

MISINFORMATION:
Rumors can spread like wildfire

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jurisdiction,” the agency wrote Thursday night on Facebook.

While some arson arrests have been made, it’s not yet clear how all the scores of fires in Washington state and Oregon started. Officials say high winds and dry conditions have made them worse in a region with a cool, wet climate that’s historically protected it from intense fire activity. Both Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee have called the wildfires “unprecedented.”

The false claims come as left- and right-wing groups have clashed during protests in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in Portland where a caravan of President Donald Trump’s supporters drove pickup trucks through the liberal city last month. An antifa supporter shot and killed a member of a right-wing group and was fatally shot by Washington state authorities a week later.

The FBI said it worked with local authorities to investigate claims that extremists set wildfires and found them to be false.

“Conspiracy theories and misinformation take valuable resources away from local fire and police agencies working around the clock to bring these fires under control,” an FBI statement said. “Please help our entire community by only sharing validated information from official sources.”

Officials in Oregon also debunked claims last week of widespread arrests affiliated with the Proud Boys or antifa.

“Remember when we said to follow official sources only,” the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office posted Thursday. “Remember when we said rumors make this already difficult incident even harder? Rumors spread just like wildfire and now our 9-1-1 dispatchers and professional staff are being overru-

with requests for information and inquiries on an *untrue* rumor that six antifa members have been arrested for setting fires in Douglas County, Oregon.”

Medford police knocked down a fake graphic spreading online that used the department’s logo and a photo from an unrelated 2018 arrest to falsely claim five Proud Boys had been arrested for arson.

A social media post shared widely on Thursday featured a picture of a woman along with claims that she tried to start a fire near a high school in Springfield. Springfield police told The Associated Press that they spoke to the woman Wednesday and that wasn’t true.

Another post claimed a landowner called police after arsonists threw Molotov cocktails on his land in Clackamas County and they got into a shootout. The Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office told the AP that no such reports existed.

Freelance journalist Justin Yau tweeted Thursday that he was told to leave Molalla by an “armed group” that feared outsiders after seeing rumors of arson nearby.

Thousands of Twitter and Facebook users shared posts trying to link the fires to antifa activists, including from Paul Romero, a former Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Oregon.

Reached by phone, Romero blamed the surge in fires statewide on a coordinated “army of arsonists” but

“ It is hot, dry, and fire spreads quickly in those conditions. There is nothing to show its antifa or Proud Boys setting fires. Wait for information. – Firefighter Matt Lowery

offered no evidence to support that claim.

The posts also are being shared by social media accounts associated with QAnon, a conspiracy theory centered on the baseless belief that Trump is waging a secret campaign against enemies in the so-called deep state and a child-sex-trafficking ring.

Police are investigating a fire that originated in Ashland as a potential arson after finding human remains, Jackson County Sheriff Nathan Sickler told reporters Wednesday.

However, Ashland Deputy Police Chief Art LeCours confirmed to the AP that the case has “no connection whatsoever to antifa.”

The Jackson County Sheriff’s Office hasn’t made any arrests and its investigation shows no evidence at this point of a coordinated effort, spokesman Mike Moran said.

“These investigations take time,” he said. “They’re intense. They’re fast moving. And so people ought to consider: ‘Does this even make sense?’ They should question anything they see in a social media setting.”

Seed to Table offers free fall field trips

Seed to Table Farm will host free fall field trips in the afternoons for youth in second through fifth grades.

Starting Tuesday, September 22, people can sign up for free field trips from 1 to 4 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday. Seed to Table is committed to ensuring students get their hands in the dirt and have opportunities for experiential learning during these difficult times.

The fall field trips offer exploration opportunities with the safety of the community as a top priority.

“We are excited to host small groups (no more than seven) of students for experiential field trips this fall, free of charge!” said Seed To Table Director Audrey Tehan.

Seed to Table Farm is a place students can play and let their imagination go wild. Exploration and learning on Seed to Table farm allows students to connect with nutrition, science, and art through farm-based

activities.

“Seed to Table educators are here to keep kids safe, help kids create positive relations with nutritious foods, and to foster experiential education. Our field trips are filled with nature exploration, creative play, and a whole lot of fun! Come learn about our native pollinators, plant life cycles, dig for worms, munch on a delicious garden snack, and so much more,” Tehan said. “A lot of hard work and brainstorming has gone into this program, with the safety of students at the center of the discussions. After watching great examples of other organizations carrying out successful and safe field trips in our area, we know we can help keep kids’ hands in the earth, getting experiential education while also keeping social distance.”

Register online: <https://www.seedtotableoregon.org/field-trip-signup>.

If families do not have access to the internet they can call to register over the phone at 541-203-0152.



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SEPT 16 WED **Edward Jones Virtual Event Future Trends & Strategies Webinar** 5:30 p.m. 25-minute free Zoom class to discuss how to see beyond today's headlines. Pre-register by calling Karen Kassy at 541-549-1866.

SEPT 17 THUR **Paulina Springs Books Virtual Event Books In Common Regional Literary Event Series with Jason Diamond & Andi Zeisler** 6:30 p.m. For more information call 541-549-0866 or go to BooksInCommonNW.com.

SEPT 18 FRI **Food Cart Garden at Eurosports Friday Car Show** 5-6:30 p.m. Bring your cool or vintage car for the free Friday car show. For more information call Eurosports at 541-549-2471.

SEPT 20 SUN **Fir Street Park Sisters Farmers Market** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Every Sunday: fresh local produce and more. Pre-order and details at sistersfarmersmarket.com.

SEPT 24 THUR **Paulina Springs Books Virtual Event Books In Common Regional Literary Event Series with Ginger Gaffney & Pam Houston** 6:30 p.m. For more information call 541-549-0866 or go to BooksInCommonNW.com.

SEPT 26 SAT **Sisters Area Sisters Arts Association Artist Studio Tour** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free self-guided tour of 26 private artist studios. Go to www.sistersartsassociation.org/sistersstudiotour for more information.

SEPT 27 SUN **Paulina Springs Books Virtual Event Books In Common Regional Literary Event Series with Craig Johnson** Noon. For more information call 541-549-0866 or go to BooksInCommonNW.com.

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Fir Street Park Sisters Farmers Market 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Every Sunday: fresh local produce and more. Pre-order and details at sistersfarmersmarket.com.

Events Calendar listings are free to advertisers.
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