

Appeal Tribune

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2021 | SILVERTONAPPEAL.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Calls for audit inundate clerks

2020 election demands becoming more frequent, threatening

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Eleven months after the 2020 election, county clerks in Oregon are getting a new round of calls and emails disputing the results. Marion County Clerk Bill Burgess said the requests for audits and canvasses of election results in the county have been coming since June. But he said they've picked up in the past few weeks following an audit of a county's

election results in Arizona. "People, they'll come and they'll start asking the question and then they won't wait for an answer," Burgess said. "They'll start railing away and sometimes with a lot of obscenity and all, too." In the 2020 presidential election, voters in Marion County swung to Democrat Joe Biden over Republican Donald Trump by 49.2% to 48%, a margin of 1,870 votes out of 164,308. That was a reversal from the 2016 election when Trump carried the county. Burgess said the calls and emails have also become threatening, including some he's forwarded to the FBI in the past few weeks. He said some of his election staff don't want their photo tak-



Voters drop off their ballots on election day at a drive-thru location outside the Marion County Courthouse in May. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

en for fear of being tracked. "It seems to go in waves," he said. "Sometimes you can't tell if these are direct threats or not."

Oregon's recount process
A person who identified themselves
See **COUNTIES**, Page 3A



Trees display leaves in bright reds and oranges along Vista Avenue SE. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon's trees are transforming into stationary fireworks for the fall color season. In the Mid-Valley, leaves often begin to turn in early September, peak in mid-October and linger until early November. As trees begin to shut down food production in leaves each fall, the chlorophyll breaks down and the green color disappears, leaving behind yellow and orange hues. Leaves on trees at higher elevations will be the first to change colors, while coastal areas are often last. The color variety and vibrancy varies from year to year, depending on weather conditions. "A succession of warm, sunny days and cool, crisp but not freezing nights seems to bring about the most spectacular color displays," according to the National Forest Service website. A late spring or severe summer drought can delay the onset of fall color by a few weeks, according to the Forest Service. A warm period during fall can dim the colors' intensity. A warm, wet spring and favorable summer weather followed by warm, sunny fall days with cool nights make the most brilliant autumn colors. Here are 20 places in and around the Willamette Valley to see the colors. Multiple people helped put together this list, but one great resource for potential leaf-peepers is Travel Lane County and Oregon Fall Foliage Facebook page.



South Falls at Silver Falls State Park has popped with fall colors in prior years. PROVIDED BY JOE JOHNSTON

Salem
There are numerous places to find fall color in the Capital City. Here's a list of favorites put together by folks with Salem City Parks and Travel Salem. **Minto-Brown Island Park** Salem's largest park and trails system is starting to show some good colors, with the

See **FALL**, Page 4A

State's 'At-A-Glance' report cards display impacts of pandemic

Dianne Lugo Salem Statesman Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon's 'At-A-Glance' school and district report cards have been released by the Oregon Department of Education. The annual publication required by law is designed to inform parents, caregivers, communities and educators. It is also designed to initiate discussions on areas of improvement for schools and districts, according to the ODE. The data shows schools across the Mid-Valley are struggling to help students graduate within four years, and that's exacerbated for Latino students and students struggling with homelessness. ODE warned that due to the pandemic-related impact on in-person learning, the data looks different this year. Similar to 2019-2020's report, this year's profiles do not include statewide assessments data, class size data or attendance

data. "We all know that we went through and we are in the midst of a global pandemic and due to that pandemic we've had an impact on in-person instruction with a lot of the state moving to conference distance learning for much of the year," Jon Wiens, director of Accountability and Reporting at ODE, said. "So there's a lot of cautions with the data that we have this year." **Losing students, adding staff** There were 38,809 students enrolled in Salem-Keizer Public Schools last school year, according to this year's report. Student enroll-

See **REPORT CARDS**, Page 4A

Calls grow for citizen commission to redraw maps

Connor Radnovich Salem Statesman Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

In the waning hours of last month's special legislative session on redistricting, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle declared this should be the last time elected representatives are responsible for drawing these maps. The session was defined by partisan controversy: House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, changed the makeup of a redistricting committee to favor Democrats, sparking a House Republican boycott, and the congressional map itself skewed Democratic, according to independent analyses. The top alternative is an independent redistricting commission, where members of the public are selected to draw new congressional and legislative district maps once per decade after the new census. Experts and political analysts warn such commissions aren't guaranteed to result in fairer maps and could be difficult to establish in Oregon. Those who oppose a redistricting commission say commissioners would not be accountable to the people, nor would they be as representative of the state as the 90-member legislative body. But those who support a commission say this past session just further demonstrated why the state needs to have a new system. Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Ashland, said redistricting fights and the perceived or actual partisan bias of the maps damage the public's trust in the state's political systems. "The events of the last week add to a mounting pile of evidence that we should not be creating the districts in which we and our allies and friends might be running in the future," he said. House Republican Leader Christine Drazan, R-Canby, called on Oregonians to vote in support of the creation of an independent redistricting commission should the measure make it to the ballot. "Oregonians will only get the fair maps they deserve, free of partisan influence, by supporting an independent redistricting commission in the next election," Drazan said. "Politicians should not be drawing their own political lines." Independent analyses of the newly drawn congressional districts indicate two are safe Democrat seats, one is a safe Republican seat, two lean Democrat and one is a relative toss-up.

However, that toss-up (Congressional District 5) contains the city of Bend, which has shifted left in recent decades and is growing rapidly, meaning the district could soon turn into a safe Democratic seat. Oregon political analyst Jim Moore said that based on voter registration and trends, Democrats "should win four of the six seats" for the state to have a fair congressional delegation, but not five. Even so, that doesn't mean a court challenge will prove successful. "Showing that it's intentional and violates Oregon law is going to be really tough to do," Moore said. Oregon has tended to find itself on the cutting edge of elections innovations — from vote-by-mail to automatic voter registration. Moore said lawmakers have not been as eager on this issue. Fourteen other states have taken the responsibility of redistricting out of the hands of lawmakers and given it to a commission. So while Moore said there is "zero chance" of a bill passing the Legislature to create an independent redistricting commission, getting it on the ballot via an initiative petition could also prove difficult. "We've seen it time and time again: the voters have a very short attention span on this," Moore said.

Coalition trying to get issue on ballot

The current effort to bring an independent redistricting commission to the state is being led by People Not Politicians, a coalition which includes the Oregon Farm Bureau, League of Women Voters, Eugene-Springfield NAACP and Independent Party of Oregon. Initiative Petition 34 would create a Citizens Redistricting Commission with 12 members, six select-

See **MAPS**, Page 3A

Online at **SilvertonAppeal.com**

News updates: ● Breaking news ● Get updates from the Silverton area
Photos: ● Photo galleries

Vol. 140, No. 43
Serving the Silverton Area Since 1880
A Unique Edition of the Statesman Journal

