

More than 60 now confirmed dead as California fires continue

By Kathleen Ronayne and Brian Melley
The Associated Press

CHICO, California — At least 63 people are now dead from a Northern California wildfire, and officials say they have a missing persons list with 631 names on it in an ever-evolving accounting of the victims of the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century.

The high number of missing people probably includes some who fled the blaze and don't realize they've been reported missing, Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said. He said he's making the list public so people can see if they are on it and let authorities know they survived. "The chaos we were dealing with

was extraordinary," Honea said of the early crisis hours last week. "Now we're trying to go back out and make sure we're accounting for everyone."

Some 52,000 people have been displaced to shelters, the homes of friends and relatives, to motels — and to a Walmart parking lot and an adjacent field in Chico, a dozen miles away from the ashes.

At the vast shelter parking lot, evacuees from California's deadliest fire wonder if they still have homes, if their neighbors are still alive — and where they will go when their place of refuge shuts down in a matter of days.

"It's cold and scary," said Lilly Batres, 13, one of the few children

there, who fled with her family from the forested town of Magalia and didn't know whether her home survived. "I feel like people are going to come into our tent."

The Northern California fire that began a week earlier obliterated the town of Paradise. Searchers have pulled bodies from incinerated homes and cremated cars, but in many cases, the victims may have been reduced to bits of bones and ash. The latest toll: 63 dead and 9,800 homes destroyed.

At the other end of the state, more residents were being allowed back into the zone of a wildfire that torched an area the size of Denver west of Los Angeles. The fire was 62 percent contained after destroying

nearly 550 homes and other buildings. At least three deaths were reported.

Air quality across large swaths of California remains so poor due to huge plumes of smoke schools from Sacramento to the Pacific Coast were closed on Friday, and San Francisco's iconic open-air cable cars were pulled off the streets.

Northern California's Camp Fire was 40 percent contained Thursday, but there was no timeline for allowing evacuees to return because of the danger. Power lines are still down, roads closed, and firefighters are still dousing embers, authorities said.

Anna Goodnight of Paradise tried to make the best of it, sitting on an overturned shopping cart in the

parking lot and eating scrambled eggs and tater tots while her husband drank a Budweiser.

But then William Goodnight began to cry.

"We're grateful. We're better off than some. I've been holding it together for her," he said, gesturing toward his wife. "I'm just breaking down, finally."

More than 75 tents had popped up in the space since Matthew Flanagan arrived last Friday.

"We call it Wally World," Flanagan said, a riff off the store name. "When I first got here, there was nobody here. And now it's just getting worse and worse and worse. There are more evacuees, more people running out of money for hotels."

OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

Oregon appeals court rejects \$65K penalty on pot petitioner

PORTLAND — The Oregon Court of Appeals has struck down a record \$65,000 penalty imposed by the state on a petitioner backing an initiative to legalize marijuana.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports in 2012, Secretary of State Kate Brown — now Oregon's governor — slapped that penalty on Robert Wolfe.

He had hired signature gatherers for an unsuccessful initiative to legalize marijuana in Oregon.

Oregon law requires signature gatherers be paid by the hour, not by the signature, to discourage fraud. Court proceedings indicate Wolfe's compensation policies were vague, but Brown's office and a subsequent ruling by an Oregon administrative law judge concluded he was effectively paying by the signature.

In Thursday's ruling, the appeals court ruled Wolfe should have been permitted to present evidence challenging the state's conclusions.

The court reversed the penalty and remanded the case back to the secretary of state's office.

Permit system to limit hiking in Oregon wilderness areas

SALEM — The U.S. Forest Service is planning to implement a new permit system to limit the number of hikers in three of Oregon's most popular wilderness areas.

The Statesman Journal reports the federal agency announced the system Thursday that aims to reduce the damage caused by the growing number of visitors to the Mount Jefferson, Three Sisters and Mount Washington wilderness areas.

Hikers will need a day-use permit for 30 of the most popular trails in the three wilderness areas. Overnight campers will also need a permit.

People can purchase permits in advance online, but a certain number will be held to allow for same-day or next-day trips.

The agency plans to start the system in 2020. It would remain in effect from Memorial Day through September each year.

Oregon man pleads guilty to drug charges after explosion

PORTLAND — An Oregon man who authorities say was burned in an explosion caused by combustible materials used to illegally make marijuana oil has pleaded guilty.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports 35-year-old Eric Scully pleaded guilty in federal court Thursday to endangering human life and illegally possessing and manufacturing marijuana.

Scully was treated for serious burns after a butane honey oil explosion at a storage facility in Cottage Grove in November 2017.

Prosecutors say federal agents searched the facility, finding a sophisticated and

unlicensed hash oil extraction lab.

Agents found more than 1,900 pounds of marijuana, 728 plants and more than 80 pounds of marijuana extract.

Scully is scheduled to be sentenced in February.

Under the plea deal, federal prosecutors will recommend a seven-year sentence in federal prison.

Man collecting cans killed by car in Portland

PORTLAND — Authorities say a man collecting bottles and cans in Portland, Oregon, was hit and killed by a car.

KOIN reports officers responded to the scene in Northeast Portland shortly before 11:30 p.m. Thursday on the report of a vehicle crash.

An injured pedestrian was found at the scene and transported to a nearby hospital, where he later died from his injuries.

According to preliminary information, the driver of a red Volvo sedan crashed into multiple, unoccupied parked cars as well as the pedestrian.

Authorities added they believe speed and alcohol were contributing factors. The driver was arrested at the scene.

Oregon gets OK to kill sea lions at Willamette Falls

SALEM — Oregon officials have received federal approval to trap and kill California sea lions that eat protected fish at Willamette Falls.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife said Thursday the permit allows them to trap and euthanize up to 93 animals a year on the lower Willamette River.

Officials say sea lions are intercepting fish on their way to spawning grounds above Willamette Falls south of Portland and removing them will help save threatened winter steelhead and spring chinook salmon.

Opponents say killing them won't solve the problem of declining salmon.

Wildlife officials can only remove sea lions observed in the area for two days or are seen eating fish.

For years now, Washington, Idaho and Oregon wildlife managers have been killing problem sea lions that eat salmon in the Columbia River near Bonneville Dam.

Five-year-old girl dies from burns suffered in apartment fire

MEDFORD — Authorities say a 5-year-old girl who suffered severe burns after a fire at an apartment building in east Medford Nov. 2 has died.

The Mail Tribune reported Thursday Medford Police Lt. Mike Budrea confirmed Olivia Chapman died at a Portland hospital over the weekend.

Chapman's mother Trish Ellsworth posted on Facebook the child had endured heart and lung problems since the fire.

Authorities say Chapman was the most severely injured of four children hurt during

the blaze.

Firefighters found Chapman unconscious with burns over much of her body, and they found her 3-year-old sister hiding under a bed. The girls' mother made it out without injury.

A man was forced to drop his two children from a second-story balcony, where a firefighter caught them. He jumped from the balcony and injured his leg.

Woman struck, killed by two drivers in Portland

PORTLAND — Authorities say a 66-year-old woman was hit by two drivers and killed, and the drivers who initially left the scene have both contacted police.

KOIN reports Victoria Lynn Pettibone was walking in Northeast Portland Wednesday evening hit by one vehicle and then another, authorities said. At first both drivers left the scene, but Thursday morning officials said both later contacted police and are cooperating.

The investigation continues.

Commercial ocean crabbing delayed in Oregon

NEWPORT — State shellfish managers have delayed the start of the commercial Dungeness crabbing season along the entire Oregon coast because of lack of meat on the crustaceans.

The ocean commercial crab season typically opens Dec. 1. But the Department of Fish and Wildlife has pushed that back until at least Dec. 16.

Officials say testing shows the crabs don't have enough meat on them. Officials will do more testing in coming weeks and decide whether to open the crabbing season Dec. 16 or take other actions.

Other crab closures are also in effect in southern Oregon because of high toxin levels. The closure applies to recreational and commercial crab harvests from bays and estuaries as well as on beaches and docks.

Commercial Dungeness crabbing is Oregon's most valuable fishery.

One dead after Portland shooting

PORTLAND — Authorities say one man is dead after a shooting outside a southeast Portland strip club.

KOIN reports police officers responded to the Dream On Saloon after reports of gunfire

early Thursday morning.

When officers arrived around 2 a.m., they found a man down on the sidewalk. Emergency medical personnel determined he was dead.

Authorities searched the area and found evidence of gunfire in the parking lot of the strip club. However, no suspects have been found.

Deputies arrest man in animal neglect case

SHERWOOD — Authorities arrested a man on animal neglect charges after deputies served a search warrant at a home southwest of Portland and found dogs in crates that could barely walk.

KATU-TV reports deputies arrested Russell Fernandez Tuesday on six counts of animal neglect and one count of possessing dog fighting paraphernalia.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office says they received a tip in October about mistreated dogs after a woman brought two pit bull puppies from the suspect's Sherwood property to an animal rescue organization in September.

Authorities say a veterinarian found the animals to be malnourished and they had an abnormal gait likely from being kept in small cages.

Deputies on Tuesday seized four dogs, two donkeys and two goats along with paraphernalia commonly associated with dog fighting.

It wasn't immediately known if Fernandez had a lawyer.

Man who slashed bus driver's neck gets 7.5 years

PORTLAND — A passenger on methamphetamine who slashed the throat of a Greyhound bus on Interstate 84 last year has been sentenced to 7-1/2 years in prison.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Multnomah County Circuit Judge Gregory Silver on Wednesday called driver Clint Lawson a hero for safely steering the bus to the side of the freeway.

The judge then sentenced 33-year-old Robert Moran-Vasquez. Moran-Vasquez pleaded guilty to assault, recklessly endangering another person and other charges.

A probable cause affidavit says Lawson was driving Nov. 29 through Troutdale headed toward Idaho when Moran-Vasquez demanded Lawson

let him off.

Investigators say when Lawson refused, Moran-Vasquez grabbed the steering wheel, slashed Lawson's throat and tried to crash the bus.

Investigators say Moran-Vasquez also stabbed a passenger who was trying to stop him.

Defense attorney Jon Martz said Moran-Vasquez is shocked by his actions and is truly sorry.

Testing of 2012 sexual assault kit led to rape conviction

PORTLAND — A man has been sentenced to more than two years in Oregon prison after a recently tested sexual assault kit linked him to the rape of a 14-year-old Portland girl.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports 49-year-old Chanh Van Tran was sentenced Tuesday after he pleaded guilty last week to third-degree rape and third-degree sodomy in connection with the September 2012 assault.

Tran was already incarcerated on a burglary conviction after breaking into a north-east Portland home in 2016.

The 14-year-old victim had reported the assault to police immediately. She was taken to a hospital for a forensic exam on the same day.

The sexual assault kit that matched DNA evidence to Tran wasn't tested until last year.

Portland police have not said why the kit wasn't sent for testing in 2012.

Driver sentenced in crash that injured two Portland officers

PORTLAND — A driver who injured two Portland police officers after crashing into a patrol car parked along Interstate 5 has been sentenced to 20 days in jail and three years of probation.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports 54-year-old Ken Neely was sentenced Wednesday after pleading guilty last month to charges of third-degree felony assault and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

Prosecutors say police Sgt. Nick Newby and officer Kimberly Adams had arrested a suspected drunken driver and were waiting for a tow truck when Neely plowed into Adams' patrol car in January.

Authorities say the patrol car had its emergency lights on.

Investigators say Neely, of Vancouver, Washington,

slurred speech and smelled of alcohol.

Neely was ordered to pay nearly \$8,700 in restitution. His driver's license will be revoked for five years.

Mental health review ordered for suspect in Portland hit-run

PORTLAND — A driver charged with intentionally ramming his SUV into three women at Portland State University in May has been ordered to get a mental health evaluation.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge Nan Waller on Tuesday agreed with a prosecutor's request to have 61-year-old Greg Porter evaluated at Oregon State Hospital.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Porter's defense lawyer maintains he is mentally unfit to be criminally prosecuted based on an expert hired by the defense.

Porter has been charged with attempted aggravated murder and hit-and-run driving, among other charges.

Three women were seriously hurt when authorities say a blue Mazda Tribute drove onto a sidewalk on the campus in downtown Portland.

Investigators arrested Porter hours later after finding him behind the wheel of a damaged SUV.

Police: Man fatally shoots estranged wife, wounds another

NORTH BEND — Authorities have arrested a 54-year-old man accused of fatally shooting his estranged wife and wounding her adult daughter in their North Bend home.

Coos County District Attorney R. Paul Frasier said Wednesday morning Glen Frank Mason was lodged into Coos County Jail after surrendering to police at his home.

North Bend officers responding to reports of gunshots and screaming Tuesday night found 53-year-old Leslie Mason dead from apparent gunshot wounds.

Her 28-year-old daughter, Lindsay Pease, was wounded but alive. She was taken to a local hospital where she is in stable condition. Officers also found three of Pease's children uninjured.

Frasier says witnesses reported seeing Glen Mason leave the house and he allegedly fired at them. One neighbor returned fire with a personal handgun.