles to see how much time they spend in the channels, measure growth, check stomach contents, and look at other indicators of species health.

"That's what people want to know — what are the benefits long-term," he said.

And biologists can take the results

from this project, compare them with results from the Lewis and Clark project and other restoration efforts in other areas, and determine which methods work best in different situations.

For the Klaskanine project, however, Cullison is confident that fish will find the habitat.

"We'll probably see fish immediately," he said.

# The World

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**South Coast**  
Food banks drive to  
refill shelves, A3  
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Kwanzaa celebrated  
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World Photo by Susan Chambers  
Heavy equipment operators go to work building a gravel road out to the dike in Libby that broke on Friday. Several dump trucks hauled rock to build the road. The houses in the background, on Old Wireless Lane, have been flooded since Friday.



World Photo by Susan Chambers  
A road closed sign is placed at the intersection of Libby Lane and Shinglehouse Road on Monday afternoon to allow workers to get access to a piece of property and do some work on the Libby dike that broke Friday and resulted in several flooded homes. In the background, heavy equipment operators spread gravel and rock.

## More storms forecast

### Storms from Page A1

ODOT officials said the highway is scheduled to be reopened at 8 a.m. on Thursday.

The initial slide was reported at 3:29 p.m. on Friday. Initially, ODOT was able to keep one lane of traffic open before the entire roadway was closed later that night for safety. ODOT maintenance crews met on site and assessed the damage Saturday morning and reopened a single lane of traffic, with flaggers and pilot vehicles providing traffic control from noon until 5 p.m.

On Sunday, ODOT road experts met at the site and determined that several thousand cubic yards of material had slid out beneath the highway, erasing the southbound lane. Later that day, the highway was again opened to a single lane of traffic with traffic control. However, further erosion led to a full closure at 10 p.m. Sunday, which remains in effect.

Meanwhile, there is some good news for South Coast residents: The tide is dropping. High tide won't

be nearly as high as it was over New Year's weekend and, barring a deluge, flood waters should be receding.

That doesn't mean all the bad weather is out of the way.

The National Weather Service has forecast another storm front for today with a high wind warning through this afternoon and a high surf advisory continuing through Wednesday. Ocean swells are likely to be higher than 20 feet throughout Wednesday before another front comes through on Thursday and Friday.

A flood warning remains in effect for the Coquille River. However, levels are expected to start dropping this afternoon.

For road condition updates, those interested can check [www.Tripcheck.com](http://www.Tripcheck.com) or call 511 or (800) 977-ODOT (6368). Those needing California highway conditions can dial (916) 445-7623 or go online at <http://www.dot.ca.gov>.

## South Coast residents wring out

By SUSAN CHAMBERS  
AND CARL MICKELSON  
Staff Writers

Dump truck after dump truck hauled rock to the Libby area of Coos Bay on Monday, where heavy equipment used the rock to make a road through private property to the dike that broke on Friday.

Standing water full of debris and an oil sheen visible in some places still surrounded some of the houses off of Southwest Boulevard, Old Wireless Lane and Illinois Avenue, even as the sun came out and blue sky appeared.

Ron Dickey, owner of the flooded red house near Fruitdale Road, watched the equipment moving back and forth through his yard, making the temporary path to the dike.

"It hasn't broken before," Dickey said. "Water's gone over the dike, but it didn't break."

Dickey said he hasn't lived in the house for some time, but that he has a buyer interested in the property. The buyer wanted to build another dike to protect the Old Wireless homes, then flood the property between that dike and Red Dike Road, Dickey said. Dickey's owned the property since 1972.

About the same time gravel started pouring into the water-logged property, the Coos County Sheriff's Office marine patrol boat chugged into the slough shortly after high tide to survey the damage and work.



World Photo by Susan Chambers  
A Coos County Sheriff's Office deputy takes visitors out Monday afternoon on Coalbank Slough, shortly after high tide, to survey the damage caused by the breach in the Libby dike.

### U.S. Highway 101

Emergency repairs began Monday night on the Rocky Point landslide that occurred Friday afternoon three miles south of Port Orford on U.S. Highway 101.

The closure has forced motorists traveling between Coos and Curry counties to take lengthy alternate routes, using Oregon Highways 38 or 42 and U.S. 199.

The Oregon Department of Transportation estimates the short-term

repair costs will be around \$100,000 in order to establish a single lane of traffic with flaggers providing traffic control.

The long term cost is a bit heftier — at around \$1 million to rebuild both lanes. There are no estimates for when the long-term repairs will occur. The economic impact to motorists is estimated at roughly \$500,000 per day based on increased travel times and transportation costs.

See Storms, Page A8

## New Year's storms kill three in region

PORTLAND (AP) — At least three people died over the holiday weekend because of the strong winds and heavy rains that toppled trees and caused rivers to overflow throughout Western Oregon and Northern California.

On New Year's Day, sheriff's deputies in Siskiyou County recovered the body of 19-year-old Lacey Garcia. Authorities believe the Northern California woman was swept away by the Yreka Creek when she tried to cross a submerged road on her way home. Siskiyou County sheriff's spokeswoman Susan Gravenkamp said a medical examiner will examine the body this week.

In Eugene, a day earlier, deputies recovered the body of Brian Niemeyer, 48, who died while trying to rescue fellow rafters stuck on an island in the gushing Willamette River. His body was found eight miles downstream from where his raft overturned Saturday, police said. The river's force ripped his life jacket off.

The stormy weather also contributed to at least one vehicle fatality when a pickup truck was hit Sunday as a 50-foot-tall tree fell on state Highway 26, west of Banks. The truck's passenger, Joshua Hojnacki, 25, from Vancouver, Wash., died at the scene.

By Monday, flood watches still were in effect for a handful of the state's rivers, including the Pudding River in Clackamas and Marion Counties and the Tualatin River in Washington County.

Several local roads remained submerged and deputies shut down Highway 101 south of Port Orford, after the southbound lane collapsed.

"It's a 70-foot drop down. The southbound lane is gone. It's eroded all the way to the median," said Jared Castle, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Traffic on the Interstate 5 over the Siskiyou Summit at the California border remained smooth, two days after snow caused a partial closure, said Castle.

The high winds forced the Mount Ashland ski area to close or scale back operations for the third time in as many days. The ski area shut down all day Friday when blizzard conditions engulfed the Siskiyou Mountains. Forecasters said they expected the first week of 2006 to remain wet, but with lighter showers.

"It's not going to be as wet as it was for the past week. We'll still have rain, but it won't be the big deluges that we saw this weekend," said Mark O'Malley, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Portland.



World Photo by Madeline Steege  
A farm between Coquille and Myrtle Point is surrounded by water on three sides with the Coquille River in the background. Animals on the farm have moved to higher ground.



**Food**

Delicious cheese, blueberry crepes, C1

# The World

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## Corps ends dike repair

By CARL MICKELSON  
Staff Writer

Just hours after beginning a temporary flood relief construction project on a battered dike that was breached and caused major flooding over New Year's weekend, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Monday pulled the plug on its mitigation plans.

The excavators building a dike around homes on Old Wireless Lane were turned off. A truck dumped its load of gravel and left. Construction workers stood in a group on the lane, waiting for their supervisors to tell them if they should stay or go home.

This latest development in the Bay Area's flood saga was caused by a change in forecasted weather reports, he said. About 22 homes were deluged with water when the Libby Dike holding back the waters of the Coalbank Slough was breached over New Year's weekend.

"Anything under emergency operations, you know — things change hourly, sometimes a lot sooner," said local corps project manager John Craig, explaining the reversal.

"We got good weather coming for the next couple of days, so under our authority for flood fight, we are not fighting a flood right now because the weather has changed," Craig said shortly after noon. "So we are stopping the con-



John Craig

tractor right now."

An hour before, the corps issued a press release indicating work had begun on the dike in the Libby and Englewood areas of Coos Bay as part of its flood-fighting operations.

"Temporary repairs made to the Libby Dike by the Libby Drainage District after it failed in December are not expected to hold through another series of very high tides, which are likely to occur over the weekend," the release indicated.

But the threat of high tides alone is not enough for the corps to get involved, Craig said.

"It's a matter of what the law says and the authorities we are operating under," he said. "The guidelines for flood fight are very specific and we don't meet those guidelines with the forecast we got this morning."

Plans called for a 300-foot-long dike on the south side of Old Wireless Lane, a cross dike to protect the main tidegate and the installation of a 48-inch tidegate at Illinois Street, Craig said.

In addition, two berms, one along Southwest Boulevard and another along Shinglehouse Slough Road, were to be built by the city and county, the release said.

All the work was expected to be completed in 72 hours. Late last week and over the weekend, forecasts called for significant rain during the middle and end of this week.

However, Craig said based on weather forecasts issued Monday, no rain was

See Dike, Page A10

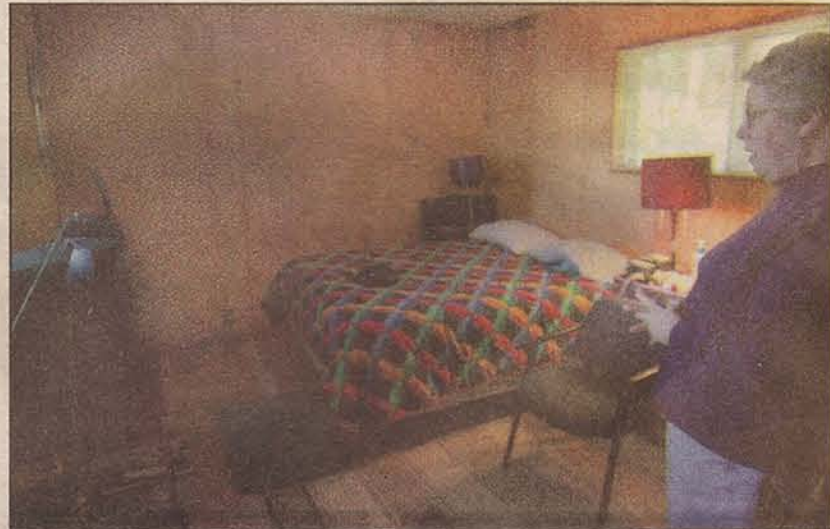


World Photos by Susan Chambers

A construction worker walks away from an excavator on Red Dike Road in Coos Bay on Monday. The excavator was building a staging area for heavy equipment that was contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work on the Libby and Englewood dikes to prevent flooding during the high tides anticipated this weekend.

Joyce Wright on Monday looks at the only room in her house on Old Wireless Lane, the bedroom, that is cleaned out enough to be livable after flooding. Here, the wallpaper has been stripped from the walls, carpeting removed and only simple amenities have been installed.

The Wrights still are working with their insurance adjuster to determine what they will do with the house. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stopped nearby flood-control dike work on Monday after the National Weather Service revised its forecast for the weekend.



## Corps advises residents to 'prepare for the worst'

Dike From Page A1

expected for Monday or today, and only a slight chance of rain on Wednesday — and as a result, no flooding was expected.

"So right now we are going to cease operations because under our flood fight authority we need to be fighting rain and floods, and that scenario is not now happening," he said.

That surprise directive brought three excavators, several loaders and bulldozers from the Salem-based Just Bucket Excavating — chosen by the corps under its emergency authority — to a halt.

Company owner Willie Davis Jr. said he had 12 workers on the job site.

Craig said the corps would continue to monitor the weather situation and step in if a large storm moves in, dumping enough rain to overwhelm the dike again.

"Then we are definitely going to re-evaluate — absolutely," he said. "But nothing is in the forecast right now."

Still, he said, residents whose homes were inundated with water over the New Year's weekend "should continue to prepare for the worst," and "continue to work directly with the city and the county."

Both entities said they would undertake measures to keep water from spilling over onto Southwest Boulevard and Shinglehouse Slough. On Sunday, about 50 local residents worked for hours to build sandbag berms in key spots in anticipation of a coming flood.

Craig said Monday afternoon he did not know how much money the corps would end up paying Just Bucket, adding that no bid price was established.

"How we are going to settle this out? We haven't worked that out yet," Craig said.

The corps is still under the auspices of a Jan. 13 emergency declaration by Gov. Ted Kulongoski issued for 24 counties, including Coos.

— Staff Writer Susan Chambers contributed to



World Photo by Susan Chambers

An excavator works behind one of the houses on Old Wireless Lane in Coos Bay on Monday. It was building a connecting dike nearly perpendicular to the Libby Dike that keeps Coalbank Slough from overflowing into low-lying areas. The aim of the connecting dike, part of flood prevention measures, was to keep the houses on Old Wireless Lane from flooding again but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called off the work early after a revised weather forecast showed there was little chance of a storm during the coming weekend.



The new tide gate goes in on Gannon Slough last Friday morning.

TMc| EYE

## Techy new tide gates installed

Terrence McNally

EYE BUSINESS EDITOR

GANNON SLOUGH

– There's not much point in pursuing salmonid habitat restoration if the fish can't even leave the starting gate. But for years at the entrance from the bay to Gannon Slough, a rusty, crusty tide gate has meant just that.

Last week, the City took a major step in opening things up, thanks to Oregon design wizard and heavy machinery operator Leo Kuntz. Kuntz of Nehalem Marine has just about perfected a tide gate

► GATE | 4

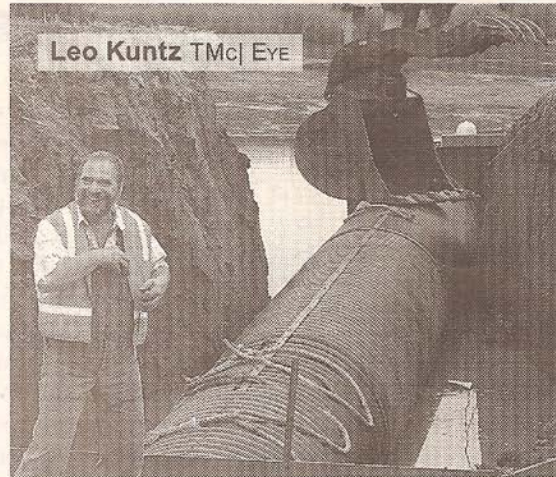
## Gates | Fish friendly

► | FROM 1

system incorporating a cantilevering alloy door and marine-quality sealer meant to stand the test of time.

Joined by Arcata restoration expert Matt Smith, Kuntz pulled the old gate and installed his \$8,500 gate, gingerly leveling it between tides on Friday. The guillotine-like gate responds to the slightest flows, allowing fish passage. It's also expected to help reduce Arcata's southeastern lowlands of some winter flooding. Smith commented that he wouldn't be surprised if Kuntz's gate was still in operation a 100 years from now.

The gates were purchased with monies from a California Department of Fish and Game grant.



Leo Kuntz TMc| EYE



TORSTEN KJELLSTRAND/THE OREGONIAN

More than 50 employees of Rosenberg Builders Supply in Tillamook showed up the day after torrential rains ended last week to help remove mud and water. Owner Loten Hooley expects the damage cost to reach \$500,000 to \$1 million.

## Storms deliver economic blow to Mt. Hood area, Tillamook

An entire region will feel the loss of access to some slopes; the coast faces a long cleanup

By ALEX PULASKI and PETER ZUCKERMAN | THE OREGONIAN

Storms that dumped two to three feet of rain in parts of Oregon and Southwest Washington last week left more than strewn boulders and rotting hay in their wake.

Mount Hood's tourist industry and Tillamook County farmers and businesses also were saddled with weeks — perhaps months — of uncertainty and cleanup. The bills will climb well into the millions of dollars, with the brunt falling on the state to repair and replace road washouts that have isolated the popular Mt. Hood Meadows ski resort.

Road damage on Oregon 35 on both sides of the resort is so severe that one highway official has estimated fixes would cost \$10 million to \$20

million. No timetable has been set for repairing the roads, and the traditional Thanksgiving weekend ski season opening is less than two weeks away.

In Tillamook, flood-weary business owners and local government officials are still taking toll of their losses. Although statewide damage assessments are not expected until later this week, Tillamook County probably sustained at least \$4.5 million in damages, mostly in the city of Tillamook.

Mt. Hood Meadows managers say the resort will open to skiers this winter. Rebuilding the road has huge implications for the area's

Please see **FLOODS**, Page E8

### Inside

- A map highlighting damaged areas in the Northwest/E8
- Flooding in Tillamook most often hits the north end of town, sparing the older section/E9
- Lees Camp near Tillamook had what might be the rainiest day in Oregon history/E9

### Gusts may hit 60 mph tonight

Gusty winds reaching up to 60 mph could arrive between 10 tonight and blow until 6 a.m. Monday, the National Weather Service is predicting.

"A strong low pressure system moving inland just north of Astoria" will create the high-wind conditions, said weather service forecaster Chris Collins.

A south wind of 15 to 25 mph may increase to 30 to 40 mph with gusts of 60 mph this evening, the weather service predicted.

The low pressure path and arrival time was unknown Saturday night, but the high winds could affect a wide area stretching from Lane County to Cowlitz County in Washington. After several days of rain, high winds could topple trees.

"Generally, when the soils are saturated, we do get reports of more trees going down in lesser wind speeds," Collins said.

There is a 70 percent chance of rain today and at least a 60 percent chance of measurable precipitation every day through next Saturday.

— Allan Brettman

NEWS IN OREGON, WASHINGTON, IDAHO

## Floods: Business owners, workers on Mt. Hood fret more about lack of snow than roads

Continued From Page E1

economy: Mt. Hood Meadows alone, resort manager Dave Riley said, typically employs 1,000 workers by Christmas.

Riley and highway officials expect that clearing away tons of boulders and repairing Oregon 35 will proceed more quickly north of the ski area, opening access through the Hood River Valley.

Area businesses are banking on that eventuality.

"If that road doesn't open, I will not have a whole lot of visitors this winter," said Mary Pellegrini, owner of the Old Parkdale Inn. "We're just kind of holding our breath."

Pellegrini has bookings for two of her three rooms for the Thanksgiving weekend. But because most of her winter visitors are headed to Mt. Hood Meadows, reservations could dry up if the road is not restored.

As significant as the road damage is, she and other Mount Hood-area business owners say they're accustomed to the vagaries of weather. They said rain-driven road closures pale in comparison to paltry snowfall, which left them gasping for customers in the winter of 2004-05.

"For my business, the reality is a lack of snow is much more a factor than that stretch of highway," said Glenn Nilsen, owner of Mountain Tracks Ski and Snowboard Shop in Government Camp.

The surging White River has cut off Oregon 35 between Mt. Hood Meadows and Government Camp for the "foreseeable future," a state transportation spokesman said late in the week. Officials said their options include building bridges across trouble spots on the White River and the nearby Newton and Clark glacier outwash-

es, moving the highway or repairing it along its current route.

"For my business, the reality is a lack of snow is much more a factor than that stretch of highway."

**Glenn Nilsen**  
owner of Mountain Tracks Ski and Snowboard Shop in Government Camp

Nilsen said that the road closure south of Mt. Hood Meadows probably would cost him some customers but that cross-country enthusiasts still have many options and downhill skiers can visit Summit or Timberline.

Kris Rada, a clerk at the Mt. Hood Inn in Government Camp, estimated that the inn could lose roughly half its wintertime guests for as long as Oregon 35 is closed south of Mt. Hood Meadows. Rada also works at Meadows part time and said he is among many who live south of the mountain who stand to lose paychecks for as long as the road is not open.

"A lot of people were counting on going over to start working this weekend," he said.

In Tillamook County, dairy farmers said they lost relatively few cows but flooded alfalfa hay resulted in tens of thousands of dollars of damage. And dairy farmer Joe Rocha said distressed cows are prone to disease and reduced milk output.

Hard-hit businesses in the city of Tillamook looked as if they were holding outdoor sales. But the piles of carpets and cabinets and cushions were just soggy remains of once-useful items ruined by flooding.

At the Mar Clair Inn on Main Avenue, workers moved wooden furniture outside. Most had been bought just after the 1996 and 1998 floods.

"We'll have to replace it again," said Mark McClaskey, the inn's co-owner. He said the damage would cost his business perhaps \$350,000 but insurance may reduce that amount.

Nearby, at Rosenberg Builders Supply, a layer of grime formed a brown skin over the floor. Hoses pumped water out the door. Workers lugged boxes of soaked light bulbs and warped wood, piling them outside.

But the store was open Friday. Owner Loten Hooley said the damage would cost his business \$500,000 to \$1 million. Most damage is in lost inventory, he said, but cleanup crews and lost business also were expensive. And the building may need structural repairs, he said, because the ground has been undermined.

"We're over Jell-O," Hooley said.

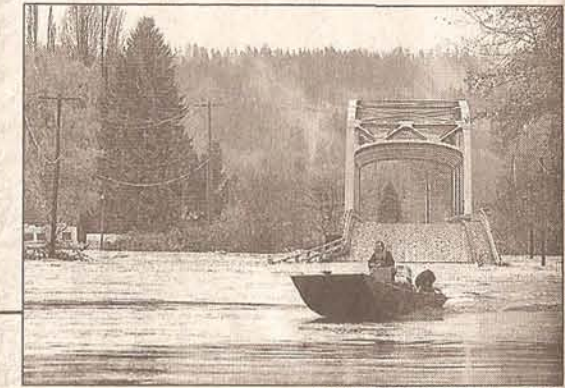
At the Dairy Queen a few blocks away, owner Jeff Johnston didn't know how much flood damage would cost his business but said it probably will be more than the \$200,000 the 1996 floods caused.

"Right now," he said, "we're focusing on cleaning."

Stuart Tomlinson and Peter Sleeth  
of The Oregonian staff contributed to this report.

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NICK GEORGE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

### Cowlitz County

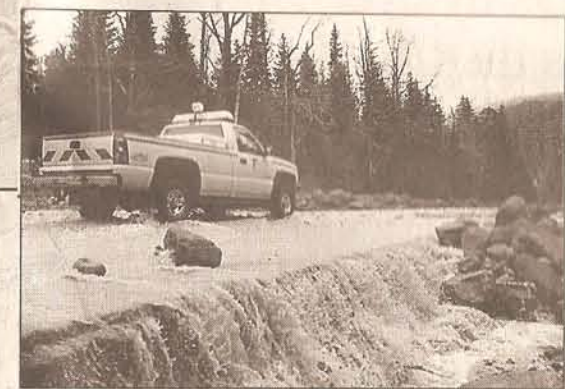
Two hunters died when their trucks were swept into the Cowlitz River near Packwood and Randle. Three houses were swept into the river; dozens more damaged. Two highways, SR 504 at the Cowlitz-Skamaniam county line and SR 4 near Stella, were closed by slides.



BENJAMIN BRINK/THE OREGONIAN

### Brightwood

The swollen Sandy River destroyed two homes and severely damaged another half-dozen. Two women were rescued from their homes; other million-dollar vacation homes are threatened by river bank erosion.



STEVEN NEHL/THE OREGONIAN

### Oregon 35

Highway officials estimate repair costs for Oregon 35 at \$10 million to \$20 million. Heavy rain and a glacial surge caused extensive damage to the road that connects Hood River and Government Camp. Access to Mt. Hood Meadows, the mountain's most popular ski area, was cut off just as the first snows were falling. Officials say Oregon 35 is closed indefinitely.



TORSTEN KJELLSTRAND/THE OREGONIAN

### Gleneden Beach

High surf and heavy rains nearly sent three million-dollar cliffside homes toppling into the ocean. Crews worked to add rip-rap to shore up the homes. One woman is dead, another missing after apparently being swept from the beach Wednesday.



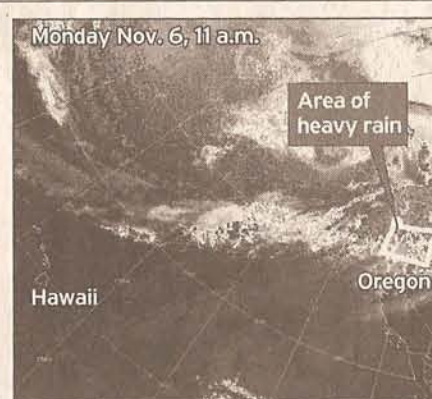
STEVEN NEHL/THE OREGONIAN

### Tillamook

Heavy rain, including 14.3 inches Monday at Lees Camp, pushed the Wilson River to historic levels, flooding U.S. 101 and damaging homes and businesses. Farmers worked frantically to save their prized dairy herds.

## Pineapple Express: subtropical rainmaker for the Northwest

Virtually every major cool-season flood in SW Washington and NW Oregon has had a significant amount of sub-tropical moisture carried on the jet stream into the region on the so-called Pineapple Express. The worst floods typically contain a long stretch of tropical moisture that extends past Hawaii into Indonesia.



### Other significant Pineapple Express floods:

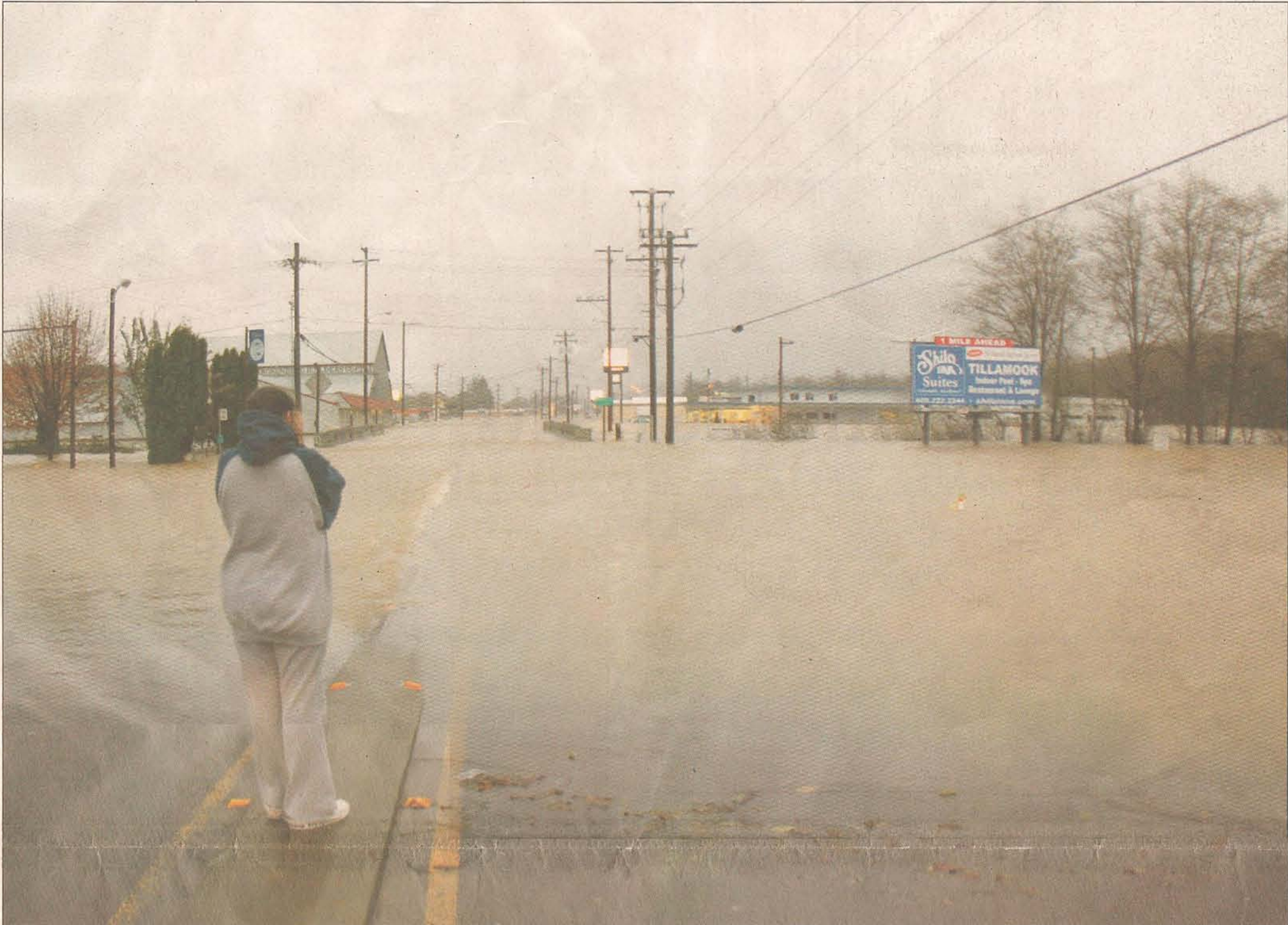
- Dec. 19-25, 1964: In Oregon, 17 people died, damage was \$37 million.
- Feb. 5-9, 1996: Record-setting rains and snowmelt. Damage estimates in NW Oregon and Washington in excess of \$100 million.
- Nov. 18-20, 1996: The official single wettest one-day record for Oregon, 11.65 inches, Elk River Hatchery, Port Orford. Five people died in Douglas County.

Sources: Oregon Climate Service, National Weather Service

MICHAEL MODE, STEVE COWDEN, STUART TOMLINSON/THE OREGONIAN



# The Flood of 2006



MEGHAN MCGUIRE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Water, significantly more of it than accumulated in the disastrous 1996 flood, pushes its way south on U.S. Highway 101 in Tillamook Monday afternoon, Nov. 6.

## Water, water everywhere in and around Tillamook

Tillamook County residents thought it could never get any worse than the disastrous floods of 1996. Until, that is, Nov. 6, 2006.

Four days of inch-plus rain were followed by a deluge that dumped nearly 20 inches of rain on Lee's Camp in the mountains east of Tillamook and sent the Wilson River to record high flood levels.

The Wilson crested at 22.8 feet Monday, Nov. 6, 10 feet above flood stage and nearly 4 feet higher than the 1996 flood.

The Wilson River RV Park was inundated as were farms along the upper Wilson. Busi-

nesses along North Main Avenue in Tillamook took on huge amounts of water and several residents of low-lying areas needed to be rescued Monday night. The Trask River crested at about a foot above flood stage, submerging several more farms and causing catastrophic losses on some individual farms.

In North County, the Nehalem River crested at 19.73 feet, nearly 6 feet above flood stage closing roads and businesses.

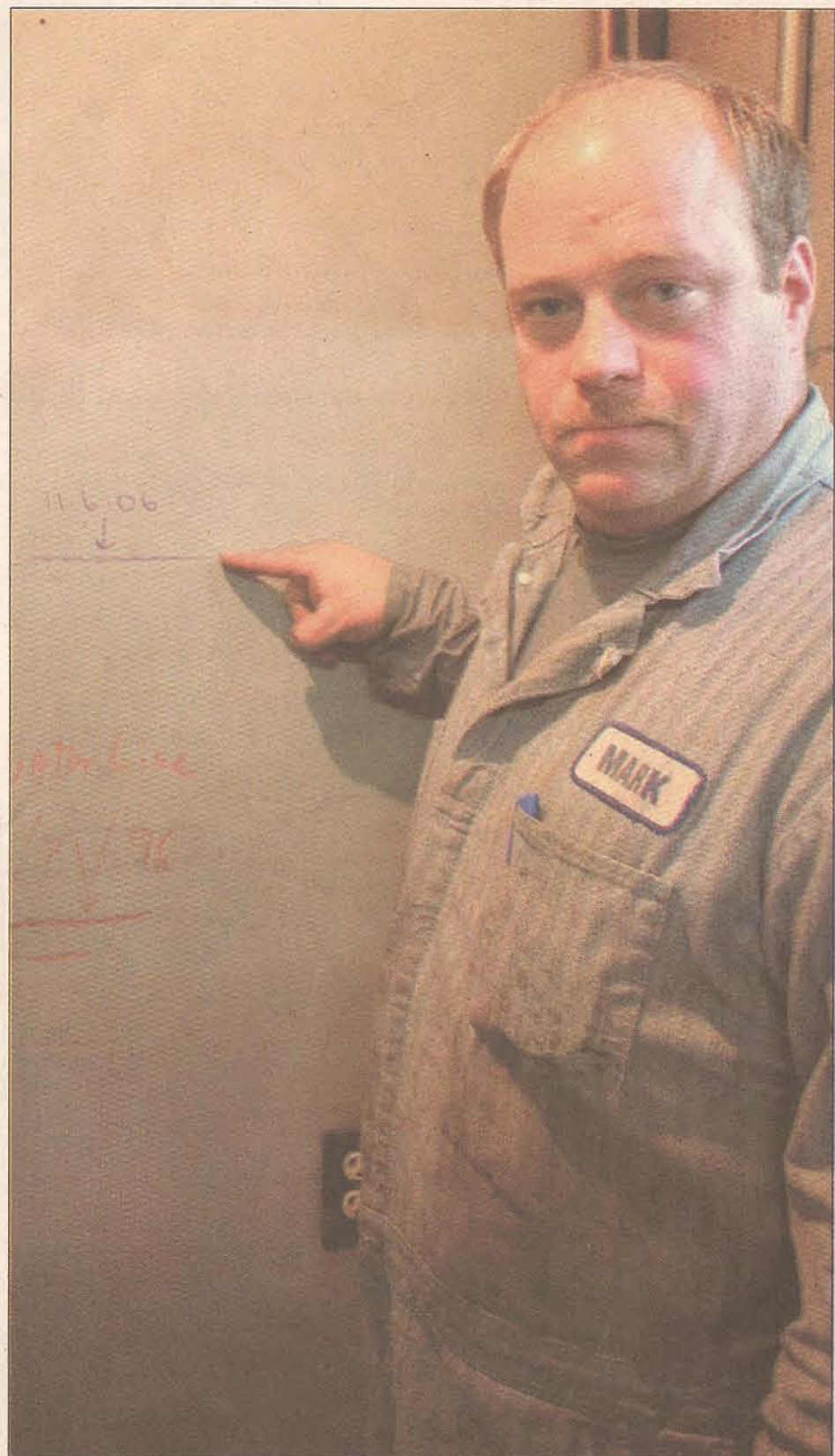
Some flooding was also reported in the Pacific City and Blaine areas in South County.



JOE HAPP/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

ABOVE: Traffic on U.S. Highway 101 at the south end of town near the Les Schwab Tire Center is reduced to two lanes Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 7.

RIGHT: Mark Wallace, owner of Grunder's Equipment Repair on North U.S. Highway 101, points to a purple line showing how high the water was in his shop last week. Below it is a red line showing the water level in the 1996 flood.



# The Flood of 2006



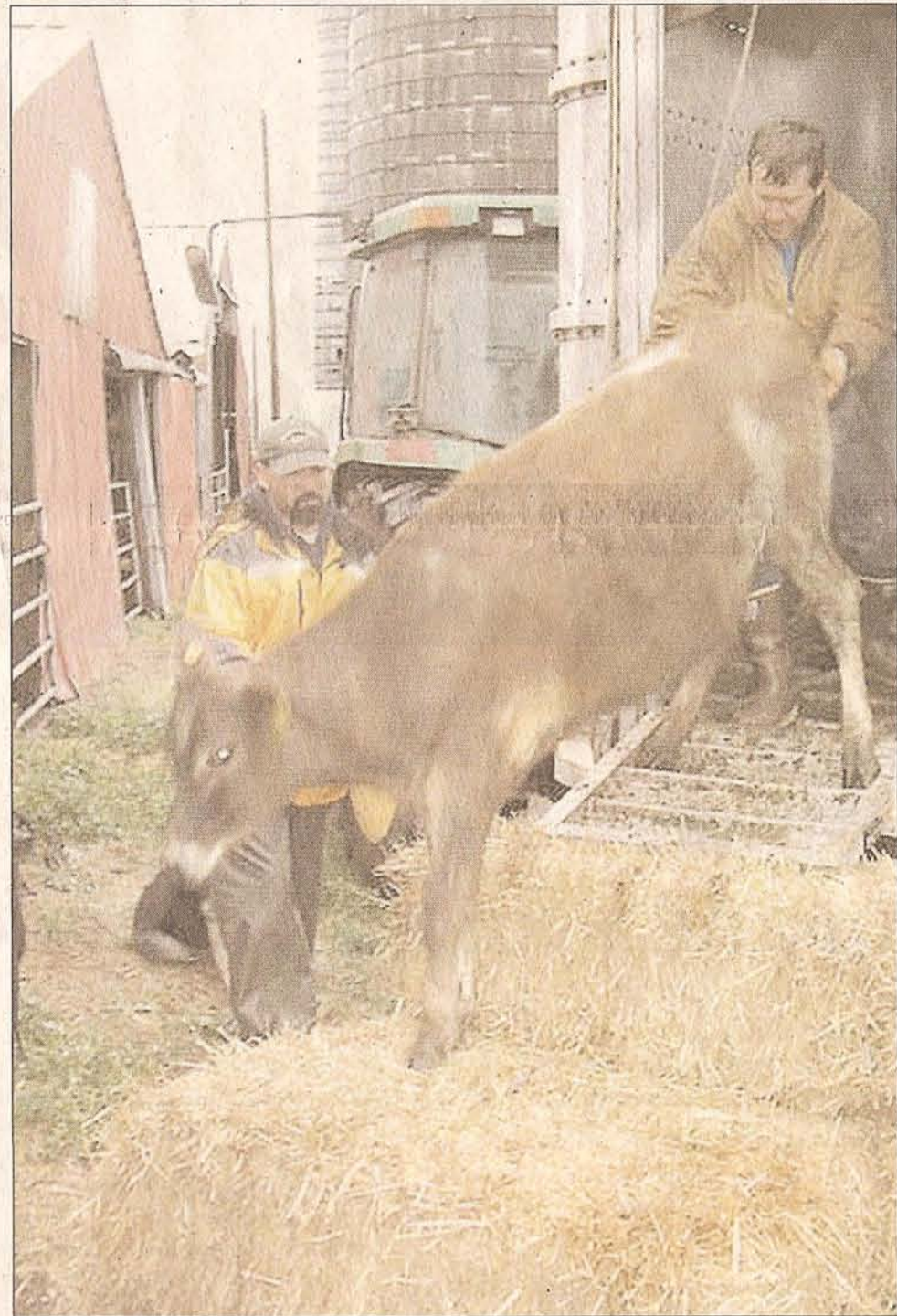
DENISE PORTER/HEADLIGHT-HERALD  
Cows rescued from flooded pastures on the Snell family's farm, get their first meal and a dry place to stay at the neighboring Matajeck Farm.

## On the farms: stranded cows, rescues, debris



JOE HAPP/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

ABOVE: A solitary cow stands in a pasture near Netarts Highway as the flood waters begin to recede.



DENISE PORTER/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

RIGHT: Vance Rodrigues, left, and Kevin Thomas offload one of the Snell family's cows from a trailer at the Matajeck Farm.



JOE HAPP/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

A large tree stump sits in a pasture on a farm owned by Mike and Sharon Shreve in the aftermath of last week's flood. Three RVs from the Wilson River RV Park also ended up in nearby pastures.

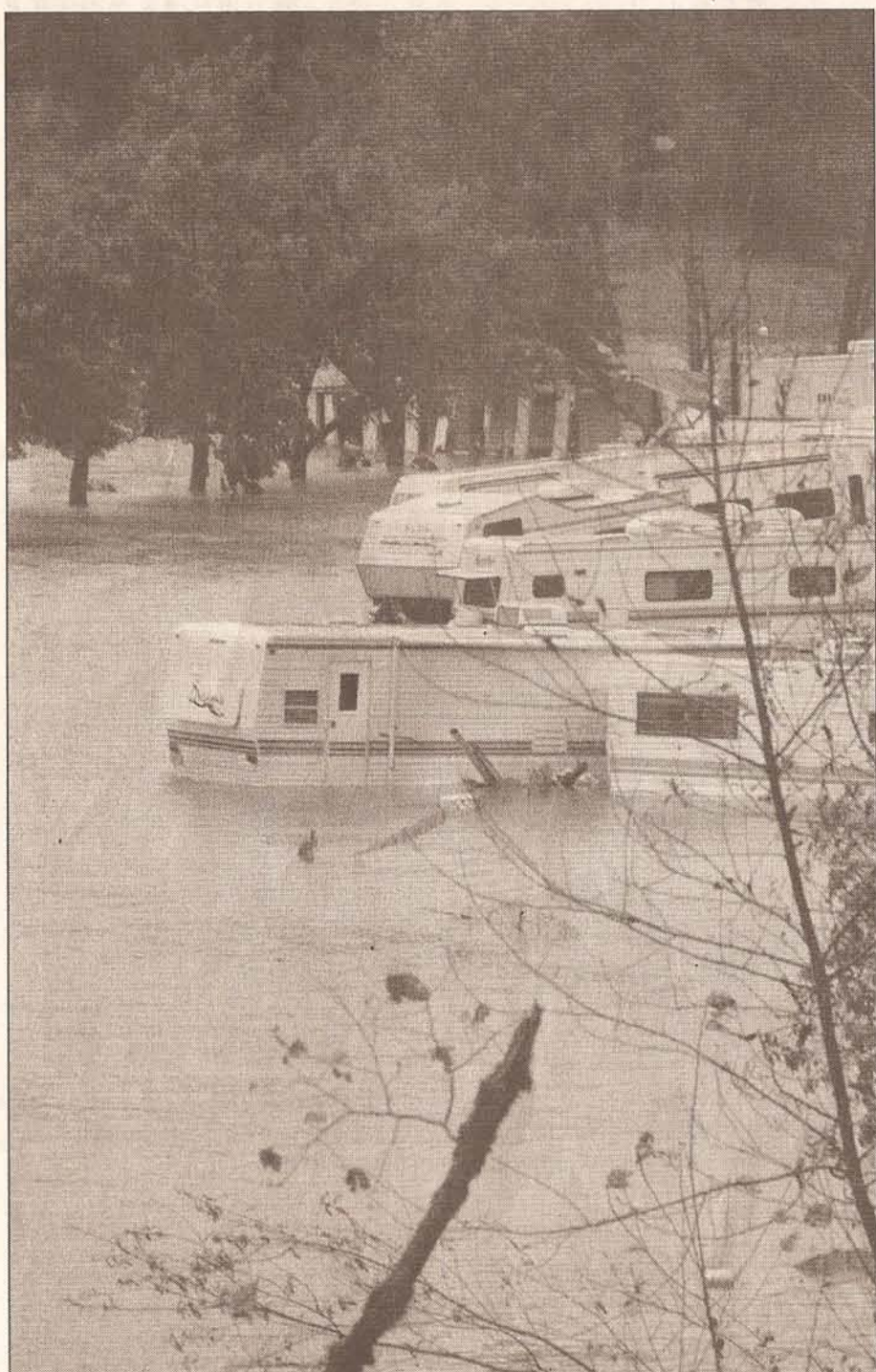


# The Flood of 2006



Raging waters of the Wilson River tear through the office and parking area at the Wilson River RV Park Monday, Nov. 6. The office was ripped off its foundation and washed several feet downstream.

## At the RV park: High water and heroism



The worst moment in last Monday's flooding for Wilson River RV Park owner Wally Voigt came when the raging river tore the park's cinderblock office from its foundation, turned it around 90 degrees and washed it several feet downstream.

"I was sitting in my jeep and I watched it go," said Voigt, a Lincoln City resident who has owned the 26-year-old park for the last four years. "It's a total loss. But I'm just happy that no one was injured or killed."

At least a dozen people were rescued at the park by Tillamook Fire District volunteers and Tillamook County Sheriff's deputies.

Voigt said he and park assistant manager Tony Lauricella started putting office items up on table tops as soon as they heard the river would crest at about 17 feet, which is 2 feet below the spot where the office had been.

"We'd have been OK," he said. But, the river crested at 22.8 feet. "It came up 8 feet in four

hours."

At least four of the 60 units that were in the park at the time washed away downstream. The park has a capacity of 70 units, Lauricella said.

The park sustained considerable damage to its water, septic and, electrical systems and its roads, he said.

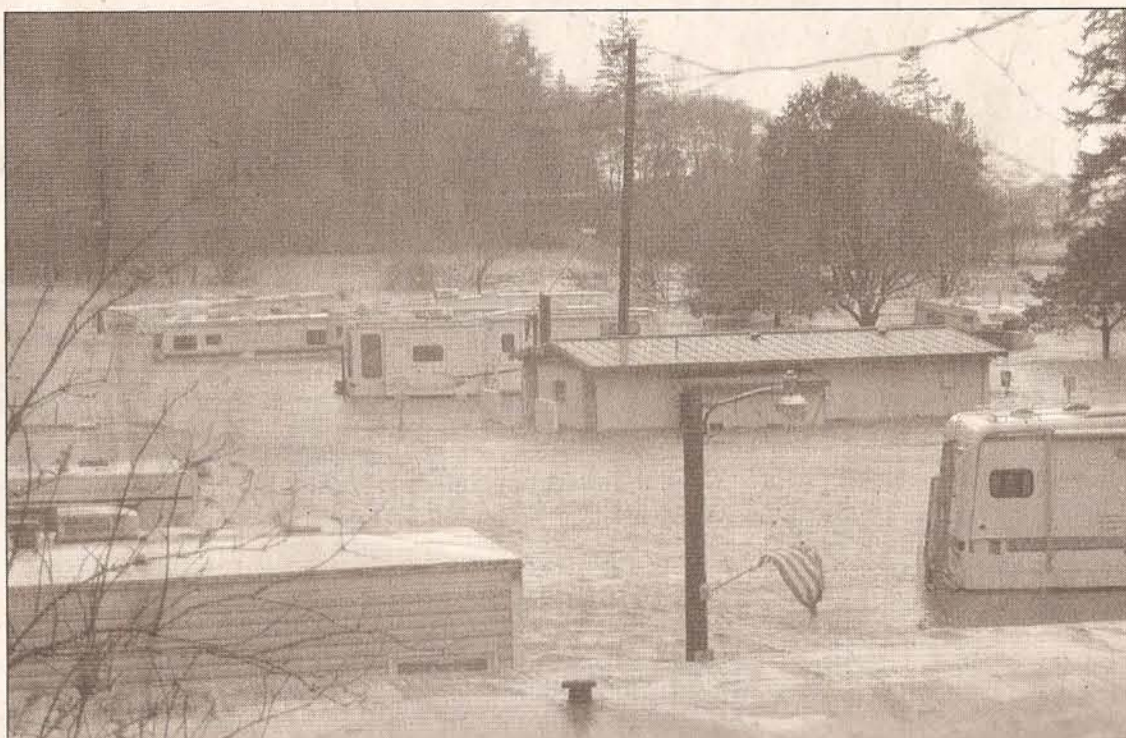
Voigt said he will rebuild and estimated the effort will take him about three months and \$300,000.

Voigt said people in the community have been "totally wonderful" to him in the aftermath of the disaster.

"People I don't even know stopped by and offered to help."

He said he is particularly grateful to Donny Burden of Burden's Muffler & Towing, who pulled several rigs out of the park before and after it was inundated, and the owners of the Blue Moon Café in Tillamook, who provided food and comfort.

HEADLIGHT-HERALD PHOTOS BY JOE HAPP



ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: RV units that couldn't be pulled out in time stand in about 2 feet of water Monday, Nov. 6, at the Wilson River RV Park.

AT LEFT: Adding insult to injury, a mud slide blocks SR 6 Tuesday, Nov. 7, preventing park residents who spent the night in a Red Cross shelter in Tillamook from getting back to check on their units.

# The Flood of 2006



SHASTA KEARNS MOORE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Homes along Brooten Road in Pacific City look as though they are standing in the ocean during the height of last week's flooding.

## S. County gets wet, but escapes serious harm



SHASTA KEARNS MOORE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Joe Hay and his family survey the floodwaters outside their house on Brooten Road in Pacific City.



SHASTA KEARNS MOORE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Washed out section of Bixby Road in Blaine gets repaired with a quick assist from Randy Haltiner, who builds logging roads for a living.



CATHY ROGERS/FOR THE HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Flood waters lap at the base of the new prefab building recently installed on U.S. Highway 101 by the Shell Game owners in Cloverdale. The original Shell Game building was destroyed several months ago in a fatal truck accident.

# The Flood of 2006



Even though the sun is out Thursday, Nov. 9, floodwaters still cover McDonald Road and adjacent fields in North Tillamook County.

MEGHAN MCGUIRE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

## Nehalem River flooding soaks North County



MEGHAN MCGUIRE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

ABOVE: Damaged carpeting is piled up outside the Nehalem Antique Mall, which suffered nearly \$20,000 worth of damage to its structure and contents.

CAROL DEMETER/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

LEFT: A view of downtown Nehalem from 9th and A streets at the height of the flood.



MEGHAN MCGUIRE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

Jordan Neahring, left, and Tim Hill take a break Sunday, Nov. 12, after clearing away wood debris that cluttered a stretch of McDonald Road near the Nehalem River. Neahring lives on a nearby dairy farm and Hill lives in Nehalem. The two said they wanted to help with flood relief any way they could.

# The Flood of 2006

## First steps toward recovery

Federal, state and county officials met in a telephone conference Wednesday, Nov. 8, to begin the process of estimating damages so the county could qualify for state and, possibly, federal aid. Gov. Ted Kulongoski declared the county a disaster area that day.

On Friday, U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley, State Sen. Betsy Johnson and State Rep. Deborah Boone toured flood damaged farms and businesses with state and county officials and heard preliminary reports from County Emergency Management Director Tom Manning and Commissioner Mark Labhart.



JOE HAPP/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

**TOP:** With a rainbow glistening in the background, flight suit-clad U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley, left, and County Commissioner Mark Labhart board a Coast Guard helicopter for a brief aerial tour of areas hard hit by last week's flooding.

**FAR RIGHT:** Derrick Josi points out flood damage on the family farm to State Sen. Betsy Johnson. With them are, from left, State Emergency Management Director Ken Murphy, State Rep. Deborah Boone and Hooley.

**RIGHT:** County Commissioner Mark Labhart shares aerial photos of flood damaged parts of Tillamook County with U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley at an impromptu briefing session with officials at the Tillamook Airport.



# Flooding takes its toll



County's losses at \$4.25 million, but officials believe it will go a lot higher

By JOE HAPP  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — County officials have so far estimated the loss from last week's record-setting floods at about \$4.25 million.

"We all think that's on the low side," said Tillamook County Sheriff Todd Anderson, emerging from a meeting with Emergency Management Director Tom Manning and others Monday morning.

Early estimates of financial losses suffered by businesses in the county were in the range of \$2.2 million,

but officials

noted that

figure is

bound to go

higher

because so

many busi-

nesses have

had to close

down to

make repairs

and replace

damaged

inventories.

Farm losses due to lost livestock and damage to artichoke, cranberry and floral acreage was pegged initially at \$700,000. That's another figure that is expected to go higher because of costs to farmers for damaged equipment and fencing, debris removal and treatment of diseases picked up by cattle from drinking contaminated floodwater.

Reports so far have placed the number of lost cows, heifers and calves in the county at about 100.

Officials said there have been no estimates yet of the amount of damage inflicted on private residences in the county.

Damage to county roads was estimated at a little more than \$1 million, Anderson said.

County and city government agencies estimated losses from damage to water control facilities, public buildings, utility systems and the cost of debris removal at nearly \$280,000.

Flood damage to tracks on the Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad was estimated at \$500,000 or more. The trains have not been

**MORE FLOOD COVERAGE:**  
Impacts on business in North, Central and South County  
**Pages A11-12**

## Central farms hardest hit by the deluge

North County dairies affected, too, but it wasn't as bad as floods in '96

By DENISE PORTER  
Agriculture Correspondent

TILLAMOOK — Dairy farmers in the central part of the county bore the brunt of the damage in last week's record-setting floods, while North County dairies, hardest hit by the 1996 flooding, fared reasonably well this time.

About 100 animals were reported lost last week, most of them on farms

along the Trask and Tillamook rivers.

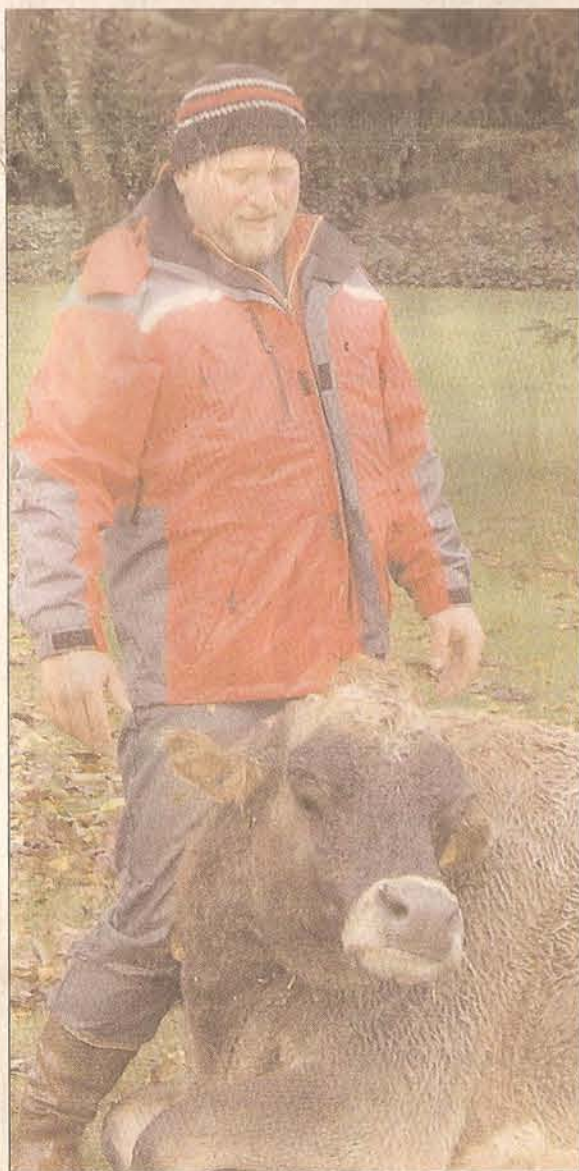
Farms along the upper Wilson River — including Wilsonview Dairy, owned by the Josi family; Shreve's Triple K Dairy, owned by Mike and Sharon Shreve; Sander Dairy, owned by Bernie Sander, and leased acreage across the river from Sander's farm used by George Prince as pasture and heifer facilities — sustained considerable physical damage.

All four experienced deposits of several feet of silt in pastures, as well as massive amounts of logs and debris that ripped through fences and came to rest in pastures. Three RV's that

**RELATED STORY:** Family reels from loss of animals in flood.

Page A8

See FARMS, Page A8



**ABOVE:** John Fjarlie rides in a skid loader with Flint, one of the Snell family's prized cows, after rescuing her during last week's floods.

**LEFT:** Fjarlie with Flint on higher, drier ground. A story on the rescue efforts at the Snell farm appears on Page A8.

DENISE PORTER  
HEADLIGHT-HERALD

See FLOOD TOLL, Page A15

## FARMS

Continued from Page A1

were swept away from the Wilson River RV Park to the east on SR 6 ended up on the Josi and Prince properties.

The Josis had to dump nearly 9,000 pounds of milk and, along with Sander, had floodwater running through all their barns.

A logjam ruined Sander's well system, causing the loss of fresh, clean water for his cows and his home for 24 hours.

"If it wasn't for my family, friends and neighbors, it would have been really ugly," Sander said. "The worst for me will come in the next month. God knows what bugs my cows have picked up from drinking that (flood) water."

Stock losses were the most severe along the Trask and Tillamook rivers.

Jack Snell, at the Candylane Dairy, said he lost 67 heifers and Liz Clausen, who milks 160 cows on Tone Road, lost 15 milk cows and five heifers.

Eric Bodie, Clausen's neighbor, had water over his entire farm and he and Clausen were unable to milk their cows for several days. Bodie estimated he lost 2,500 pounds of milk.

Damage was extensive at Clausen's farm, which is situated on a bend of the Trask River. The dairy was owned by Tom Blaser in 1996 and he lost nearly his entire herd that year. Since then, a cow pad — a raised area of rock with a steep ramp that cows can be moved onto during floods — had been installed but, according to Clausen, it wasn't high enough to keep all her cows safe this time.

"The cow pad was built to 1996 flood heights and this

water was higher," Clausen said. "However, if we hadn't had the pad, we would have lost everything."

Farther down Tone Road, dairymen Butch Schriber and Dan Landolt, were able to evacuate their herds.

"I am so glad all of those men came to take our cows out of the barns," said Schriber's wife, Cheryl. "Bless their hearts!"

Schriber's 100 cattle, as well as the young stock were split between the Coppini Dairy and Fairview Acres, owned by the Obrist family. Landolt's 65 milk cows and all of the young stock were housed at his son Ryan's farm on Trask River Road.

Ten heifers were reported lost at a property along Ekroth Road on the Miami River near Garibaldi. The property is owned by Chuck Carlson and is leased to a family which is raising replacement heifers, according to Bethany Roach, a volunteer who helped rescue 30 of the farm's 60 heifers. Ten to 15 neighbors and volunteers spent two days in the rescue attempt.

Almost no damage, except for the usual water through the barns, was reported along the Kilchis River.

"We did fine for some reason," said lower Kilchis dairyman Sean Doohar.

The same was true for some farms along the Wilson.

Misty Meadows Dairy, owned by the Hogan family, had water running through its barns up to the cows' udders, but lost no animals. The Hogan family lost several hundred head of cattle in the 1996 flood.

"The hard work we've done the last several years has paid off," said Rita Hogan. "We reinforced our dike and made it three times higher than it was prior to 1996. We also invested in sev-

eral small pumps, as well as a \$15,000 pump that moves 15,000 gallons of water per minute. At times, the large amount of money we spent was hard to justify, but now we realize how fortunate we are."

North County farms fared relatively well last week.

"It was so much easier for us this time," said dairywoman Joan Marti, whose farm is located along the Nehalem River. "We've certainly had it worse before."

Late last week, Marti said the flooding prevented her cows from being milked for about 30 hours, but that it was too early to tell if she will lose any cows because of the severe mastitis problems that can result from the lack of milking.

She said her cows' average production last week was down by 18 pounds of milk each from the week prior to the flood, a significant loss. She said the farm lost 3,000 pounds of milk while the cows couldn't be milked.

Marti's neighbor, Mike Whalen, also lost 3,000 pounds of milk and sustained water damage in two employee houses.

Steve Neahring, another dairyman severely affected in the flood of 1996, lost only five heifers and had some equipment damage.

All three dairy farmers agreed that putting in cow pads was instrumental to the improved conditions during this flood.

South County farms fared especially well. Only minimal damage to fences and fields was reported, and some had small amounts of water through barns and buildings.

Farmers near Pacific City reported that the money they spent after the 1996 flood raising their homes and installing cow pads paid off.

## Most animals saved at Blue Heron

By LINDA L. EDIGER  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — The majority of the animals at the Blue Heron French Cheese Co. petting pen were saved during the flood.

"I couldn't sleep. I just kept thinking of those animals," said Blue Heron co-owner Denny Pastega. Caught in the middle of the flood on U.S. 101, Pastega feared devastating results for his store and the animals.

"I finally got a Pepsi semi-truck through the flood around midnight Monday," said Pastega, against the advice of local law enforcement. It was scary, said Pastega. "The water was moving pretty fast."

The petting pen lost two sheep and two goats. "They were smaller. The water would have been way over their heads," said Paste-

ga, who also discovered a foot of water in the store. "We've lost at least a quarter of a million in inventory," he said. At this early report, he was also unsure of the integrity of the building. "In 1996, we only had about 4 inches of water in the store," Pastega said.

"I was so happy when I saw one of the llamas and then a horse. I thought they'd be all dead."

He credits the help of a group of volunteers, including Coast Guard personnel, and especially local contractors Mychal Bush and Jason Hahn, and Pepsi employee Scott Conrad. "The animals would be dead if it wouldn't have been for them helping to move them out," said Pastega.

More than 25 animals are being housed at the Tillamook

County Fairgrounds.

"They're in the horse barns and have been fed and watered," Pastega said. "I'm happy."

Tuesday morning, Nov. 7, he said the Blue Heron French Cheese Co., will be down for "at least a month."

Pastega hopes, that spurred by this incident, the proper permits will be approved so he "can build an animal pad, so this doesn't happen again."

"Thank, God, we had no loss of (human) life," said Pastega. "We lost our chickens, but the guineas roosted in the trellis. We threw a lot feed out to the ducks and geese, who are very happy with all this water." The longhorn cattle are still on the property. "They're on high ground and we fed them well," said Pastega Tuesday morning before the water started to recede.

## Homeowners warned of storm-damage repair scams

Recent storms packing Mother Nature's fury have damaged many homes and structures. The Construction Contractors Board (CCB) warns Oregon homeowners not to fall victim to thieves pretending to be legitimate contractors. Homeowners whose property is damaged can be prime targets.

The CCB has the following advice:

Be extra careful of door-to-door repair solicitations, contractors using vehicles with out-of-state license plates and "too-good-to-be-true" bids. Don't pay 100 percent of the bill before the repairs are properly completed.

If you need roofs, windows, fences, or patio coverings fixed, or if you've got damaged trees that should be removed, "Stay away from unlicensed contractors," said CCB Enforcement Manager Richard Blank. "Scam artists come out of the woodwork after severe weather to prey on people anxious to get their home fixed because more winter weather is on the way."

CCB urges property owners to make sure the contractor is properly licensed. A license offers some financial protection to consumers through the business' CCB bond and insurance. Consumers should verify a contractor's CCB license at [www.oregon.gov/CCB](http://www.oregon.gov/CCB), or (503) 378-4621 before signing a home repair contract or paying any money.

The CCB is the state agency licensing more than 43,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB. Free consumer publications with helpful tips are available at the CCB's Web site and (503) 378-4621.

# FLOOD TOLL: County may have good chance for federal disaster aid

Continued from Page A1  
 running since last week, which means the Stimson and Tillamook lumber companies have not been able to ship any lumber out of the county.

Port Manager Jack Crider said last week he expected to be able to get "a skeleton" line operating by this Friday.

In addition, an estimated \$210,000 worth of damage to dikes, levees and tide gates was reported by the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District.

Tillamook County Commissioner Mark Labhart said he thinks the chances of getting federal disaster aid as a result of last week's weather are good.

"The state has to spend \$20 million on damages before it can qualify for federal aid," the commissioner said. "Damage from the flooding to Highway 35 near Mt. Hood was \$20 million all by itself."

Labhart said the state will combine Tillamook County's disaster estimates with those of other counties and state agencies and submit them to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

The next step would be for FEMA officials to do their own assessment and verify those reports before deciding on whether the state qualifies for federal disaster relief.

If that relief is granted, he said, the federal government would pay 75 percent of the recovery costs borne by public agencies.

He added that a federal disaster declaration might qualify private individuals for grants of as much as \$24,000 per household to help pay for flood damages.

County Emergency Manage-

ment officials closed down the operations center Monday, Anderson said. It had been operating since Sunday, Nov. 5, staffed by Manning, his assistant JoAnne Spencer, Undersheriff Terry Huntsman and 11 volunteers.

The volunteers, Anderson said, put in 268 hours and Manning, Spencer and Huntsman worked a combined total of 250 hours.

Sheriff's Office deputies logged more than 600 hours on flood-related duties from Nov. 6 through 9, including 35 water rescues.

More than 100 water rescues were performed last week by first responders, including sheriff's deputies, Tillamook Police, Oregon State Police and Tillamook Fire District and U.S. Coast Guard personnel, Anderson added.

Anderson said Emergency Management officials also met Monday with representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to plan repairs necessitated by the flood and prepare for more winter storms.

Meanwhile, Tillamook County residents were reacting angrily to remarks last week by Gov. Ted Kulongoski in a post-election press conference, part of which was broadcast over a couple of Portland TV stations.

To a question about whether he was pleased or not pleased by state officials' reaction to the coastal flooding, the governor gave a rambling answer that included this: "Because of the way television treats weather — the crisis team — you have actually elevated the weather — to a national crisis. And the truth of it is it has been raining in Oregon for years and years and years ... This is nothing new."

Loten Hooley, president of



A street sign washed up with logs and debris by the north Barview jetty after last week's storm.

Rosenberg Builders Supply, which sustained heavy water damage in last week's flood, sent Kulongoski a letter.

"As I shovel mud and take wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow to the dumpster, I am reminded of your comments ... Thank you for those kind words."

"We have paid a price. A large one. At Rosenberg's, we installed flood walls, extensive diking, and large diesel pumps to prevent the damage caused by the Wilson River coming up and going down. We were dry inside at 6:30 p.m. Monday. We had 3.5 feet of water outside our building; you could

see out our windows into the water. Yet we were dry."

"Not until the water kept rising and breached our flood walls were we in danger of flooding. According to you, it is our fault. The water was 8 to 12 inches above the FEMA 500-year flood level. Now, Ted, you haven't been around that long."

"We will clean, repair, and reinforce our flood prevention system out of our own pockets. We will learn from this situation. We will survive and thrive

in Tillamook.

"What will you learn from this? Give us permission to dredge. Not studies. Not money. We will raise the money. Just permission. That is all we want."

Local farmers and others have been trying without success for years to get gravel bars that have built up in local rivers dredged, but have run into bureaucratic roadblocks from a number of state and federal agencies.

### Food Sensitivity Screening

Dr. Brenda McCool



# Family reels from loss of animals in flood

## Neighbors, others work tirelessly in rescue effort

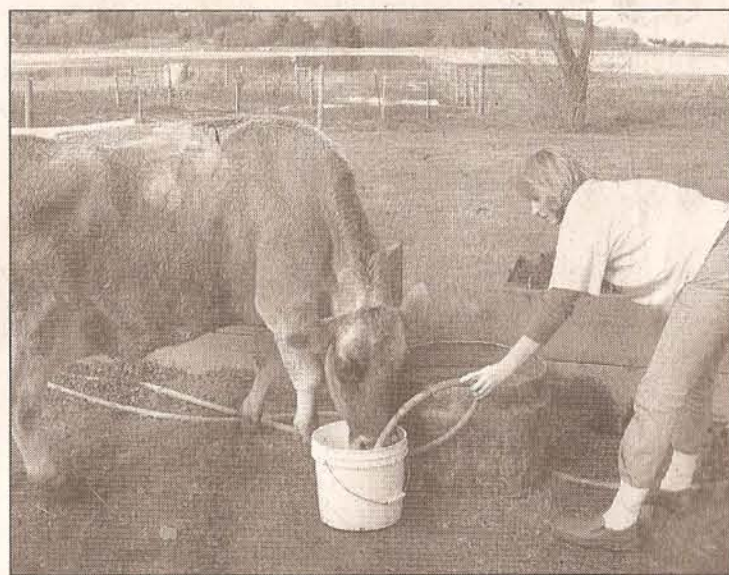
By DENISE PORTER  
 Agriculture Correspondent

TILLAMOOK — As the rampaging waters of the Trask and Tillamook rivers rose last week, the Snell family was attempting to save 90 head of yearling Jersey heifers from 6 feet of water in the pastures of their CandyLane Dairy on U.S. 101, south of here.

At the end of the three-day rescue attempt, the farm family had recovered only 33 animals.

KaShan Snell said the financial blow was awful. Early estimates of the value of the animals lost ranged \$1,000 to \$1,800 each, or \$34,000-\$84,000. Many of the heifers were pregnant and due to calve in the next few months.

But the emotional blow was even more detrimental.



Kim Snell gives Paulette a drink of fresh water as floodwaters inundate pastures on the family farm.

"We know every calf on this farm and Jack, my father-in-law, has spent his lifetime breeding quality cattle," she said. "Genetically, we've lost a lot more than the monetary

value of the heifers. We've all cried."

The dairy's heifer pastures and barns, located on the old Hathaway farm at the end of Matejcek Road, were purchased

recently but the family has been leasing the property for several years. The land is bordered by both the Trask and Tillamook Rivers and is a well-known flood plain within the county.

Last week's was the first serious flood the Snell family had encountered.

"We were busy helping our neighbors farther down Tone Road (who had lost cattle in 1996) evacuate their cows because we knew they would lose them if the cows weren't evacuated," said Jack Snell, owner of the dairy. "When I got home that evening, there was water coming across Highway 101 into our main dairy where the milk cows were. Even then, we thought the heifers were OK."

Snell said that, once the main dairy was secured, he drove to the heifer farm and realized the water had risen much faster than he'd anticipated. He and his son, Ben, immediately began trying to save the 12- to 20-month-old heifers.

Rescue efforts went on for nearly three days with help from Search and Rescue, the Salvation Army, the Humane Society, many community volunteers, and nearly 25 dairymen from across Central County.

Nearly 40 other heifers that were in a barn when waters began to rise were brought safely to the neighboring Matejcek Dairy, owned by the Rocha family.

Two cows, ages 21 and 22, were also rescued from the barn. The cows, named Flint and Paulette, are "retired" milk cows Snell had purchased for their outstanding genetics nearly 20 years ago. They are special pets of Snell's 14-year-old daughter, Katie, and his wife, Kim.

The search teams then began the daunting task of floating through the 6 feet of water in search of the 90 heifers still on the pastureland. The task, Snell said, was difficult at best because the heifers would panic, causing the boats to tot-

ter and become unstable. In addition, the water was so high on the first day it was hard to see where the fences for the pastures were.

Several eyewitnesses observed heifers spread across pastureland from nearby farms and one reported seeing several heifers swept into the rivers.

One volunteer held onto a struggling heifer with his hands to keep her from falling into the fast-moving Trask river for nearly 20 minutes before exhaustion forced him to let go.

A group of about 15 heifers was found and safely rescued from neighbor Butch Schriber's dike the second day.

Snell said he was thankful for the help of all of his neighbors and the volunteers who worked long hours to save the animals.

"I don't know of any other community where the farmers and the neighbors are so willing to help in times of crisis. We are all grateful."

# N. County families cope with flooding setbacks

By MEGHAN MCGUIRE  
 Headlight-Herald Staff

NEHALEM — While the Nehalem river dumped into neighboring fields, numerous families were driven from their homes during last week's floods. It was late in the week by the time many were able to return home, some to severe damage and loss of property.

One of these families was Maria and Severo Pulido and their four children, who live on McKimmens Road in a house on the property of Grazing West Dairy, where Severo works.

They stayed at the Old Wheeler Hotel Monday and Tuesday night as floodwaters blocked access to their home. Luckily, their house was raised after the flood of 1996, and water did not enter.

However, Maria's mother, Jaynee Morin, and her family weren't as fortunate. The entire first story of their home at River End Dairy on Tohl Ranch Road was flooded, destroying all their furniture and flooring.

"Five of our cats disappeared," said Morin, tearfully last Saturday at her daughter's house, while she waited for insurance adjusters to assess the damage.

So much debris was left on the road to their house, Morin's husband, Agustin Sandoval, was not able to walk in through the water to assess the damage until Friday, when they were able to get a truck in, she said. They then began to rip out carpeting and move the soaked couches outside.

Monday morning, Maria, who has worked at the Mohler Co-Op Store for six years, warned commuters that Miami-Foley Road was closed. As the forecast worsened, she called her husband and told him not to send their two younger children, Carlos and Irene, to school at Nehalem Elementary. He was able to drive the kids out in his truck, through the quickly rising water, now up past the wheel wells.

Morin picked up the two older girls, Carlee and Katee



Jayne Morin, left, Nina Marie Sandoval, Carlee Pulido, Carlos Pulido, Mario Morin, and Katee Morin stand on the deck of the Morin family house, which last week was inaccessible due to flood water.

MEGHAN MCGUIRE  
 HEADLIGHT-HERALD

and her son, Mario Morin, from Neah-Kah-Nie High School, and headed to Tillamook for supplies. By 2:30 p.m., Mohler

Co-Op was closed and the family was reunited in Wheeler.

All together, the family spent more than \$300 for lodging dur-

ing the ordeal. Maria's car was submerged in the flood, and the damage to her mother's house is unknown.

Luckily, their bedrooms are located upstairs, where they stored many of their clothes and personal effects, said Morin.

## N. Main businesses hit hard by flooding

### Employees and owners do battle with high water, cleanup chores

BY SHASTA KEARNS MOORE AND JOE HAPP  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — "Business as usual" is a phrase unlikely to be heard for some time along North U.S. Highway 101 here in the wake of last week's record-setting floods.

Rosenberg Builders Supply managed to reopen within a few days of the deluge last Monday and Tuesday that sent higher water levels than they experienced in the 1996 floods surging into local businesses.

But that wasn't the case everywhere and one local business owner, Jeff Johnston of the Dairy Queen, was still pondering whether he would be able to reopen at all.

"We fought the whole way," said Rosenberg's owner Loten Hooley.

He said nine of the stores 50-plus employees spent the first night of the flood moving as much out of the way of the rising waters as they could.

By Thursday evening, they and about 20 other employees and volunteers were still hosing off silt, pumping out water, squeezegeeing the floors and wiping down everything that had been less than 3 feet off the ground.

"It takes lots of water and lots of elbow grease," noted employee Diana Crouch, who said she had cleaned up after six previous floods. But, she added, "This (store) is a big part of the community and we're not going to give up on that."

Since the 1996 flood, Hooley said, Rosenberg's had spent about \$100,000 putting a dike around the store.

"If the water had been 4 inches lower or if we had been 4 inches higher, we'd have been fine," he said.

Water was said to have been at least 3 feet high in the store and warehouse at the height of the flooding.

"Those reports you heard about desks floating around in here were true," said Laura Swanson, who handles advertising and public relations for the store.

Hooley estimated damages to be between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Next door, Johnston said 5 feet of water washed through the Dairy Queen, damaging all of the furniture and most of the equipment.

He said the damage was severe enough to cause him to consider closing the business, which his family has owned for 46 years.

"It's been through several generations," he said. "I'm hiring the kids of the people I first



JOE HAPP/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

A worker power washes mud from the parking lot last Friday at The Cash Company on North Main Avenue in Tillamook.

hired in 1978," when he became manager.

In preparation for the flood, Johnston said he and his crew lifted what they could out of the range of the 1996 flood level, but in some cases it wasn't enough.

Johnston said if he does reopen, he will have to replace all of the furniture, just as he did in 1996. That will take about six weeks, he said.

Johnston expects the damage to be "substantially above" the cost of the 1996 flood, which totaled about \$200,000.

But, he added, the outpouring of the community has made it easier to absorb.

"It's amazing," he said. "Strangers I don't even know are calling me up to see how they can help. This is when the community really comes together."

Mark Wallace, at Grunder Equipment Repair, said floodwaters reached a height of 64 inches there and left a layer of mud and silt an inch thick throughout much of the business's shop area.

"You can't just not clean it up," Wallace said, estimating the damage to be in the

\$100,000 range, including about \$60,000 in computer and electrical equipment.

Stumpy Borough, owner of Tillamook RV Repair and Sales on Hadley Road near 101, said he had five-and-a-half feet of water at his facility and the estimated damage to merchandise and repairs to the building will cost more than \$100,000.

All the businesses in the North Park Plaza at 1000 North Main suffered damage and will need refurbishing said co-owner Jon Cummings. The cost of the repairs will be "astronomical," Cummings said, adding that it was too early to estimate a total figure.

The Fern Restaurant had 16 inches of water in it, according to its owner, B.J. Whitehead.

By late last week, she said, hired help and several volunteers had already ripped out the furniture, floorboards, sheet rock and wall insulation, which will all be replaced in the next few weeks.

Whitehead said she hopes to reopen in time for Thanksgiving, but it could take longer. Whitehead said she lost 3,000 pounds of food, but no equipment in the flood.

## Stores in Nehalem suffer losses, face big cleanup job

BY MEGHAN MCGUIRE  
Headlight-Herald Staff

NEHALEM — The anxiety levels of local business owners rose right along with the river here last Monday and Tuesday and, when the water finally subsided Wednesday, many were left with damaged goods and a mountain of cleanup work looming before them.

While many buildings in Nehalem, on U.S. Highway 101 were elevated following the flood of 1996, the flood waters last week rose past the main thoroughfare on to 8th Street and seeped into businesses, such as North Coast Wallpaper, that normally stay dry.

Nehalem Food Mart and Nehalem Antique Mall, which were not raised after 1996, fought to save their stock with the help of friends, family, and volunteers.

"That's the thing about small

towns, everybody is there to help," said Vikki Smith, who founded North Coast Wallpaper 27 years ago.

Three years ago, following a bout with cancer, Smith sold her house and moved into her childhood home in Nehalem to care for her elderly mother. She stored many of her antiques and heirlooms in the back room of her store, next to City Hall. These personal possessions are much of what she lost in last week's flood.

"I've lived here all my life; it always floods in Nehalem," Smith said. "But, I didn't think it would get like this again. I couldn't believe the water was that high. I never thought we'd get another '96. That was supposed to be the big 100-year flood."

Monday morning, Smith was at Neah-Kah-Nie High School, where she also works as a trans-

sitional specialist, when the river started to rise. Smith also moonlights as a waitress at the Sea Shack in Wheeler.

"It was horrible, I was just thinking about the shop the whole time, but I knew it wasn't flooding yet," said Smith.

After students were sent home because of the high winds, rising tides and road closures, Smith was able to leave the school around noon. She was able only to take a quick look at her shop before heading home to console her mother, Helen Zagata, who is confined to a wheelchair.

From Zagata's house near Nehalem Elementary School, the two could see flood water rising downtown, said Smith.

Zagata has owned the house for 52 years, Smith said.

Early Tuesday morning,

See NEHALEM, Page A12



SHASTA KEARNS MOORE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

A mud-soaked office chair sits outside Rosenberg Builders Supply on North U.S. Highway 101. Employees and volunteers helped salvage what they could from a mass of waterlogged products piled in the parking lot.

Movietime Video will be closed for at least three weeks as a crew works to replace the floor and up to 3 feet of drywall in the store. Workers were unable to prepare for the flood and the resulting damage is expected to be more than \$60,000, with 1,100 DVDs and 750 VHS tapes lost.

"We've been asking people to hold on to their (rented) videos for the last few days because right now we don't have a place to put them," said owner Jill West, who added that soon they will be able to put them through the drop slot in the parking lot.

Honda of Tillamook at the rear of the plaza reopened last week as did the Solid Grounds Café, though both suffered damage. Marita Rockwook of Honda said the motorcycles and ATVs were undamaged.

At the Blue Heron French Cheese Co. on North 101, employees said most of the large animals — horses, cattle and llamas — were evacuated to the Tillamook County Fairgrounds on Monday before the flood waters rose too

high. Owner Denny Pastega told U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley and other state and local officials who toured the area last week that he estimated damage to the business at about \$250,000 and that he was hoping to have it open again by the first week in December.

Swanson, who also handles advertising for the Blue Heron, said about \$18,000 pounds of food was lost, including stocks of brie cheese that had been ordered for Thanksgiving.

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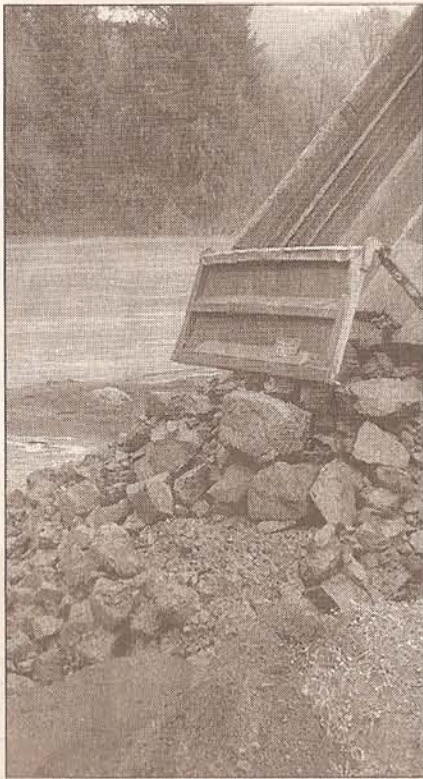
# OPINION

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Headlight-Herald

January 24, 2007

## GUEST COMMENTARY



COURTESY PHOTO

A load of rock is deposited at the Josi levy on the Wilson River.

## Levee repair project result of team work

*(The following Guest Commentary was submitted by the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District.)*

The 500-foot levee repair along the Josi property on the Wilson River is a perfect example of what the community accomplishes working together.

The levee was breached during the November flood, when thousands of cubic yards of dike material washed into fields, creating a new major river channel and causing flooding of farms, businesses and homes. The Wilson River Loop Road emergency route was closed for the first time and record flooding occurred on the northern edge of downtown Tillamook along North U.S. Highway 101.

Property owners are still assessing damages, remodeling, relocating, closing and selling because of the flood.

In December, a second flood was imminent during the windstorm. Loten Hooley, the new owner of Rosenberg

Builders Supply, said, "I don't know how we could have survived through another devastating flood. We were still trying to recover from November."

Emergency actions by Tom Manning, Tillamook County's emergency management director, and the Tillamook County Board of Commissioners prevented the second flood with the emergency levee repair that was completed during the storm.

Manning had obtained U.S. Army Corps of Engineers detailed preliminary needs immediately after the November flood. The commissioners hired an independent surveyor, Terry Jones, who completed key cross-section work in two days. Easements and agency approvals had been obtained. Using the surveying, county commissioners approved emergency funds for local drainage contractor Leo Kuntz of Nehalem Marine to do the repair.

Kuntz's crew, including workers pulled from a Northern California job, were able to complete the emergency

project in three days, moving out of the project area ahead of threatening flood waters during the wind storm.

The levee breach required some 600 dump truck loads of rock and clay, furnished by Don Aufdermauer and George Hurliman rock pits and hauled by local truckers Aufdermauer Trucking & Excavation, Robert Warren Trucks, and Frank Clausen Trucking. The Tillamook County Roads Department kept access roads maintained during hauling. Landowners Don and Bill Josi donated materials and labor.

Kuntz described the final work day. "By the time we got a layer packed into place, the water rose up to it," he said. "It went that way until the river reached its peak."

Manning said, "One more day of delay and we would have had another disaster."

Doug Rosenberg, TBHEID president said, "The quick action during an emergency shows the capability of this county. The district is very apprecia-

tive of the extra effort of the county and local contractors in solving this emergency." The commissioners' leadership, in particular Mark Labhart's project lead, saved the public from a second emergency and further economic loss.

Labhart gives credit to Nehalem Marine for several days of "standing by" before mobilizing immediately, once the repair was approved.

Manning noted, "This success was a result of excellent cooperation and collaboration from the county commissioners, the county Sheriff's Office, state and local agencies and the many local contractors and property owners."

The emergency repair, start to finish, was done in five days and under budget at \$83,574. A reimbursement of 75 percent of the cost is being requested by the county through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and 25 percent of the final cost through the City of Tillamook.

## READERS' OPEN FORUM





## County appeals FEMA's ruling on levee

BY JOE HAPP  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — County officials last week filed a formal appeal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's denial of financial aid to help pay for repairs to a Wilson River levee that failed during last November's flood.

In February, FEMA officials in Salem denied the county's request to be reimbursed for part of what it spent to fix a 500-foot section of levee located in a pasture on the dairy farm owned by Don Josi. FEMA officials said the county did not prove it had the legal responsibility to do the work.

"The denial misconstrues applica-

ble rules," county officials said in their appeal. "Emergency protective measures to save lives, to protect public health and safety and to protect improved property are eligible for assistance."

The county argued that, to be eligible for assistance, "emergency protective measures must either eliminate or lessen immediate threats to

life, public health or safety or eliminate or lessen immediate threats of significant additional damage to improved public or private property through measures which are cost effective. In the present case," the appeal continued, "both of the required elements for relief were

See FEMA, Page A5

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### FEMA

Continued from Page A1

present."

The appeal described damage done by November's record-level flooding along the Wilson River following the levee's failure.

"The flood resulted in the closure of both Wilson River Loop and Highway 101. Flood elevations on Highway 101 were up to eight feet deep, resulting in millions of dollars in damages for just that area. When flood waters receded some three days later, the area was covered in over a foot of silt and debris."

In addition, officials maintained that the simultaneous closings of both 101 and Wilson River Loop cut off all possible routes for emergency ambulance transports from North County to Tillamook County General Hospital.

The county commissioners met Dec. 11 and were told by various local experts, including County Emergency Management Director Tom Manning that, with the levee not repaired, even a nuisance flood of the type that occurs several times each winter would cause more significant damage.

The next day, the National Weather Service issued a severe weather warning for the North Oregon Coast, predicting more heavy rains, seas up to 35 feet and 100-mph winds.

"It was with a sense of urgency, then, that the board of commissioners convened again on Dec. 13 to consider a board order declaring emergency circumstances requiring the prompt execution of a public contract for the emergency repair work," the appeal said.

The appeal, citing minutes of the Dec. 13 meeting, quoted County Commissioner Mark Labhart as saying, "It should be clearly understood (that) the county is leading this effort in order to protect public resources at high risk, not to repair a pri-

**'It is clear from the photographs taken during the course of construction that the emergency work barely kept ahead of the rising flood waters.'**

County FEMA appeal

vate property levee."

According to the appeal narrative, at 3:38 p.m. that day, the National Weather Service issued a flood watch for Northwest Oregon. That became a flood warning for the Wilson River by the following afternoon.

"It is clear from the photographs taken during the course of construction that the emergency work barely kept ahead of the rising flood waters," the appeal continued. "At one point, there was less than one foot of freeboard between the water surface elevation and the top of the repair work."

The county hopes to recover 75 percent of the cost of the repair work from FEMA. Initial estimates ranged from \$125,000 to \$250,000, depending on whether suitable material for the repair could be salvaged at the site and other factors, such as the cost of additional material and whether an access road to

the levee could be maintained for hauling heavy loads. However, the work was completed at a cost of \$87,772.72.

"Were it not for this emergency repair," the appeal stated, "public and private damages would likely have been many times greater than that amount."

The county has also requested financial help for the levee repairs from the City of Tillamook. City Council has deferred action on that request, however, preferring to wait and see what the county recovers from FEMA.

Glen R. Sachtleben, FEMA's Salem-based coordinating officer for recovery operations in the area, said in March that the county has two appeal possibilities. The first is to FEMA District 10 officials in Seattle. If that fails, he said, another appeal can be bumped up to officials in Washington, D.C.

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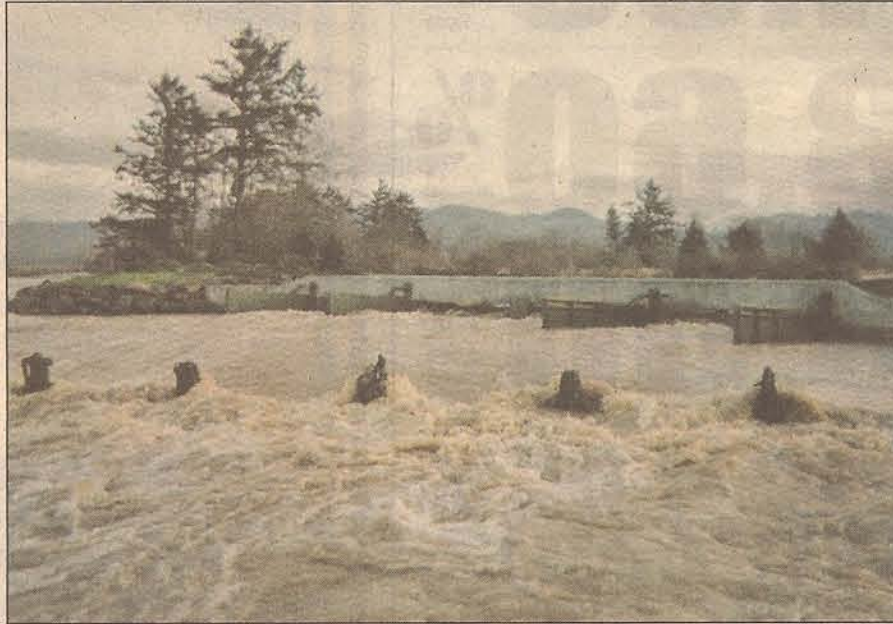
# Flood spillway passes test

By AMBER NOBE  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — Seven weeks after two busloads of people gathered to dedicate the Wilson River spillway, a lone boat motored out to the flooded site. The roar of water gushing through the open flood gates could be heard from the Cape Meares Highway in the early morning, and Leo Kuntz of Nehalem Marine knew the spillway was working.

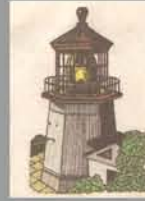
Paul Levesque, with the county, and Doug Rosenberg, president of the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District, had nothing but praise for the spillway after the

See SPILLWAY, Page A10



Water from the Wilson River rushed through the green spillway gates toward the bay last week. In the foreground, the tips of old pilings can be seen.

COURTESY PHOTO



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## SPILLWAY

Continued from Page A1

winter's first flood event.

"The spillway worked exceptionally well," Levesque said.

Some locals who've weathered the epic storms and floods of 1996, 2006 and 2007 shrugged last week's off as small potatoes. Kuntz, Levesque and Rosenberg said that can in part be attributed to the Wilson River spillway.

"We would have had a lot more water, a lot faster, and a lot longer," Rosenberg said.

### Background

Decades ago, a levee was constructed on the edge of bay, Levesque said. During heavy rains, it acts as a bathtub,

backing up water trying to make its way to the bay.

To top the levee, water would have to be at such a level it would be 4 feet deep on U.S. 101, Rosenberg said.

The simple solution is not so simple; poking holes in the levee would allow high tides to push floodwaters back into town. So, a string of 10, 6-foot diameter tide gates were installed in 1999 to help drain the so-called tub.

"They work great, but running at full capacity, they can only take less than one-fourth of what the spillway can," Rosenberg said.

When the Tillamook Oregon Solutions team convened in 2007, it designated this confluence of the Wilson and Trask rivers as a key area for flood mitigation. Last year's storms helped pave the way for a fast-tracked permitting process.

Kuntz said the timeline for the government project was impressive.

Designed and constructed by Kuntz, the spillway features four 5-foot-by-12-foot side-hinged doors. It was completed in late September at a cost of about \$317,000.

### What it does

When the Trask and Wilson rivers swell from coastal storms, the rushing waters flow through the hinged doors, which open toward the bay. When the tide comes in, those doors are then driven shut, preventing a backflow of water.

Kuntz said he was happy to see there was no resistance from the gates, which shows a design improvement over a top-hinged style.

The completion of the spillway was excellent timing, as

tides last week were at among their highest points and could have wreaked much more havoc.

Levesque expects the chief benefit of the spillway is that it can reduce the amount of time Tillamook is inundated, as it helps the rivers drain much faster than before.

Rosenberg sees the greatest boon in the fact that the spillway allows people more lead time to prepare for floods when they do come. Kuntz said it was apparent to him the water levels in major flood zones on U.S. 101 were lower this time around. Those benefiting from the structure can certainly take their pick from among these advantages.

### Up next

The Oregon Solutions team

recently issued a notice to Nehalem Marine to proceed with construction on a second spillway on Tone Road, which will further mitigate flooding on the Trask River and in south Tillamook.

Kuntz said the second spillway will be identical to that on the Wilson. The cost is esti-

mated at \$300,000; it is expected to be complete in February.

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# Flood reduction project dedicated

TILLAMOOK – The Tillamook Oregon Solutions Team met Sept. 24 to dedicate the first major project that will help reduce flooding in Tillamook. The Wilson River spillway project cost about \$317,000. The spillway is designed to move floodwaters from north Tillamook into Tillamook Bay.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson recognized the efforts of local, state and federal agencies that provided the permitting and the Legislature, which provided the funding for this first project.

In attendance were many local business persons, including members of the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District, and representatives from federal, local and state agencies, including Mike Carrier, natural resource adviser from the Governor's Office, State Rep. Debbie Boone and County Commissioner Mark Labhart.

The Oregon Solutions project team met after the dedication and heard reports on other flood reduction projects:

- The Department of Environmental Quality told the project team a permit will be issued soon, and work can begin, on the Tone Road spillway project, which is similar to the Wilson River spillway but located at the end of Tone Road. The spillway will remove flood waters from the south end of Tillamook into the Trask River quicker. Cost for this spillway is estimated at \$300,000.

- The project team voted to accept the request from the Tillamook City Council to assist with the update of the Tillamook Flood Mitigation Plan.



AMBER NOBE/HEADLIGHT-HERALD

**Community leaders gather to dedicate the Oregon Solutions Wilson River spillway project in Tillamook last week.**

- The project team voted to take on a new project along the length of Holden Creek in south Tillamook and submit it to the design team for further work. The Holden Creek project is designed to reduce flooding, improve water quality and improve fish habitat. The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is also looking into provided technical and financial assistance on this project.

- The project team heard a report from David Barbour about the new digital terrain mapping that is happening soon along the entire Tillamook County coastline. This new topographic maps will make it easy to map the flood plain and help with updates for tsunami flood inundation zones.

Mark Labhart, Tillamook County commissioner and co-convenor of the Oregon Solutions Tillamook, project summed it up when he said to the project team: "This group of local citizens, business leaders, city, county, state and federal officials are working well together to address



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important flooding issues. We need to keep at it and then expand into other parts of the county to address important flooding concerns there also."