



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Scott Wyke, owner of Hammer Down Firearms in Bend, works on straightening a case of guns Friday while working at his store on Friday, Feb. 19, 2021.

Oregon gun sales break records

By SUZANNE ROIG
The Bulletin

BEND — While Gun-traders in Redmond sells mostly collectible guns, owner Jerry Koch said that isn't stopping customers from flocking to his shop in search of a firearm. They're coming out of fear, Koch said. Customers are fearful of the protests they've seen on television, in Portland and across the country.

"I pray for America," Koch said. "At the start of the pandemic, they came in and we were busy. They were scared then, too. But once the riots started, they started climbing again."

The pandemic and protests have made 2020 a banner year for gun sales in Oregon, according to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, which tracks criminal background checks of gun applicants.

Gun sales are not tracked, but the background checks required for most gun sales are. Still, not every background check results in a gun sale, and some sales are made without going

through background checks. For example, guns sold between family members do not require a background check, according to federal guidelines.

In 2020, Oregon sold more than 516,000 guns and performed background checks for those sales. In the United States, 39.6 million gun background checks were done in 2020, compared to 23.1 million in 2015.

With so many purchases, the state, which performs its own background checks, is backlogged. In 2019, there were 276,912 background check requests, compared to 2020 when there were 418,061 requests.

That backlog is mostly due to near hits on the National Instant Criminal Background Check System because of incorrect information, missing information or invalid government-issued identification or missing information, Capt. Timothy Fox, an Oregon State Police government and media relations officer, said in an email.

Jefferson County District Attorney Steven Leriche said he was not aware of increased crime being associated with increased firearm sales. But he did say there is a correlation between drug and alcohol use and gun ownership and serious crimes.

"Guns themselves are generally not my worry," Leriche said. "The combination of drugs being plentiful and guns being plentiful, that's a worry. We've had five murders so far and at least two involve a firearm."

According to FBI data, there was a 44% increase in firearm background checks in Oregon from 2019 to 2020 and an 86.9% increase from 2015 to 2020.

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NASA shares Mars landing video

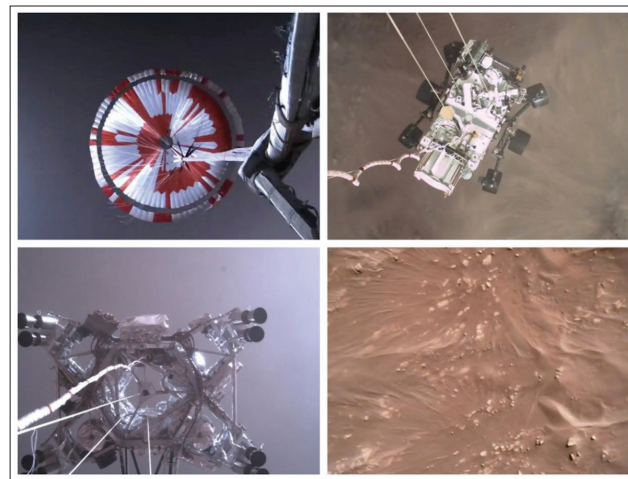
By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla — NASA on Monday, Feb. 22, released the first high-quality video of a spacecraft landing on Mars, a three-minute trailer showing the enormous orange and white parachute hurtling open and the red dust kicking up as rocket engines lowered the rover to the surface.

The footage was so good — and the images so breathtaking — that members of the rover team said they felt like they were riding along.

"It gives me goose bumps every time I see it, just amazing," said Dave Gruel, head of the entry and descent camera team.

The Perseverance rover landed last Thursday near an ancient river delta in Jezero Crater to search for signs of ancient microscopic life. After spending the weekend binge-



NASA/JPL-Caltech via AP

This combination of images from NASA shows the descent of the Mars Perseverance rover as it approaches the surface of the planet on Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021.

watching the descent and landing video, the team at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, shared the video at a news conference.

"These videos and these images are the stuff of our dreams," said Al Chen, who was in charge of the landing team.

Six off-the-shelf color

cameras were devoted to entry, descent and landing, looking up and down from different perspectives. All but one camera worked. The lone microphone turned on for landing failed, but NASA got some snippets of sound after touchdown: the whirring of the rover's systems and wind gusts.

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MATURE living

How to stay connected with loved ones after moving into an assisted living facility

Decisions surrounding assisted living facilities are not always easy. Men and women may be reluctant to leave their homes while family members may be worried about how their aging loved ones will adjust to life in an assisted living facility. Though modern assisted living facilities cater to residents with an array of needs and interests, the hesitation about whether or not to move into such a facility is understandable.

One of the concerns seniors and their families may have about assisted living facilities is how to remain in touch with loved ones. Thankfully, staying connected is easier than ever before. That ease of connection has been on full display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, during which aging men and women have been urged to limit contact with people outside their households in an effort to reduce their risk of contracting the virus. When the pandemic is in the rearview mirror, seniors can continue to employ various strategies to stay connected with their families after moving into an assisted living facility.

• **Embrace technology.** It's understandable that seniors are sometimes hesitant to utilize technology. Having spent much of their lives without smartphones and Zoom calls, it may seem like adjusting to a world where such things are now widely utilized will be incredibly difficult. However,

modern technology is user-friendly, meaning seniors won't need much, if any, technical expertise or experience to utilize an assortment of devices that can help them stay in touch. Ask a relative to show you the ropes of a new device or request that staff at the facility teach residents the basics of using devices to stay connected with family. Staff may help set up Zoom calls or help residents learn the ropes of texting.

• **Make a weekly communication commitment.** Work with family members to set up a time each week when you can communicate directly with them. If family lives nearby, this might take the form of a weekly family meal at a loved one's home. If family lives too far away for routine in-person meals, set up a time each week for a family Zoom call.

• **Continue to engage with your interests and fellow hobbyists.** If you were an avid reader who loved to discuss and recommend books to your loved ones, then continue to do so after moving into an assisted living facility. Sports fans who bonded with their loved ones over a shared passion for a favorite team can keep following their team and discussing the latest big game with their friends and family via email, texts or video calls. Various studies have discovered the positive effects that hobbies can



Many seniors relied on technology like Zoom to stay connected with loved ones during the pandemic. Residents of assisted living facilities can continue to utilize such technology to maintain connections with their families after the pandemic.

have on long-term physical and mental health. Staying engaged with your passions can keep lines of communication open with friends and family and benefit your overall health.

Keeping the lines of communication with loved ones open can help aging men and women as they transition to life in assisted living facilities.

Many people have been asking if preplanned funeral arrangements are transferable from one funeral home to another. The simple answer is yes, they are. And the process is easy.

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