Millsboro Argus

Tuesday, April 16, 1991

An independent, locally owned newspaper since 1873

Hillsboro, Oregon

'Hope' brings migrant worker flood

By LUCILLE WARREN Of the Argus

Migrant farm workers are arriving daily from California, Mexico and Guatamala in an effort to stake claims to what little housing is available and the few jobs being offered in Washington County.

And most predict more will follow their footsteps by the end of April or early in May.

Monday was the first official day the camps could be open under state laws for seasonal housing. A visit to half a dozen camps told the same

"This camp has been full three or four weeks," said Miguel Leone, 44, whose wife and four children live in Baja, Mexico. "Times are bad there, too.'

Miguel believes many workers will visit Oregon for the first time this year. No field work exists in California because of the February frost damage and drought conditions.

"Jobs are scare and many people are looking," he said. The few jobs available are in ornamental plant nurseries or pruning.

"There aren't a lot of jobs at this point," said Sue Brewer, Hillsboro employment division.

"We're getting out a few people for day work, but there's probably not going to be a lot of employment until the harvest season starts.'

"We're not open," one camp operator said. He claimed workers had removed screens from cabin windows over the weekend to get

into shelter.

The parking lot at the camp was

At Centro Cultural in Cornelius, men waited outside for doors to

Nineteen-year-old Jaime Lemos said he'd been in Washington County nearly a week. His papers were under a new immigration program, Safe Haven, which allows people to apply for asylum.

An automatic six-month stay can be renewed up to 18 months.

Jamie got his papers in California, where he'd been detained four months.

Some 20 or 30 men were in the Centro parking lot.

"These people come to do the job that we won't do," said Jose Jaime, coordinator of education and

workers who come to Centro seeking help have been lured to Oregon by false information.

money off the trees," Jaime said.

the sweat and toil for their labor for which they're paid little. They're the backbone of the agriculture economy."

At Centro, farm workers are of-

over-run with cars. Trash barrels were full and the unemployed workers sat in the sun.

translation services at Centro. Jaime insists that most migrant

"They're told if they come they will live in free housing, in a land of plenty where they can almost pick

"These people bring resources;

"They're lured here by a bunch of lies," Jaime said. "And then there's nothing when they get here; no housing, no jobs, nothing."



Migrant farm workers pass the time at an area camp waiting for work in area fields.

fered a free, hot noon meal. Often they wait there hoping someone will come along to give them work for the day.

Jaime said the community support helps Centro feed workers. "Whenever the sign goes out, we get help and we appreciate it," Jaime said. "Centro lives like the poor we serve; on a day-to-day basis."

One grower blamed the large numbers of migrant workers on the

Argus photo by Lucille Warren

worker grapevine that assures them they'll be housed and fed by agencies and churches once they get (Continued on page 2A)

lany more migrants expected

(Continued from page 1A)

here.

"The more people give, the worse it becomes," he said.

Ignacio Garcia from Oaxaca. Mexico, has been here eight days from California, where he'd worked pruning grapes until that was finished.

When asked whether he knows others who are coming, he said, "Mas." Many are coming to try to find work. "Thousands will arrive by the end of the month."

Garcia has been to Washington County before. He came early, he said, to try to find a place to stay and, perhaps, work in a nursery

Dam said

safe, doing

needed job

(Continued from page 1A)

Within a half hour after TVID

followed emergency notification

procedures, there was a radio

warning, Wilson said. "I heard it

He saw no need for notification

procedures to change. "We notified

the emergency network. Beyond

And he urged those who feel they

have suffered damage from the

flood to submit claims under the

James Mumford, the BOR chief of

dam safety, said the dam performed

as it was designed to do. "At no time

The dam is owned by the Bureau

of Reclamation, but is operated by

TVID under guidelines specified by

Mumford said the flood peak had

been reduced by 10 percent and that

the flood had been delayed from

He estimated the Scoggin Creek

flood had been reduced by 1,600 acre-feet of water, the amount of

space reserved in the reservoir for

was the dam in danger of failing."

district's liability insurance.

the Corps of Engineers.

night to daylight hours.

flood control

impending flood.

that, I can't answer."

myself.'

until strawberry harvest.

The camp where he stays, he said, is full, but the owner is trying to limit the numbers to eight people per cabin. He pays \$10 a week to stay there as do the others.

Jaime Lemos has been trying to find an apartment or some place to rent. To do so, he must pay an application fee of \$25, which is not refundable and may not help find him a bed.

"Some are lucky to find friends who will take them in," said Jose Jaime. Otherwise they sleep in their cars, if they have cars, or under trees.

and officially were open. "We're just getting things fixed up for the preoccupancy inspection," said Lloyd Duyck, a Cornelius area grower.

Duyck, however, said he has less space than last year. He's removed one camp that was on rented ground: the family camp. Next year he plans to replace some of the older housing, but also to have fewer workers.

"We've got people who've been coming for years," Duyck said. He also is seeing new faces and turning away people.

Duvck said he plans to cut his

employed between 200 and 300 than 120 in 1992.

Duvck said he's cutting back to

"There have been no preoccupancy inspections," she said. "They (OR-OSHA) just give us more trouble if we let people in without the inspections."

She said the year-round building away and sending them to Centro.'

Chris Ottoson, with OR-OSHA's Portland consultation office, said consultants look at camps on request to assist owners to comply with rules and regulations.

The program is voluntary, with inspectors going out only at the request of the employer. He emphasized the inspections are confidential and not shared with the enforcement division of OR-OSHA.

in charge of enforcement, said he does not believe the large influx from California will arrive in Oregon.

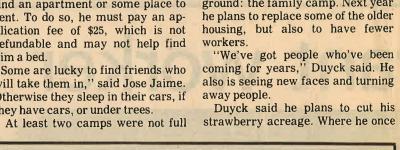
"So far it's not occurring," he said. Most camps are occupied, he said. "But so far, I haven't seen any occupied to capacity."

Monday's tour showed larger numbers than usually are here at this time of the year. It also showed many without legal papers, here just hoping to find someone who will look the other way.

'Why do you come if you have no papers and there is no work for those without papers?"

'They hope," one man answered. "It's the last thing you lose; hope."

Girl home safe after



pickers in previous years, he estimates he'll have work for no more than 180 this year and no more

minimize the effect of county, state and federal regulation on his operation.

Darla Tankersley, who operates Tankersley Farms for her father, Ron, said Monday their camps will not open until just before strawberry harvest, perhaps as late as May.

at Little Beaver Camp in North Plains is full. "We're turning people

Tomas Schwabe, whose division is

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