

Oregon's economy roaring at 'full throttle'

By Kristena Hansen
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon's economy is barreling out of the Great Recession gloom at "full throttle," with full employment now in sight, wages on the upswing and state revenue gaining at some of the fastest rates in the country, state economists said Friday.

There were some bleak spots — most notably the ongoing erosion of affordable housing — and the rapid pace some areas have been improving aren't sustainable in the long term, especially as the Baby Boom generation continues aging. But overall, Oregon's economy wrapped up the first half of the year in sturdy shape.

"Progress is clearly being made. Participation is increasing as the job opportunities remain plentiful and wages are rising," the Office of Economic Analysis wrote in its second-quarter report. "Full employment in Oregon is fast approaching."

Oregon's unemployment rate (4.5 percent), job growth (5,000 per month for the past two years) and gains in wages and personal income (8.5 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively, in the second quarter) all fared better than national averages, as well as the state's own performance in recent years.

The state's new minimum wage law — under which the first wage increases begin July 1 — should help low-income workers right away. In the long term, or by 2025, it could cost 40,000 jobs, but state economists say it's a drop in the bucket compared to the overall market and is more so reflective of a slower rate of job growth than

outright job losses.

But housing remains a major problem, they say, especially in metro Portland, where new construction and stronger low-income assistance programs are badly needed to slow the area's surging living costs.

In a statement, Rep. Mike McLane and Sen. Ted Ferrioli, leaders of the Republican minority party in their respective chambers, took a stab at Democrats by noting that, despite revenue growth, "our ending fund balance is expected to be \$57.1 million below previous projections, largely due to overspending by Democrats during the 2016 session."

That projection-drop was partly due to various financial needs, some unexpected, that came up at the Legislature earlier this year, such as the affordable housing package and air quality monitoring amid Portland's toxic air crisis.

RODEO: Action begins Wednesday with Xtreme Bulls

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at the 76th Sisters Rodeo.

Trevor Knowles, last year's all-around champion at Sisters, will compete with many top contenders and a few rookies rated in the top 10 Rookie World Standings.

Terrebonne's Russell Cardoza is riding this season at second place in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association all-around standings. Cardoza competes in tie-down roping, team roping (with header Dustin Bird) and steer wrestling.

The young Central Oregon competitor has been rising steadily in the PRCA since he began his career in local rodeo training facilities, which have put Central Oregon on the rodeo map nationwide.

Sisters will also see the return of Taos Muncy, who broke the arena record in Saddle Bronc riding last year with an 88-point ride. Saddle Bronc brings riders who are in the top 10 in 2016

standings, including Jake Watson at No. 4 and Jake Wright at No. 6.

Bareback Riding has Clayton Biglow currently at No. 1, Zack Brown at No. 4 and Cody Kiser at No. 7. Brian Bain of Powell Butte is also a rider to watch in this event. Bain is a local favorite, not just for rodeo, but also for his striking bronze sculpture of horses and riders galloping through the field just south of Sisters on Highway 20.

The Saddle Bronc competition is loaded with current riders in the top of the PRCA standings, including Jake Watson at No. 4 and Jake Wright at No. 6, vying for numbers that can beat Taos Muncy.

Shane Erickson of Terrebonne is a tie-down roper to watch as he tries to get the short time in a total of forty-two competitors in this event over the weekend.


There are 60 barrel racers competing, including the legendary Brenda Mays and her sister Vicki Mays

of Terrebonne. This crowd-favorite event has 15 racers per performance over the weekend.

A dozen steer wrestlers will tackle steers at each performance. A total of 31 team roping teams will throw their ropes for fastest time over the three days, and there will be a pounding eighteen bull rides per show.

Many of the timed-even competitors will be riding for their first go-round times on Thursday during Slack competition, beginning at about 8 a.m. The public is welcome to watch Slack at no charge. There are no bucking events at Slack, which will run from early morning until about 1 p.m.

The rodeo performances begin Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m., Saturday night at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 1 p.m. The ticket office in Sisters is closed before noon on Friday, to reopen one and one half hours before each performance at the rodeo grounds.



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5 PRCA RODEO PERFORMANCES

<p>WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8 Xtreme Bulls 6:30 pm</p> <p>THURSDAY, JUNE 9 Slack 8 am</p> <p>FRIDAY, JUNE 10 Rodeo 7 pm</p>	<p>SATURDAY, JUNE 11 Rodeo Parade 9:30 am Rodeo 1 pm & 7 pm</p> <p>SUNDAY, JUNE 12 Buckaroo Breakfast 7-11 am Cowboy Church 9 am Rodeo 1 pm</p>
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JUNE 8TH

6:30 PM

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Xtreme Bulls: \$20, Kids 12 & under free

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