

Oregon State Parks imposes new fee on out-of-state campers

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Camping at one of Oregon’s state parks will cost a little extra if you’re visiting from outside the state beginning on August 10.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department announced a 30 percent surcharge on nonresidents that make new camping reservations or arrive at a state park campground beginning Aug. 10.

The surcharge is aimed at encouraging local recreation and providing funding to operate Oregon’s state parks system, which was hit hard by COVID-19 shutdowns and losses from the Oregon Lottery.

“We love serving all people, no matter where they live,” said Lisa Sumption, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department director. “Even so, this temporary

change is needed to remind people to stay as close to home as possible while enjoying the outdoors, and to provide much-needed support for the Oregon state park system.”

The added fee breaks down as follows:

- The average cost for a full-service RV site is currently \$33 per night, but starting August 10, that will increase to an average of \$42 for nonresidents.
- The average tent rate is currently \$19 per night and will increase to \$23 for nonresidents.

The surcharge could raise around \$500,000 through the end of the year and “help hire staff and pay for cleaning supplies and other park operations,” OPRD said in a news release. The move is temporary and only stays in place through 2020.

The shutdown of all campgrounds and day-use

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Camping at places such as Detroit Lake State Park will cost a little extra beginning Aug. 10 if you’re visiting from out of state. BRENT DRINKUT/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Rows of tables await guests in the middle of a field of Centennial hops at TopWire Hop Project, part of Crosby Hop Farm, in Woodburn, on July 24. PHOTO BY BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL; ILLUSTRATION BY HIEN TRUONG/USA TODAY NETWORK, AND GETTY IMAGES

Hop farm beer garden, Top Wire, now open

Emily Teel
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Locals can now enjoy beers brewed with Willamette Valley hops on a working hop farm in Woodburn.

Crosby Hop Farm has opened TopWire Hop Project, an outdoor beer garden.

A fifth-generation farm supplying craft breweries both near and far with more than 75 varieties of hops, Crosby Hop Farm is one of only a few in the area — Rogue Farms in Independence also welcomes guests for beers among the bines — onto the farm.

To reach TopWire, guests must drive a half mile on a road that winds through the hop fields. In August the trip is shaded by the 18-foot hop bines suspended from overhead cables.

The bar is built in a modified shipping container and features eight taps pouring a rotating list of craft beers, cider and a non-alcoholic seltzer. The beers are selected to showcase different expressions of the farm’s hops and feature exclusive collaborations with breweries including Russian River Brewing Company, Fort George Brewery and pFriem Family Brewers.

All draft pours are available for consumption on-

If you go:

TopWire Hop Project

Where: 8668 Crosby Rd NE Woodburn

Phone: (503) 765-1645

More information: www.topwirehp.com

site or as 16-ounce cans to-go. A cooler features additional non-alcoholic options and an expanded selection of craft beers.

Though it was in the works before COVID-19, the outdoor patio space of the beer garden allows for ample physical distancing of guests, both in shaded and sunny areas. Parties with children are welcome, as are leashed dogs.

Guests are welcome to bring picnics or take-out food. The closest options are those in Woodburn. TopWire is currently open on Sunday and Thursday from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m.; and Friday and Saturdays from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m..

Emily Teel is the Food & Drink Editor at the Statesman Journal. Contact her at eteel@statesmanjournal.com, Facebook, or Twitter. See what she's cooking and where she's eating this week on Instagram: @emily_teel

Wood products firm wants to hire 100 employees

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

At a time when many companies are struggling to keep employees on the payroll, one of the state’s largest wood products manufacturers can’t find enough employees to operate at full capacity.

While Oregon’s unemployment rate is at near-record levels, Freres Lumber of Lyons is seeking to hire 100 workers to get back to full capacity after a number

of workers resigned over the past months.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in March, Freres Lumber had about 475 employees; now it is below 400.

“We’re down one shift in our veneer plant and one shift in our plywood plant,” Freres Lumber President Rob Freres said. “People aren’t showing up, probably out of some anxiety due to the COVID thing. We’ve

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Enrollment cap law limits online schooling

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Families in at least 10 school districts across Oregon are bumping up against an enrollment cap that limits their ability to enroll in virtual charter schools.

The issue has been building for nearly a decade as school populations grow, but has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with more families wanting to switch their children to established virtual programs.

There are 20 virtual charter schools in Oregon, including Oregon Connections Academy hosted by the Santiam Canyon School District in Mill City. These schools account for about 13,000 students and have been operating in the state for more than 15 years.

Unlike homeschooling, in which parents are the teachers and put together their own curriculum, online charter schools are publicly funded institutions where students learn from home, have state-mandated teachers, are still required to participate in state testing and use traditional curriculum.

They are overseen by the Oregon Department of Education and are hosted by a public school district.

But since 2011, when the Oregon State Legislature passed House Bill 2301, there's been a limit on how many students can enroll in a virtual charter school if it isn't hosted by the original district.

Districts that have more than 3% of students enrolled in virtual public charter schools sponsored by other districts have the option to deny new enrollments and provide other online options, explained Kate Pattison with the state education department.

Districts are not required to deny enrollment, she said, but the law gives them the option to do so.

Pattison said schools may deny students for different reasons. One reason could be because educational funds follow the students, it can be harmful for districts to have too many students leave, especially all at once.

School districts across Oregon are planning to start the new school year this fall with either a hybrid model of in-person and online learning, or a comprehensive distance learning model, which largely uses online instruction. This has caused more and more parents to consider online options.

If a student is denied enrollment, current law does allow them to appeal the decision to the State Board of Education. But advocates of increasing the cap argue the process takes too long and can be very time consuming.

"Districts are denying kids access to online schools at exactly the time they're needed most," said Tricia Powell, president of the Oregon Virtual Public Schools Alliance, a coalition of parents who advocate for online public schools.

To date, the Oregon Department of Education has confirmed 10 school districts that have hit the cap, though Powell believes there are more. The districts listed by the department are:

- Banks School District
- Bethel School District
- Central Linn School District
- Colton School District

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A student works on a computer coding exercise with a program that has been used at Whiteaker Middle School in Keizer.

