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# Statesman Journal

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## LOOKING FOR LITHIUM



A sagebrush sea straddles the Oregon-Nevada state line in the McDermitt Caldera, where mining companies are looking to drill for lithium, a metal that is among the critical minerals needed to make batteries. CASSANDRA PROFITA/OPB

### Mining exploration project receives federal approval

Cassandra Profita  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The Bureau of Land Management on Dec. 8 announced its approval of a controversial lithium mining exploration project in southeast Oregon's Malheur County near the Nevada state line.

The decision allows HiTech Minerals Inc., a subsidiary of Australia-based Jindalee Resources, to do exploratory drilling for lithium at up to 168 sites across 7,200 acres of BLM land. The company is also cleared to build more than 20 miles of access roads for the project.

See LITHIUM, Page 2A



A male sage grouse inflates the air sacs on its chest to attract females in a video still taken on April 4 in southeast Oregon's McDermitt Caldera. Wildlife advocates are concerned that a lithium exploration plan by Australia-based mining company Jindalee Resources will disturb the sage grouse habitat in the caldera. CAMERON NIELSEN/OPB

## 'Massive' landslide blocks highway

Isabel Funk  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A "massive" landslide between Kernville and Siletz has closed Highway 229 indefinitely, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

The landslide, reported 10 miles north of Siletz around milepost 14, has "taken out the road," according to ODOT's Tripcheck.

"This will be a long-term closure, though we do not yet know whether that means days, weeks, months, or longer," ODOT spokesperson Mindy McCartt said.

The Oregon Coast has experienced heavy rainfall as the Pacific Northwest was pummeled by an atmospheric river. Lincoln City and the surrounding area has received an estimated 2.16 inches of rain in the last seven days.



A large landslide has indefinitely closed Highway 229 between Siletz and Kernville. PROVIDED BY THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## When to see 2025 Geminid meteor shower peak

Ginnie Sandoval  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The 2025 Geminid meteor shower will reach its peak on Dec. 13, producing vivid and colorful meteors.

The annual shower typically reaches its peak in mid-December. It is famous

for its bright colors and vivid meteors that tend to slowly streak across the sky, flaring into fireballs while leaving a yellowish trail behind them.

"This is the one major shower that provides good activity before midnight as the constellation of Gemini is well placed from 10 p.m. onward," said Jim Todd, director of space science educa-

tion for OMSI.

The Geminids are active between Dec. 1-21 and are considered one of the best and most reliable annual meteor showers, expected to produce approximately 40-60 meteors per hour, according to NASA.

Here's what to know about the Geminid meteor shower and how to watch.

### When is the Geminid meteor shower?

The Geminid meteor shower will peak on the evening of Dec. 13 and continue into the early morning hours of Dec. 14.

See METEORS, Page 2A

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