

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 1, the first day of leap year 2020. There are 365 days left in the year.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Jan. 1, 2005, desperate, homeless villagers on the tsunami-ravaged island of Sumatra mobbed American helicopters carrying aid as the U.S. military launched its largest operation in the region since the Vietnam War.

ON THIS DATE

In 1785, The Daily Universal Register — which later became the Times of London — published its first issue.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slaves in rebel states shall be “forever free.”

In 1892, the Ellis Island Immigrant Station in New York formally opened.

In 1953, country singer Hank Williams Sr., 29, was discovered dead in the back seat of his car during a stop in Oak Hill, West Virginia, while he was being driven to a concert date in Canton, Ohio.

In 1959, Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries overthrew Cuban leader Fulgenicio Batista, who fled to the Dominican Republic.

In 1975, a jury in Washington found Nixon administration officials John N. Mitchell, H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and Robert C. Mardian guilty of charges related to the Watergate cover-up.

In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two new countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In 2009, the U.S. formally transferred control of the Green Zone to Iraqi authorities in a pair of ceremonies that also handed back Saddam Hussein's former palace.

In 2014, the nation's first legal recreational pot shops opened in Colorado at 8 a.m. Mountain time.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$8.1 million
2-11-32-33-35-38

Mega Millions: \$60 million
30-44-49-53-56-11-x3

Powerball: \$220 million
20-23-39-59-60-18-x2

Win for Life: Dec. 30
17-18-54-73

Pick 4:

Dec. 31

• 1 p.m.: 1-1-9-3

• 4 p.m.: 1-9-9-9

• 7 p.m.: 7-0-9-3

• 10 p.m.: 6-1-8-0

Pick 4: Dec. 30

• 1 p.m.: 6-7-1-3

• 4 p.m.: 9-0-2-5

• 7 p.m.: 9-1-9-3

• 10 p.m.: 8-7-2-5

NEWSPAPER LATE?

Every effort is made to deliver your Observer in a timely manner. Occasionally conditions exist that make delivery more difficult.

If you are not on a motor route, delivery should be before 5:30 p.m. If you do not receive your paper by 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, please call 541-963-3161 by 6 p.m.

If your delivery is by motor carrier, delivery should be by 6 p.m. For calls after 6, please call 541-975-1690, leave your name, address and phone number. Your paper will be delivered the next business day.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“If you asked me for my New Year Resolution, it would be to find out who I am.”

— Cyril Cusack, Irish actor

New laws to know for 2020

By Jade McDowell
EO Media Group

SALEM — Several new Oregon laws take effect with the start of the new year, including measures for making voting even easier in Oregon. Others address plastic bags, revenge porn and marijuana convictions.

When a new year starts, it can be easy to miss the memo on changes to the law. Ignorance of the law is not a defense for breaking it, however, so here are some handy guidelines for 2020:

Plastic bags

Starting Jan. 1, stores will no longer be able to give out single-use plastic bags at check-out, although bags used for meat and produce will be exempt. Stores will also be required to charge at least 5 cents per bag for paper, reusable bags or other alternatives.

Real ID

As of Oct. 1, 2020, regular Oregon driver's licenses will no longer be valid to board a commercial flight, enter a secure federal facility, such as a military base, or do other activities where a federally approved form of identification is required.

After Oct. 1, Oregonians who want to take a flight will have to use another form of approved identification, such as a passport, or apply for a new type of driver's license called a Real ID. The state hopes to have the federally approved Real IDs available through the Department of Motor Vehicles starting in July after finishing a “major IT overhaul,” according to the department's website.

Real IDs will be optional, and those getting them will be required to pay the DMV's fee for replacement of a driver's license, plus a yet-to-be-determined additional Real ID fee. The newly issued Real ID will have the same expiration date as the person's current driver's license, so people whose licenses expire soon after the Real IDs are available are advised they may want to wait until it is time to renew their license.

Should someone choose not to upgrade to a Real ID, a standard Oregon driver's licenses will still be good for activities such as driving, purchasing alcohol, registering to vote or applying for benefits.

Voting

In 2020, Oregon will continue its quest to make voting as convenient as possible by not charging for postage to mail in ballots. During the next election, Oregonians will simply be able to drop their ballot in the mail without a stamp.

Bicycling

Starting Jan. 1, bicyclists can proceed through an intersection with a stop sign or traffic signal without stopping, providing they proceed at a safe speed and yield to vehicles and pedestrians.

Revenge porn

As of 2020, it will be a crime in Oregon to distribute intimate photos or videos of a person without their consent. The photos or videos qualify as revenge



PortlandTribune/Jaime Valdez

The Oregon Legislature passed hundred of new bills that go into effect in 2020.



EO Media Group Photo/Ben Lonergan

A receipt from a retailer in the Tri-Cities, Washington, shows an 8.6% sales tax. The tax consists of Washington's 6.5% sales tax and the 2.1% sales tax in the Tri-Cities. Under a new Washington law, Oregon residents must file for reimbursement of the tax rather than receive a point-of-sale exemption.

porn under the law if they show a person's “intimate parts” or show them engaging in a sex act, the subject is identifiable, they did not give permission and could reasonably be expected to be “harassed, humiliated or injured by the disclosure.”

Previously, the law only covered posting such content to a website but now adds any other methods of dissemination, such as text message, email, private messaging in apps or handing out physical copies. It also allows victims to sue for up to \$5,000 in damages. The crime is a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense and Class C felony if the perpetrator has a prior record of such offenses.

Calling 911

Using the police as a weapon to harass someone will be a risky move starting Jan. 1 as a law takes effect allowing people to seek civil damages from someone who summoned police with the intent to infringe on the person's rights, discriminate against them, cause them to feel harassed or embarrassed, expel them from a place where they are legally allowed to be or damage their reputation or financial standing.

The law was put in place to address reports of incidents in which whites called 911 on people of color for legal activities, such as holding a barbecue.

Marijuana convictions

Starting in January, the aptly named Senate Bill 420 will allow people with past marijuana convictions to petition to clear their record.

The bill was passed in recognition that while Or-

egon legalized possession of user amounts of recreational marijuana in 2015, many people have criminal records based on possession pre-2015. Those convictions, for something that is now legal, can hold them back from obtaining jobs and housing.

After Jan. 1, people who have “qualifying marijuana convictions” can petition the court to set aside their conviction and seal the record, making it as if it never happened. As long as the conviction fits under the definition laid out by the law, the court must grant the motion.

A qualifying conviction means the person was found to possess less than 1 ounce of marijuana or other behavior described in ORS 475B.301, the offense happened before July 1, 2015, and the person fully complied with the requirements of their sentence.

Employment

Employees in Oregon will receive a variety of new protections in January.

Pregnant workers will be among those who receive new protections under the law. Employers will be required to provide reasonable accommodations, such as assistance with manual labor or more frequent bathroom breaks, to pregnant employees. They will also be prohibited from denying someone employment, requiring them to take a leave of absence or otherwise retaliating or discriminating against them for requesting accommodations for their pregnancy.

Employers will also be required to create anti-harassment policies for their workplace and will

no longer be allowed to force employees to sign nondisclosure agreements restricting them from talking about harassment or discrimination they experienced at the company.

Minimum wage

Minimum wage will increase once again in July as part of a law passed by the Legislature in 2016 that set up regular increases through 2022. This year, minimum wage in Oregon will increase to \$12 in “standard” counties (mostly found on the west side of the state), \$13.25 in metro counties, such as Clackamas and Multnomah, and \$11.50 in rural counties. Union and Wallaowa counties fall into the rural category, along with the rest of counties east of Sherman County.

Sales tax

In July, Washington stopped granting Oregonians an exemption to sales tax at the register. But as of Jan. 1, Oregon residents who have been saving their receipts can file a tax return for the amount of sales tax they paid to Washington in 2019.

To qualify, applicants must be a resident of a state that does not have sales tax, must have purchased the items for use outside of Washington and must be requesting reimbursement for more than \$25 in taxes paid (at 6.5% state sales tax, that means spending at least \$384.62 on qualifying items). They will have to submit receipts and information about the time and place of each purchase, in addition to proof of residency.

Each person is allowed to apply for reimbursement once per calendar year for taxes paid in the previous year.

According to the Washington Department of Revenue's media relations office, the necessary forms will go online in January under the “general public” heading on their home page. For now, what information is available can be found at dor.wa.gov/find-taxes-rates/retail-sales-tax/sales-non-residents.

WALLOWA COUNTY

Spending bill offers little help locally

By Bill Bradshaw
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Although a new federal spending bill included nearly \$60 million for sustainable and organic agriculture, few Wallowa County producers expect to see any benefits despite federal and state efforts to promote such farming methods.

The \$1.4 trillion 2020 spending bill was signed Dec. 19 by President Donald Trump to avert a government shutdown. Notice of the bill came in a press release from U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden.

Pete Schreder, the Oregon State University Extension livestock, range and natural resources agent for Wallowa County, said the county's organic market is rather small and without knowing the strings attached to the funding he couldn't be sure of the effects.

“It provides some opportunities for individuals thinking of changing methods ... toward an organic market,” he said.

Merkley's spokesperson Sara Hottman, emphasized his help securing \$37 million for the U.S. Department of Agriculture education and research program, an increase in the National Organic Program to \$15 million and \$6 million to help farmers transition from conventional to organic farming practices.

“For Wallowa County,” Hottman said, “this means that folks have access to competitive grant funding. Oregon in particular has benefited from organic research programs and the Organic Transition Program, which provide education to farmers who are newly adopting organic practices. The program will help transitioning producers better understand the economic and environmental benefits of organic production.”

As an example of grants to establish new organic crops that are available under the transition program, Hottman cited a program to incentives growing organic blueberries on the east side of the Cascades. These and other grant opportunities are available through OSU Extension, Hottman said.

Hank Stern, a spokesman for Wyden, said while there's no per-county dollar estimate, these increased resources will help farmers working in Northeast Oregon and throughout rural parts of the state if they are interested in organic and sustainable agriculture. That's a win all-around for both the rural economy and a sustainable future.

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