



WILDFIRE WEAPONS



Courtesy of Loren Kellogg

A Tactical Fire Suppression Forwarder in action in Central Oregon.



NIFC

The National Weather Service operations center at the National Interagency Fire Center, Boise.

From satellites to state-of-the-art vehicles, firefighters get a hand from technology

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

BOISE — From inside the National Interagency Fire Center at the Boise Airport, meteorologist Nick Nauslar evaluated a wildfire burning 1,100 miles away in southern New Mexico.

Using the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite and Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, he peered into the heart of the wildfire from satellites orbiting the earth 22,300 miles straight up. Using an arsenal of sensors, Nauslar could track the size and movement of the fire, find hot spots and assess

the weather and its impact.

“It’s not showing heat in the last 24 hours, due in part to weather,” he said.

The real-time information was helpful in seeing the fire and forecasting its behavior, Nauslar said. It would also be updated using ground reports and aerial mapping.

He used the system to help fire managers understand the fire and to track whether and where it was spreading.

“In fire, there is a lot of data you have to look at, and it comes from multiple sources,” said Nauslar, who is in his 12th fire season. “So you are trying to ingest all of this data, aggregate it, organize it and apply it — one of the most important and

difficult aspects of our job.”

Technological advancements help wildfire forecasters, incident commanders and land managers as they race to join the battle that rages across the West every summer. The progress is welcome — and needed in light of larger fires, longer seasons and new urgency in determining how to manage fire-prone landscapes. Last year alone, 52,113 wildfires burned 89 million acres, most of it in the West.

“Technology has helped us in preparation, planning and communication,” NIFC Public Affairs Specialist Carrie Bilbao said.

See Wildfire, Page 12



George Plaven/Capital Press

Hemp flowers resemble marijuana, but with an average concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, of 0.3% or less.

Hemp lawsuit against DEA dismissed

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has convinced a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit against its hemp regulations, but another legal challenge against the rules will likely persist.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., has determined his court lacks jurisdiction in the hemp industry’s lawsuit against DEA restrictions that allegedly overstep the agency’s authority.

The Hemp Industries Association filed a complaint last year claiming the DEA’s rules would “effectively destroy the burgeoning hemp industry” by criminalizing crop extracts that exceed 0.3% THC, the psychoactive compound in marijuana.

Under the DEA’s “interim final rule” for hemp, hemp extracts that exceed the 0.3% THC threshold are regulated as marijuana, which remains illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act.

The hemp industry argues this interpretation “threatens every stage of the hemp production supply chain” because the crop’s extracts temporarily become more concentrated in THC during processing.

Products sold for cannabidiol — or CBD, a substance thought to have healthful properties — are diluted below the 0.3% THC threshold before becoming available to consumers, the industry argued.

The DEA’s regulations would expose hemp companies to prosecution simply for engaging in “essential hemp processing and manufacturing operations,” threatening the entire industry, the plaintiff said.

See Hemp, Page 12



Idaho Department of Lands
A Fire Boss single-engine air tanker makes a drop.

Oregon Legislature approves higher wine shipping limit

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

SALEM — The Oregon Legislature has passed a bill to increase the monthly limit on direct-to-consumer wine shipments, aiming to keep small wineries competitive during the coronavirus pandemic.

Up to five cases of wine per customer can be shipped

a month under Senate Bill 406, which was approved 39-13 by the House on May 12 after unanimously passing the Senate in March.

Total economic activity associated with Oregon’s wine industry fell about 20% last year and wine industry jobs plunged 28% due to coronavirus restrictions, said Rep. Gary Leif, R-Roseburg.

“This is a way to support wineries that are struggling right now,” he said.

Though the bill didn’t face many obstacles during the legislative session, some lawmakers opposed it on the House floor, citing the potential for alcohol abuse.

“I don’t think it’s appropriate for us to provide more opportunity for people who are struggling to fall deeper

into addiction,” said Rep. Tawna Sanchez, D-Portland.

Sanchez said lawmakers should “take our blinders off” and recognize that easier access to alcohol is a detriment to Oregon’s child welfare, judicial and educational systems.

Meanwhile, the economic effects of the coronavirus outbreak will wane over time, she said. “At

some point, the pandemic will be over and these industries will be able to do better.”

Proponents of SB 406 said that alcohol is already accessible in Oregon and that raising the shipping limit isn’t likely to increase abuse because price is the main impediment to consumption.

See Wine, Page 12

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