

Rural Report

June is the Great Outdoors Month

It looks like Oregon is currently in the spotlight for being one of the best places ever for the great outdoors. In case you were unaware, June is Great Outdoors Month. It's a time dedicated to celebrating and exploring the beauty and benefits of the natural world. Whether it's hiking, camping, fishing, or simply enjoying a picnic in a local park, this month encourages everyone to step outside and appreciate the great outdoors.

The Senate has officially designated June 2024 as Great Outdoors Month, and we're ready to join in the festivities. We're not alone in our enthusiasm. According to BetVirginia.com, Oregon is the second most outdoorsy state in the nation. While BetVirginia.com usually focuses on Virginia sports betting, they decided to rank states based on their interest in outdoor activities using Google Trends search interest scores.

It's no surprise Oregon ranked so high given the magnitude of outdoor activities. With mountains, deserts, and the ocean, Oregon truly has a little bit of everything. From hiking by stunning waterfalls to epic cycling and camping adventures, you can't ask for much more if you love being out in nature as much as so many Oregonians do.

Oregon scored 80, just behind Minnesota's perfect score of 100 and ahead of Indiana's 70. Our northern neighbor Washington placed seventh with a score of 47, while California didn't make the top 10. Surprisingly California is home to some of the most awe-inspiring places you ever could visit, such as the Redwood Forest, Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks and other wonders.

Water Management Agencies in Lane and Douglas Awarded millions Drought Funds

A sum of \$1.22 million will go to the Tri-City Water and Sanitary Authority, which serves small communities 20 miles south of Roseburg, including Myrtle Creek. General Manager Paul Wilborn explained the investment will help build a 300,000-gallon water tank.

"We have an area in our system — it's a little bit deficient on water storage. And it's kind of on a wild land area, so we're just wanting to get a little bit more water in there for fire suppression, if necessary, or water usage," Wilborn said.

Eugene-Springfield's Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission received a \$4 million grant for storage, filtering and recycled water capabilities.

The federal WaterSMART Program grants are awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation. Wilborn said he and his team have sought this kind of water infrastructural funding for years. The TCWSA has approximately 1,700 connections. "It can impact about 3,600 people out here."

"The new water storage reservoir will work in parallel with an existing 87,000-gallon water storage tank to enhance fire suppression volume, improve pressure and flow and ensure continuous potable water service to the area," Wilborn said.

The recent awards are matching grants and Wilborn noted the TCWSA is "already invested in the project" and ready to proceed.

Oregon's U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley supported the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal and Inflation Reduction Act, which enabled the WaterSMART funding projects.



DSU Extension Service Douglas County

Digging in: taking soil samples in the farm or garden!

How to take and interpret soil samples

Do you have yellowing vegetable leaves? Is your pasture tonnage down? Are your grapes having trouble reaching brix? Whether it's your home garden or Commercial farm, it could be a soil nutrition issue. Luckily determining soil nutrition isn't as daunting a task as it may sound!

This workshop will teach you how to be an agricultural investigator, taking soil samples, interpreting the results, and scouting for in-field issues. During this class we will sample both perennial and annual cropping systems, showing you how to do both. We will also cover where, when, and how to take these samples, and where to send them.



When:
August 20, 2024
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Where:
Elkton Community Education Center
15850 DR-38 W
Elkton, OR 97436

Registration:
Registration required
Ends August 13, 2024

Cost:
FREE!

More Information:
Logan Bennett
(541) 236-3015
<https://beav.es/iHt>

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Veterans Corner

Enjoying your Freedoms? Thank a Veteran!

2024 VA/DOD Suicide Prevention Conference

Reimagining Suicide Prevention: Evolving and Innovating to Meet Diverse Needs The health and well-being of the Nation's service members and Veterans continue to be a top priority for VA and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). We are partnering again this year to host the Nation's only conference dedicated to addressing military and Veteran suicide prevention. Join us for the 2024 VA/DOD Suicide Prevention Conference July 16-18 at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd in Portland, Oregon.

Guided by the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide (PDF, 2.8 MB, 42 pages) and Department of Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention (PDF, 1.8 MB, 103 pages), this year's theme — Reimagining Suicide Prevention: Evolving and Innovating to Meet Diverse Needs — focuses on innovative ways to increase the reach to at-risk Service member and Veteran populations, especially including historically underserved and growing populations such as women, LGBTQ+, or American Indian and Alaska Natives.

Who Should Attend

VA and DOD care teams, leaders, allies and subject matter experts from across the country are invited to come together and share comprehensive and public health-based strategies to prevent suicide nationwide.

Oregon Veteran Max Home Loan Increased in 2024

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) has increased the maximum home loan limit for the Oregon Veteran Home Loan for 2024, conforming to loan limits for mortgages set by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). ODVA will now accept loans up to the new maximum loan amount of \$766,550, an increase of \$40,350 from \$726,200 in 2023, for funding on or after January 1, 2024. The Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program, which has been one of ODVA's core veteran benefits since the agency's inception in 1945, offers eligible veterans fixed-rate financing for owner-occupied, single-family residences.

The veteran home loan product is a non-expiring, lifetime benefit for any eligible Oregon veteran and may be used up to four times. The program provides financing for purchases only and cannot be used for refinancing.

This state veteran home loan benefit is separate and distinct from the federal VA Home Loan Guarantee and has lent nearly \$9 billion in low-interest home loans to more than 336,000 veterans since 1945. To be eligible, a veteran must have served on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces, as documented on their DD-214, and must meet one of the service criteria outlined on ODVA's website.

For more information about the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Home Loan Program, program eligibility, or to find a partner broker near you, please call (800) 633-6826 to speak with a loan specialist or visit www.orvethomeloans.com.

Letters to the Editor

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ongoing use to the citizens of Drain. A part of the Endowment was the establishment of the Civic Center Committee. In the language of the Endowment, this was to insure that there was oversight and stewardship of authority to mitigate and integrate the intended use of the resource in liaison with the city and in it's partnership, which was codified at that time.

Now, a generation later and a city government somewhat removed from those motivations, character, and ingenuity - a new resolution results in the nullification of those important guardrails. Under the tunnel vision of finding money, cutting costs and diminutive progress, the city management closes it's eyes and ears to those committed to finding constructive answers to prevailing problems while keeping an eye to progress and growth. There is a lesson to simply attempting to maintain the status quo and that is inevitable decline.

When government shuts out those voices it is left to push a narrow objective, and without a true rudder it spins within it's own circles, unfettered to others concerns. I know that the CCAC has been working diligently on the objectives outlined in the letter above. One example is, of the needed improvements identified that would contribute to the potential income from the center is updating tables and other amenities in the kitchen and the CCAC has supposedly been tasked to inventory and

look for ways to prudently save the city money while researching the material improvements. I say supposedly because, as the committee meets regularly to research and request meetings to report back findings and assuage management with their diligence to save the city money that it claims the civic center is hemorrhaging. The city management declines to meet for these findings and on it's own, with out consultation, purchases one 8' table for over \$200, when there are more appropriate tables available for 1/4 that cost. If the concern is the financial burden of the center, why is the source of procurement more important than the cost? Doesn't this insure that the burden is now amplified and contributing to the supposed financial liability, leading to increased speculation and accusation that it is a burgeoning impediment on city finances?

A citizen committee that has little or no meaningful input or feedback to the powers that be, has little chance of finding encumbrances that are slipped into it's operating costs like water, utilities and man hours charged that aren't directly attributed to it's specific and actual use. It can't monitor or regulate with any accuracy and so cannot defend or even identify it's own position and is in effect, in limbo. For the sake of Katrina's plea for the community to come out and volunteer and contribute to the efforts to be involved with the betterment and success of citizen resources, I urge you to join her.

