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‘Happening faster than we thought’

2021 was Oregon’s fifth-hottest year since 1895, continuing warm trend

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon’s string of hot years continued in 2021, which finished as the fifth-warmest in records dating back to 1895.

It was also a dry year — and an exceptionally dry summer — although the impact was far worse on the east side than

on the west side, according NOAA data from weather stations across the state.

Oregon’s statewide average temperature was 49.2 degrees in 2021, which is 2.5 degrees warmer than normal and adds another recent year to the list of hottest years on record.

Of the 12 hottest years ever recorded, eight have been recorded since 2000 and six have come since 2010, as climate change moves Oregon’s weather closer

to California than Washington.

“What’s most concerning is that this was a La Nina year, when we’d traditionally expect colder or at least historically normal temperatures,” Oregon state climatologist Larry O’Neill said. “Instead, we got extreme heat in the summer. We did have somewhat cooler weather in the winter, which is why this year didn’t end up as the hottest.”

A late December drenching allowed Oregon to make up a lot of ground in precipitation totals, finishing with a statewide average of 28.47 inches,

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A child runs through the Wall of Water fountain on the Capitol Mall in late July. Last year was Oregon’s fifth warmest. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Mt. Angel Public House is located at 210 East Charles Street in Mt. Angel. The restaurant and bar opened in time for Oktoberfest and has since expanded their menu. PHOTOS BY ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Mt. Angel Public House officially open

Em Chan Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

In just eight months, the space across the street from Mt. Angel’s iconic Glockenspiel has transformed into a modern sports bar: Mt. Angel Public House. The dedicated sports bar had been ‘soft opened’ for months, but is now open with big plans to become a community spot. ● As the pandemic continues to shake up the economics of running an eatery, owner Brandon Norbury said he hopes folks in Mt. Angel can enjoy the space as he originally intended: a sports bar that’s clean, has fresh food, and plenty of space to “really enjoy themselves when they come in.”

Mt. Angel Public House, named aptly for its range of alcohol, spirits and food offered, had its official grand opening Dec. 19. They currently have a limited menu, but feature Smashburgers and a few appetizers.

Even without the constraints the pandemic has forced on many businesses, Norbury renovated, furnished and opened his bar against the frustrating

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Dre Goyer and Brandon Norbury pose for a portrait together at Mt. Angel Public House in Mt. Angel.

Silverton hospital takes step towards new emergency room

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The hospital in Silverton is looking to move its emergency room.

Silverton’s city council gave Legacy Silverton Medical Center its first step toward accomplishing that by approving the rezoning of two properties the hospital owns on Cherry and West Center streets into a public overlay district earlier this month.

Legacy Health senior construction manager James Berekoff said the hospital identified a new emergency room as a priority four or five years ago as the current one doesn’t meet current health codes for hospitals.

“We do have plans to not just expand, necessarily, but relocate our emergency department,” Berekoff said.

The 101 Cherry Street property is a 16,698-square-

foot parcel purchased by the hospital in 2010 and is used for hospital IT functions. It has been zoned for single-family residential and has a house on the site.

The hospital purchased the 208 West Center Street property in 1994. It is a 10,845-square-foot area with a house that was converted from a residence to an office in June 2006. It is primarily used for staff sleeping rooms, but also has a staff training room and storage shed used for facilities.

Also at the Jan. 3 meeting, the council approved \$157,000 for audio visuals at the future civic center and a contract with Day Wireless for providing service there.

The council also re-appointed councilor Jess Miller to the city’s environmental management committee.

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Forest Service to start over on reopen plans

Timeline of access to Opal Creek, Breitenbush, Jefferson now unclear

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Forest Service said it would essentially start over the process to reopen around 170,000 acres burned in the 2020 Labor Day Fires east of Salem and Eugene after lawsuits halted the plan last fall.

The move throws into question when access will be restored to places such as Opal Creek, the Breitenbush area and the northern Mount Jefferson Wilderness.

A federal judge in November blocked a plan by Willamette National Forest to log hazard trees along 400 miles of road within the scars of the Beachie Creek, Lionshead and Holiday Farm fires.

The Forest Service said at the time that the plan was critical to making roadways safe and reopening public access to vast swaths of public land burned in the 2020 Labor Day Fires.

Environmental groups, who brought the lawsuit, said the federal agency was being too aggressive in removing trees along roadsides.

Instead of going through the lawsuit process, Willamette National Forest supervisor Dave Warnack said he would scrap the old plan and restart the process.

“I have decided it is in the best interest of the public to limit the continued time and expense associated with ongoing litigation surrounding this project,” Warnack said in a statement. “Our work to safely restore public access to areas burned in the 2020 Labor Day fires continues to be top priority.”

“Upon withdrawal of this decision, my staff will conduct another review of the purpose and need of this project and will consider a new approach to addressing this important issue. We will re-engage with community partners and other interested parties toward solutions and opportunities to facilitate safely reopening fire affected areas.”

The lawsuits were filed by Cascadia Wildlands, Oregon Wild, Willamette Riverkeeper, and Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics.

“The Forest Service just went way too big, authorizing far more logging than the law allows without doing an environmental assessment,” Nick Cady, legal director for Cascadia Wildlands, said previously. “The Forest Service attempted to use the fires as cover to commercially log in scenic areas and on remote roads, which risked further harm to these sensitive burned landscapes and undermined confidence in their ability to manage public lands.”

Other groups said the lawsuit and injunction would delay reopening access to the public and make

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A crew removes hazardous trees near Highway 22 outside Idanha in March of last year. A plan by the Forest Service has been scrapped to remove hazard trees in other areas burned by the Labor Day fires. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

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