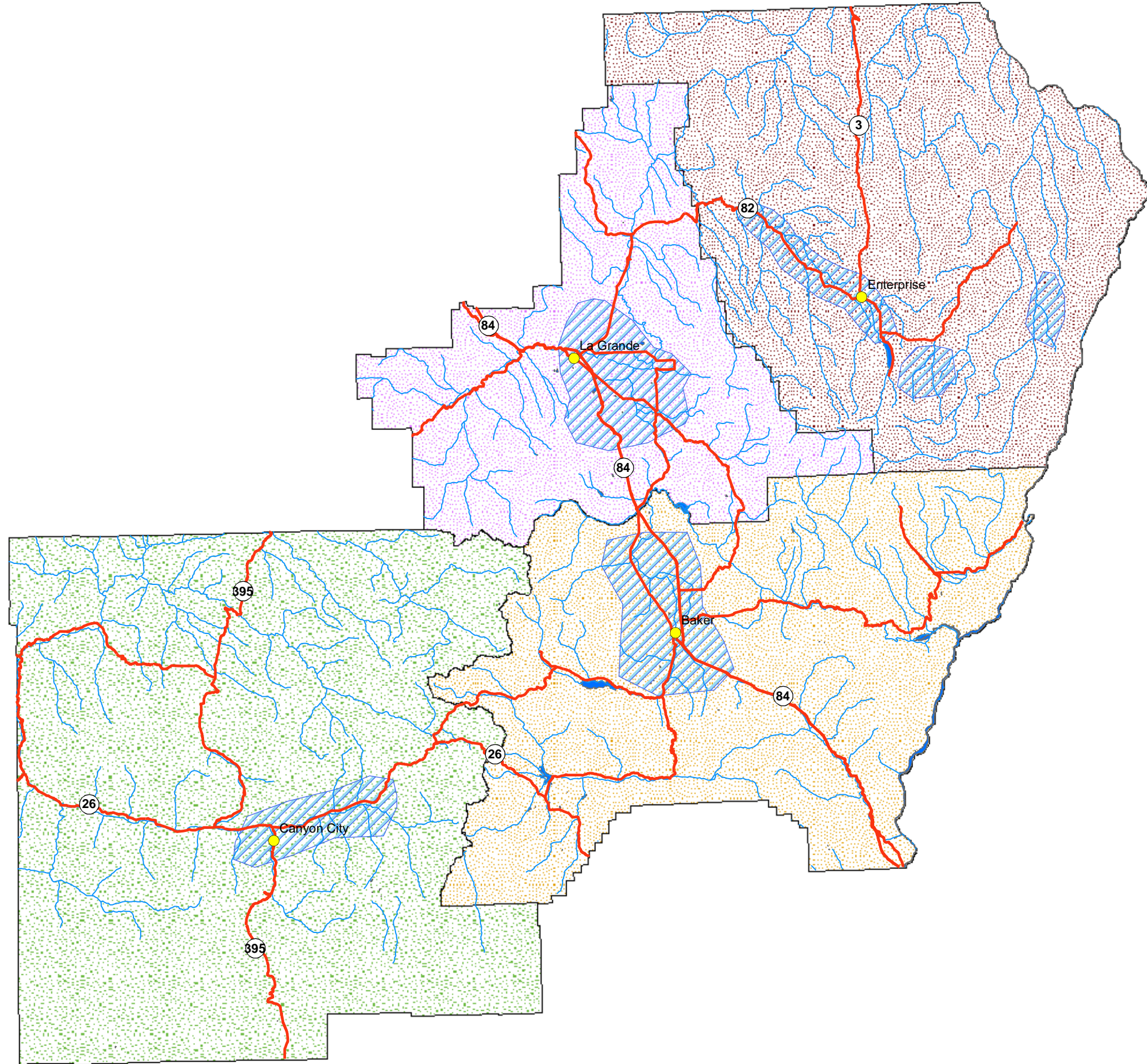


Hazard Annex

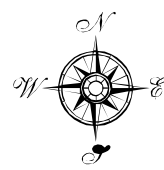
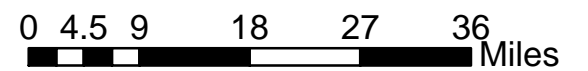
Wind Storm

Northeast Oregon Natural Hazard Risk Reduction Plan Damaging Winds



Legend

- County Seats
- Roads
- Streams
- ▨ Wind Damaged Areas
- Lakes
- Baker
- Grant
- Union
- Wallowa



Data Sources: County boundaries, county seats, streams and lakes are from the Oregon Geospatial Data Clearinghouse. Critical and Essential facility data was provided by each individual county. Roads are from Oregon Dept. of Transportation. Power lines and Airstrips are from Oregon Department of Forestry.

Maps created by Wallowa County GIS, a division of the Wallowa County Planning Department.

The information on this map was gathered from various sources. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". Wallowa County cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy in the digital data or the underlying records. There are no warranties, express or implied, including the merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product. However, notification of any errors will be appreciated.

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How hard did it blow?

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In Union County, the winds peaked about 7:30 p.m. when gusts reached 52 mph, according to National Weather Service readings at the airport. High winds continued through the night, however, finally abating about 5:30 a.m.

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Trees were knocked over in other locations in the county as well.

The situation was much the same in Wallowa County Sunday, with winds causing significant property damage but no injuries.

The weather service said wind gusts reached 65 mph at the Joseph reporting station about 10 p.m. Sunday.

The Wallowa County Sheriff's Office reported this morning that a barn on Highway 82 between Lostine and Enterprise blew over, falling onto the highway.

A wind advisory is in effect for both counties until 4 p.m. today.



TREE STRIKES CAR IN COVE: Sunday's storm toppled trees all over Cove, but Richard Kern, shown here with his daughter Naomi Alldredge and friend Anthony Sorrells, woke up Monday to find one smashed across the 1996 Pontiac in his driveway. Though Kern says he is upset about the car, he is grateful the tree — estimated to be about 70 to 80 feet tall — didn't fall on the house.
The Observer/MARDI FORD

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The Tillamook County Sheriff's Office Sunday night said it had many reports of downed trees and downed power lines.

Weather stations along the Oregon Coast reported sustained winds Sunday night of 60 mph, with gusts of 102 mph at Cape Blanco; 85 mph on the Yaquina Bay Bridge; 88 mph at Lincoln City; 82 mph at Mount Hebo; and 73 mph at Florence. Wind gusts toppled trees into power lines, causing scattered power outages reported from Depoe Bay south.

STORM TIES TRAFFIC IN KNOTS

Published: January 8, 2005



SLOW GOING: Motorists plod through high winds and blowing snow on Interstate 84 near La Grande shortly before poor visibility closed the freeway Friday.
The Observer/PHIL BULLOCK

T.L. Petersen
Staff Writer

The combination of a little snow and a lot of wind Friday evening brought Northeast Oregon to a near stand-still.

The Oregon Department of Transportation closed Interstate 84 due to poor visibility late Friday afternoon. Travellers and truckers were forced to spend from several hours to the entire night in La Grande.

Early this morning, parking lots at the Flying J Truck Plaza, Eagle Freightliner and Wal-Mart were still filled with semis, although by 7:30 a.m. most lots were emptying.

The highway closure ended about 1:30 a.m.,

But many truckers apparently chose to stay parked for the night.

When the morning supervisor at Eagle Freightliner arrived at work this morning, he admits he wondered what was going on.

"When I walked in and there were trucks parked all over the place," he said, "I wondered what was going on. I couldn't believe we had that many waiting repairs."

Wal-Mart's security supervisor added early this morning that truckers had used the store's parking lot through the night.

"Neither Ladd nor Meacham were open," he said. And with the Flying J lots full, "we'll accommodate them."

He added that the company's policy is to make the parking area available when possible because "we'd rather have them out of the danger, here."

"(Our lots) were full," a Flying J employee confirmed.

But the halted truckers were moving out early this morning, she added, and the highways leading east and west were both reported in Condition A — open and clear — conditions. Neither the supervisors nor the employee would give their names to the press.

And while the wind was still blowing this morning, it hit its peak between 10 and 11 p.m. Friday, according to the Pendleton office of the National Weather Service.

Records there this morning had recorded a gust of almost 50 mph at the Union County Airport. Sustained winds at the time were blowing at about 40 mph.

For much of the evening, the wind-measuring equipment at the airport recorded gusts of up to 40 mph.

For 1,055 Oregon Trail Electric customers in southeast La Grande, the wind had more affect than just making driving difficult.

About 4:30 p.m. Friday a breaker opened at the El Paso substation near the cooperative's Cove Avenue service center.

According to Nancy VanSickle at OTEC, high winds blew two line together. The lines "slapping" each other caused the breaker to open, cutting power to customers.

The outage was short-lived, only about 10 minutes or less, VanSickle said, because the breakers could be closed so quickly and the situation hadn't damaged equipment.

But for those who had to be out Friday evening, the conditions ranged from severe to slow.

Elgin basketball players ended up staying the night in Ontario because of the interstate highway closure. But most teams were able to get to where they were going Friday night. Elsewhere in the West, the storm is proving a doozy.

According to the National Weather Service, the Pacific storm was spinning bands of moisture into the region from the southwest. Snow buried the Spokane area and fell north of Seattle, and Las Vegas got a rare snowfall on the famed strip.

As much as 10 to 15 inches of rainfall is expected in a series of three storms hitting the mountains near Los Angeles this weekend.

The National Weather Service is predicting another 8 feet of snow in the already hard hit Lake Tahoe region.

STORM DELIVERS BLOW, BUT BRINGS OUT BEST

Published: July 22, 2004

The storm cell that delivered a shocking blow to La Grande in a matter of minutes Monday afternoon wreaked havoc on trees, houses, cars and streets. Minutes after the storm, which blew in with 70 mph winds and drenching rain, people were out and about surveying the damage, beginning cleanup and putting their property back together.

Perhaps the most interesting phenomenon beyond the sudden onset and power of the storm was the way people reacted. They immediately set about cleaning up, carrying on and reaching out. Neighbors renewed acquaintances or met for the first time, offering help to each other as they cleaned up whatever effects the storm left in its wake.

For a lot of people that involved lifting, sawing and clearing away tree branches. For others it was dealing with flooded basements or helping clear streets that were blocked by downed trees and branches. In some cases, it was a matter of waiting for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative or city or county crews to arrive to lend a hand. And lend a hand they did. OTEC crews worked through the night to restore power to the 5,600 accounts affected by the storm. City, county, ODOT and law enforcement personnel were on the spot as needs arose. All should be commended for their efforts.

Luckily, most of us rode out the storm safely. Only a couple of people found themselves actually in harm's way. One was a truck driver whose rig blew over along Interstate 84. He wasn't injured when the big rig tipped over.

The other was Doug Yearous, operations manager at the Union County Airport, who literally rode out the storm in his temporary office. The modular office, which was put in place temporarily to replace the airport office that burned to the ground a year ago, was blown across the tarmac at the airport — with Yearous in it. He figures the lightweight building rolled about four times, finally coming to rest on Ron Nash's Cessna 182. Yearous was taken to the hospital, but was home by the next morning and — thank goodness — able to talk about the experience.

The power of nature is immense. Oregonians, luckily, don't feel it as often as the people in the hurricane and tornado states do. But the threat is real. Weather and its unpredictable nature can't be taken lightly, even if some of us did when we heard the warning from the National Weather Service just minutes before the storm.

Perhaps, though, the storm's most enduring impact will be the goodwill it brought among neighbors and strangers. To every thing — even storms — there is a purpose.

Editorials in this column are the opinion of The Observer's editorial board. The board is comprised of Ron Horton, publisher; Ted Kramer, editor; Jeff Petersen, news editor; and Pierre LaBossierre, wire editor. Letters from readers, signed columns on this page and

cartoons represent the opinions of the writer/artist and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editorial board.

STORM POUNDS LA GRANDE

Published: July 20, 2004



DISASTER SCENE: Friends of Russ Bergette gather around his home at 63450 Gekeler Lane Monday to survey the damage after all of the surrounding trees snapped in half and landed on the roof of his newly remodeled home. The trees ripped out a meter base and took down telephone and power lines around the house. The Observer/LAURA MACKIE-HANCOCK

**By Bill Rautenstrauch
Observer Staff Writer**

A sudden severe storm cut a wide swath of destruction through the Grande Ronde Valley late Monday afternoon.

Winds estimated at 70 miles per hour sent a modular building tumbling across the grounds at the Union County Airport and upended a semi-truck on Interstate 84 east of La Grande. A house on Gekeler was pummeled by several trees, and numerous homes in La Grande were hit by falling branches.

Slightly over an inch of rain fell in about half an hour.

In the airport incident, operations manager Doug Yearous was taken by ambulance to Grande Ronde Hospital, where he was treated for injuries and later released.

The modular building has served as a temporary airport operations center since a fire destroyed the regular office last year. Yearous was inside the building when the winds took it.

"I was shutting things down and I felt the trailer slip and move," Yearous said this morning. "I got knocked out on the second hit. I remember hitting my face on the other side of the room."

Yearous said he believed the trailer rolled about four times. It came to rest upon an airplane owned by Ron Nash.

The plane was one of at least five damaged during the storm.

The semi-truck overturned in the eastbound lane of I-84 near milepost 266, about a mile from the Flying J truck stop. No injuries were reported.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton had no reliable estimate of the wind speed during the storm, though one weather spotter near Island City said winds gusted to 60-70 mph. Also at Island City, nearly an inch of rainfall was reported.

The weather service said a sensor that measures wind speed at the airport was knocked out early in the storm and did not render a reading.

The service said its network of spotters submitted numerous reports of storm damage. No spotter reported seeing a funnel cloud that would have indicated a tornado. A tornado did strike in Grant County Monday, the service said.

La Grande Public Works Director Dan Chevalier said this morning flooding occurred at several places around the city because the storm sewer system couldn't keep up with the flow of water.

A power outage caused electric pumps to shut down, adding to the problem.

Chevalier said downed trees and power lines kept his department working overtime.

"We worked until about eight o'clock last night, and this morning crews are out cleaning up," he said.

Chevalier said Bud Jackson's Sports Bar at the east end of Adams and the Golden Harvest Restaurant at the corner of Greenwood and Jefferson downtown were among buildings whose interiors were flooded.

Flooding was heaviest in the Island Avenue underpass.

Dara Decker, Union County Emergency Services officer, said drivers trying to take their vehicles through the deep waters caused some complications.

"A couple of people tried to drive through it. Their cars stalled and had to be towed out," she said.

Decker said her office received numerous reports of damage from throughout the county.

"There were multiple trees down across roads and on top of buildings, and some of the railroad crossing bars along Island Avenue were ripped off," Decker said.

Eastern Oregon University felt the impact of the storm but suffered no significant damage, said Michael Rhodes, EOU's interim physical plant facilities and planning director.

Water flowed into the ground level floors of Ackerman Hall, Pierce Library and Hoke Center. The water had to be cleaned up by crews but did not cause any damage.

Normally the water would have been caught by EOU's storm drains but they were backed up because of the storm, Rhodes said.

The storm also blew down many branches on campus. Rhodes said that crews will be cleaning up the branches for much of the next two days.

The Oregon Department of Transportation was busy cleaning up debris until late in the evening, said spokesman Tom Strandberg.

Strandberg said crews monitored the storm via radar and were ready when it struck.

"We were following it and we had people standing by, ready to go," he said.

Strandberg said there were no full highway closures during the incident, though debris caused some single-lane closures.

Damage to the valley's crops was being assessed this morning.

The weather service was in La Grande this morning, investigating the path of the storm, its wind speed, and other factors.

WILD WINDS WHIP AREA

Published: June 2, 2001

By T.L. Petersen
Observer Staff Writer

Roads closed, businesses shut down, bricks flew, power went out and trees fell.

But overall, Friday afternoon's powerful winds caused no serious injuries and a remarkably limited amount of property damage.

Many people across Union County experienced outages, while some in La Grande and the High Valley area had no electricity for almost 18 hours. A small neighborhood area along Fourth Street in La Grande, including The Observer building, saw the lights blink off at 3:48 p.m. Power was restored just before 10 this morning. A tree fell on Fourth Street, across from The Observer, causing the outage.

Little information, except the general area of outages, was available from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative this morning, as supervisors were working with repair crews, and OTEC spokesman Steve Schauer was in Washington, D.C., for meetings.

The National Weather Service in Pendleton reported wind gusts of 50 to 60 mph late Friday afternoon, along with thunderstorms on the east side of the Blue Mountains.

Jan Michel of Cove was in the La Grande Public Library when the tree on Fourth Street fell. The tree tore down power lines around the library, which soon closed.

Michel found the downed power lines made the trip to her vehicle risky, but La Grande police officers were soon on hand to assist her.

Paul Sieders, who lives near First Street and Adams Avenue, wasn't quite as lucky. His daughter called him Friday afternoon when she came home from school to report that a tree in the front yard was now partially on a family car.

The tree brought down two power poles and their electrical lines. By late afternoon, the poles were leaning over the street.

The situation led to a radio warning Friday afternoon for people to avoid downtown La Grande where tree branches were blowing, power lines were swinging, and, along Fir Street near the railroad tracks, bricks were blowing off the top of a building and hitting nearby parked cars.

Another large tree split and fell at a recently vacated home at the corner of Grandy and Cedar streets.

Some areas were spared damage.

While Island City experienced high winds during its annual Hog Wild Days celebration, the power remained on and the Lions Club was able to move its Friday evening pork barbecue into the school.



WATCH FOR FALLING TREES:
Kory Vaughn of Charter Cable examines the damage caused by a tree that fell onto Paul Sieders' car at First and Adams, taking out the cable line with it.

The Observer/ERIN PHILLIPS

While those in La Grande appeared to take the brunt of the storm, it wasn't a good afternoon to be out driving in the valley.

Visibility was near zero along Highway 237 and Hunter Road at about 4 p.m. because of blowing dust. Both roads were reportedly briefly closed.

The rough weather, a meteorologist at the Pendleton weather station said, occurred because of a combination of factors.

Winds in the Grande Ronde Valley, she said, were already blowing at nearly 20 mph as a warm thermal trough system began pushing southeast after sitting in the region for several days.

On its heels was what the Weather Service called "a real vigorous cold front," which moved in and pushed the thermal trough closer to the ground.

"It made for a tight surface pressure gradient," the meteorologist said.

The result was strong, gusty winds and rapidly dropping temperatures.

The cold system, an upper atmosphere trough, should stay in place today and through Sunday, the Weather Service is predicting, which should cause locally breezy conditions but not a return of the violent winds.

The cool temperatures, though, are not expected to bring much, if any, precipitation.

The why of the weather wasn't of huge interest though to those having to deal with it Friday afternoon.

By the time the weather systems had collided in Union County, some of their fury was spent.

Wallowa County didn't report any outages this morning, although a power pole along Crow Creek Road fell and several trees were being removed after falling across the Imnaha highway.

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The Observer/MARDI FORD

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WALLOWA COUNTY HIT WITH BIG WINDS

Published: November 29, 2001

By Gary Fletcher

Observer Staff Writer

ENTERPRISE — Winterlike weather arrived with gusto Wednesday, but Wallowa County took the first snowstorm of the season in stride.

The temperature early Wednesday morning dipped to 12 degrees before rising to 36 by 4:30 p.m. Before the storm subsided, 14 inches of snow had been dumped on some parts of the county, and many trees had sustained severe damage or been toppled or uprooted. Some trees 30 inches in diameter were snapped off 10 to 12 feet above the ground, officials said.

Winds estimated at 70 mph to 80 mph uprooted trees, blowing snow severely limited driving visibility. The storm snapped power lines and briefly blocked roads before people pitched in to clear the trees from the roads. Evergreens crashed into one cabin at Wallowa Lake.

Vehicles slid off slick roadways, but no injuries were reported.

The lower valley around Wallowa was not as hard hit as the upper part of the county, where there was near zero visibility on Sheep Creek Hill, Prairie Creek and Imnaha Highway, virtually shutting them down. Vehicles traveling the Imnaha Highway out of Joseph could go only 5 mph.

Police were anticipating accidents today due to slick roads and the accumulation of snow in some areas.

Two inches of snow fell Wednesday morning, but by the end of the day, 14 inches had fallen in the area from Flora to Troy.

Most roads in the Wallowa Valley remained open because there was little snow on them. The exception was Highway 3 north of Enterprise, where snow drifts forced road closures intermittently throughout Wednesday.

Trees wreaked havoc at Wallowa Lake Wednesday. One tree took down the Power House Road power lines near the Flying Arrow Resort at about 10 a.m., knocking out power for the rest of Wednesday in most of the homes at the lake. At 11:30 a.m. a large red fir crashed across the same road near the Wallowa Lake General Store. That cut off telephone service until 4 p.m. Electricity at the lake was restored at 9 p.m.

A pine tree fell into a cabin on River Road in the same vicinity. Trees were reported blown down on Wallowa Mountain Loop Road near Sheep Creek Hill.

Trees were reported down on Highway 82 a mile north of Joseph, on Hurricane Creek Road and on Bicentennial Lane at Dobbin Road, where a felled tree was blown 30 feet into the roadway.

About 3 p.m., Oregon State Police Trooper Greg Retherford came across a cottonwood blocking both lanes of Highway 82 a mile north of Joseph, the OSP reported. A log truck driver produced a chain saw and he and Retherford and another volunteer cleared the road in minutes.

Schools in Joseph and Enterprise dismissed students early Wednesday since buses had to transport some to the more remote areas of Innaha and Flora.

As the temperatures thawed, the snow and, slick ice developed on roadways late in the day, but no accidents were reported.

The storm followed the two to three inches of snow that fell Saturday, making for a busy time at Enterprise's Les Schwab Tires. Crews said it must have been a record day for putting studded tires on vehicles. By 2 p.m., they were fully booked to keep them busy well into the night. After that, customers were put on a list for today.

"The storm was just a good wake-up call to be ready for winter, said Terry Holbrook of the Wallowa County Public Works Department. "We're ready."