

# Audit suggests low morale at Department of Energy

By HILLARY BORRUD  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Employee morale is low and turnover is high at the Oregon Department of Energy, according to interviews conducted by auditors at the Secretary of State's Office.

The energy agency attracted public scrutiny in recent months for its handling of energy tax incentives. Now, the auditors' notes released by the Secretary of State's Office suggest the department is also struggling internally with workplace problems.

Auditors began an investigation into the Department of Energy's handling of renewable energy and efficiency tax credits in June, after someone filed an anonymous complaint through the Secretary of State's waste, fraud and abuse hotline.

The complainant alleged that energy officials gave preferential treatment to the consulting firm Blue Tree Strategies, by allowing the firm to negotiate deeper discounts on energy tax credits than allowed under state law.

The Audits Division ultimately concluded that the Department of Energy never publicized its 2012 decision to lift restrictions on discounting tax credits, so few finance firms knew they could negotiate such deals.

Many recipients of energy tax credits are government entities or companies that do not owe state taxes, so the state has allowed them to sell the tax credits in order to raise cash. However, lawmakers wanted to ensure most of the benefit from the tax credits went to the energy project owners, so the Legislature passed a law that required the Department of Energy to adopt price regulations for the sales.

### High turnover, low morale

According to notes auditors took in early August, two employees at the Department of Energy said the employee turnover rate at the agency had reached as high as 50 percent and morale has been low during the last five years. Rachel Wray, a spokeswoman for the agency, said turnover was at 32 percent

during the 2009-2011 biennium, 50 percent during the 2011-13 biennium and 22.3 percent from April 2013 to April 2014.

Auditors did not reveal the names of the employees who made the allegations. However, they wrote that an employee in the energy loan program said the human resources manager wanted to request "an agency-wide performance audit" but would not request it until she left the agency out of fear of retaliation. The employees told auditors that staff who raised questions were "told to mind their own business and just do as told," according to the auditor's notes.

Donna Archambault, who was the energy agency's human resources manager until the end of this week, wrote in an email that the employee's statement to auditors that Archambault wanted to request an audit was incorrect.

"I have never requested an agency-wide performance audit nor have I ever had any fear of retaliation either under the current or any past Department of Energy director — for any rea-



EO Media Group

An audit by the Secretary of State's Office found employee morale might be a problem at the Department of Energy.

son," Archambault wrote. "I did talk with Director Kaplan about a classification review of the positions in the tax credit and loan programs and that's currently on HR's 'to do' list."

### Buckley a 'common denominator'

Both energy employees said Anthony Buckley, the chief financial officer at the energy agency, was a common denominator for problems at the agency and "the way he organizes staff and reporting duties would allow him to hide anything he wants," according to the auditors' notes.

In a written statement, Wray disputed the allegation that the Department of Energy would hide anything.

"We haven't shied away from acknowledging and trying to take on the many problems here at ODOE, and I reject the suggestion and believe it's mis-

leading to suggest that we're hiding issues," Wray wrote. "We've been upfront about the need to improve and rebuild the agency, including challenges like our budget (2015-17 budget reflects 21 percent cut), morale and retention, the performance of our tax credit programs, and our data and reporting."

Wray wrote that it is a "heavy lift to address these issues, but we're working on them one by one, and we don't pretend that problems that developed over years can be solved overnight ... Our director's expectation is that as an agency, down to each and every individual employee here at ODOE, we take accountability and responsibility for our decisions and actions, and we figure out ways to constantly improve."

### Increasing accountability

Buckley, who oversees the agency's tax incentive, energy

grant and loan programs, said there were a couple reasons for high turnover in the division he manages. Some of the positions were temporary, such as jobs related to federal economic stimulus initiatives, and the Legislature's decision to phase out the business energy tax credit meant the division could function with fewer employees. Buckley wrote in an email that he restructured the division to increase accountability, by empowering an accountant to report problems directly to Buckley.

"The first change had the energy loan program accountant position report directly to me instead of the loan program manager," Buckley wrote. "This was done to increase internal controls and enhance the integrity of the program. Prior to this change accounting transactions were localized within the program. This resulted in weak internal controls and a higher propensity for errors and risk exposure."

According to Buckley, accountants who worked in the division left because of a forecasted deficit in the energy loan program and "lack of resources."

"We have actually reduced the potential for issues to be hidden," Buckley wrote. He added, "It is important to me that staff know they are empowered to raise issues when appropriate and trust that those issues will be addressed."

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

## ACCUWEATHER® FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

### Astoria 5-Day Forecast

**Tonight**

A shower early; otherwise, mostly cloudy

49°

Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs

**Tuesday**

Cloudy with a shower

64° 52°

**Wednesday**

Breezy with rain

63° 54°

**Thursday**

Continued cloudy with a couple of showers

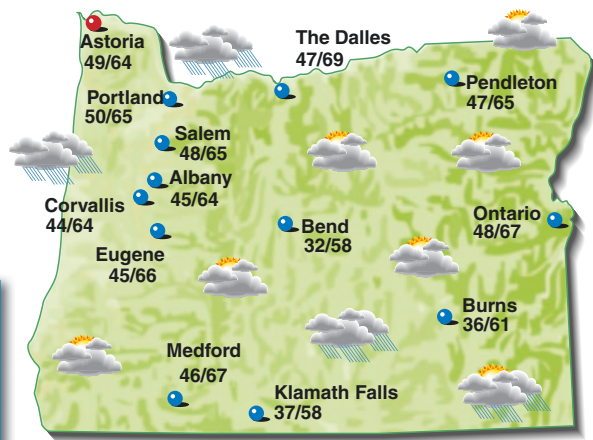
67° 53°

**Friday**

Intervals of clouds and sunshine

69° 54°

### Oregon Weather



Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2015

### Almanac

**Astoria through Sunday.**

**Temperatures**

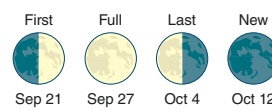
High	67°
Low	55°
Normal high	68°
Normal low	50°

**Precipitation**

Yesterday	0.00"
Month to date	1.56"
Normal month to date	0.79"
Year to date	30.67"
Normal year to date	38.89"

### Sun and Moon

Sunset tonight	7:30 p.m.
Sunrise Tuesday	6:53 a.m.
Moonrise today	8:14 a.m.
Moonset today	8:09 p.m.



AccuWeather.com

### Regional Cities

City	Today			Tues.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Baker City	70	36	c	63	37	c
Bend	66	32	c	58	37	c
Brookings	65	49	c	59	51	c
Eugene	67	45	c	66	48	c
Ilwaco	62	53	sh	61	54	sh
Klamath Falls	71	37	c	58	33	c
Medford	75	46	c	67	45	c
Newport	61	48	sh	59	51	c
North Bend	65	48	c	64	52	c

City	Today			Tues.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Olympia	65	45	sh	63	49	c
Pendleton	68	47	c	65	47	c
Portland	67	50	sh	65	53	c
Roseburg	69	48	c	66	50	c
Salem	67	48	c	65	51	c
Seaside	63	53	c	62	55	c
Spokane	63	45	c	62	45	sh
Vancouver	66	49	c	64	52	c
Yakima	70	38	c	68	43	c

### Under the Sky

Tonight's Sky: The stars Sirius and Procyon are in the southeast before sunrise. Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky. Procyon is well to its upper left.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

### Tomorrow's Tides

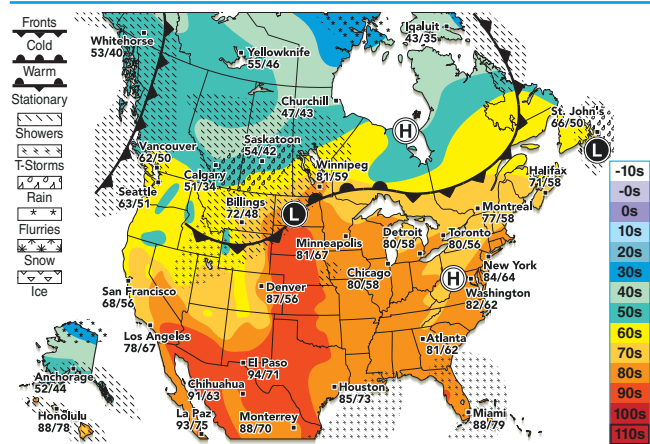
**Astoria / Port Docks**

Time	High	Time	Low
3:10 a.m.	7.5 ft.	9:16 a.m.	0.6 ft.
3:19 p.m.	8.0 ft.	9:44 p.m.	0.3 ft.

### National Cities

City	Today			Tues.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Atlanta	78	58	s	81	62	s
Boston	74	60	pc	80	63	s
Chicago	77	61	s	80	58	s
Denver	91	58	s	87	56	pc
Des Moines	82	67	s	85	67	s
Detroit	75	57	s	80	58	s
El Paso	94	72	s	94	71	s
Fairbanks	46	35	c	47	37	sh
Honolulu	88	76	pc	88	78	s
Indianapolis	77	53	s	81	57	s
Kansas City	83	66	s	85	67	s
Las Vegas	96	74	t	89	71	t
Los Angeles	82	70	r	78	67	r
Memphis	83	60	s	86	65	pc
Miami	90	79	t	88	79	t
Nashville	79	54	s	84	58	s
New Orleans	84	73	s	82	74	t
New York	78	62	pc	84	64	s
Oklahoma City	89	65	pc	88	69	s
Philadelphia	77	58	s	83	61	s
St. Louis	81	63	s	84	63	s
Salt Lake City	82	60	t	87	58	t
San Francisco	69	58	pc	68	56	c
Seattle	64	50	sh	63	51	c
Washington, DC	77	58	s	82	62	s

### Tomorrow's National Weather



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. Forecast high/low temperatures are given for selected cities. Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

## Columbia Beach Lane closed for brush cutting

The Daily Astorian  
Clatsop County crews are brush cutting on Hillcrest Loop and chopping in the

Jewel District this week. The southeast end of Columbia Beach Lane is closed Wednesday and Thursday for culvert installation. A detour will be

set up via Delaura Beach Lane and Ridge Road. For information, contact Clatsop County Public Works at 503-325-8631.

## Deaths

**Sept. 9, 2015**  
HANNULA, Irene M., 96, of Clatskanie, died in Clatskanie. Groulx Family Mortu-

ary is in charge of the arrangements.  
**Sept. 10, 2015**  
PETERSON, Barbra Jo-

anne, 77, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary in Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## Lotteries

**OREGON**

**Sunday's Pick 4:**  
1 p.m.: 5-7-9-6  
4 p.m.: 9-6-5-2  
7 p.m.: 8-4-3-8  
10 p.m.: 3-4-0-4

**Saturday's Megabucks:**  
10-12-17-19-34-40  
Estimated jackpot: \$2.4 million.

**Saturday's Powerball:** 2-3-13-16-35, Powerball: 27  
Estimated jackpot: \$167 million.

**Saturday's Pick 4:**  
1 p.m.: 5-5-8-8  
4 p.m.: 5-6-2-7  
7 p.m.: 8-8-7-6  
10 p.m.: 0-8-7-7

**Friday's Pick 4:**  
1 p.m.: 2-7-7-6  
4 p.m.: 1-5-5-8  
7 p.m.: 6-1-5-7  
10 p.m.: 3-4-4-7

**WASHINGTON**

**Sunday's Daily Game:** 2-6-4  
**Sunday's Keno:** 01-02-12-14-18-20-23-33-40-43-47-51-55-59-62-65-69-71-72-73  
**Sunday's Match 4:** 02-13-14-16  
**Saturday's Daily Game:** 4-7-4  
**Saturday's Hit 5:** 09-12-26-27-35  
Estimated jackpot: \$170,000.

**Saturday's Keno:** 06-09-10-16-17-19-23-25-32-41-51-53-59-61-67-75-77-78-79-80  
**Saturday's Lotto:** 13-21-27-31-40-46  
Estimated jackpot: \$4 million.  
**Saturday's Match 4:** 09-15-17-24  
**Friday's Daily Game:** 5-2-2  
**Friday's Keno:** 04-06-10-12-16-17-19-21-24-29-31-37-44-54-56-60-64-66-71-76  
**Friday's Match 4:** 04-06-09-15  
**Friday's Mega Millions:** 05-11-31-50-67, Mega Ball: 14  
Estimated jackpot: \$106 million.

## Public meetings

**MONDAY**

**Youngs River Lewis & Clark Water District Board,** 6 p.m., 34583 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

**Clatsop County Rental Owners Association,** 6 p.m. quarterly meeting, Westlake Chinese Restaurant, 1480 S. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside. Members and nonmembers welcome. Cost, including dinner and tip, is \$12.50. Speakers: Chris Dugan and Terry Turner.

**Astoria City Council,** 7

p.m., special meeting, affordable housing study, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Seaside City Council,** 7 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 989 Broadway, Seaside.

**TUESDAY**

**Cannon Beach Public Works Committee,** 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St., Cannon Beach.

**Clatsop County Human Services Advisory Council,** 4 to 5:30 p.m., 800 Exchange St., Room 430.

**Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission,** 5:15 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

**Port of Astoria Commission,** 6 p.m. regular meeting, old Port offices, 422 Gateway Ave., Suite 100.

**Northwest Regional Education Service District Board,** 6 p.m., 5825 N.E. Ray Circle, Hillsboro.

**Shoreline Sanitary District Board,** 7 p.m., Gearhart Hertz Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

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