

Power outage, internet disruption cause headaches

The Daily Astorian

Power was knocked out to more than 1,000 customers early Thursday after a car crash in Miles Crossing.

A 2009 Toyota Corolla with two occupants hit a power pole at about 1:30 a.m. near U.S. Highway 101 Business and Youngs River Road and Lewis and Clark Road, according to authorities.

One or both occupants were taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital for treatment.

The power outage affected 1,123 customers in the area. Pacific Power was able to restore power to about 100 customers by 3:30 a.m. Power was restored to all remaining customers by about 7:30 a.m.

Internet service, meanwhile, was down early Thursday after a fiber line was apparently cut.

Storms: No time to get complacent

Continued from Page 1A

In a Tuesday blog post, Washington meteorologist Cliff Mass wrote, "Starting Thursday, we will enter a period of extraordinarily active weather with the potential for heavy rain, flooding, and a highly dangerous windstorm with the potential to be an historic event." Mass explained that the coastal areas of northern Oregon and southern Washington could see hurricane-force winds.

He described the Songda-fueled storm as "A true monster storm, potentially as strong as the most powerful storm in NW history (the Columbus Day Storm of 1962)." Friday is the anniversary of this milestone storm.

Plan for the worst, hope for the best

Everyone knows that much-hyped weather events can turn out to be much ado about nothing, but local emergency experts say this is not the time to get complacent.

Pacific County Emergency Management Agency Deputy Director Scott McDougall said Thursday that many people are not adequately prepared for a natural disaster.

"It's really basic stuff, and yet is stuff that people sometimes forget about," McDougall said.

In relatively remote places, road damage, flooding, power outages and problems with communications systems can linger for days after a severe weather event, McDougall said, so families should prepare for the aftermath, as well as the storm. He noted that research about the Cascadia earthquake has changed the way emergency managers think about preparedness for other type of events.

"Three days (of supplies) isn't enough," McDougall said. "The messaging we are going to put out now is that people need to be prepared for two weeks. Why not prepare for a worst-case scenario? If that scenario doesn't come to pass, you're still well-prepared."

How to prepare

McDougall offered the following tips for preparing for — and getting through — a major weather event:

- Make sure you have enough canned and other nonperishable foods to feed your family and your pets for several days.

- The power may go out, so stock up on foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking.
- Be sure you have enough clean drinking water to meet the needs of your family members and pets.

- If you expect to have problems with your water system, fill tubs and sinks ahead of time, so you

will have water for dishes, hygiene, etc.

- Refill prescriptions, stock up on needed medical supplies, and make sure you have a backup-plan for any medical equipment that relies on electricity.

- Refill your gas tanks in your vehicles before the storm. Check to see if you need to stock up on batteries, gas for your generator or propane tanks. Store those items safely.

- Keep essential electronic devices fully charged, so they'll keep working if the power goes out.

- Round up candles, matches, or lanterns and flashlights. Make sure they're in working order.

- Place important documents and contact information in a water-safe container.

- Make plans for keeping your pets dry, safe and warm during the storm. Make a plan for how you will move livestock in the event of severe weather or flooding.

- Be sure that you have essential supplies in all of the places where you might be caught during a bad storm — for example, your workplace, your car.

- Walk around your property, looking for any potential hazards. Take time to secure loose items that could cause damage during a storm.

- Make sure you know where gas and water hookups are located, and how to turn them on and off.

- Check to be sure that you have enough blankets and warm clothing to keep warm if the heat goes out.

- Remember that generators, propane stoves, and charcoal barbecues can all generate carbon monoxide. Never use these items indoors. Use them only outdoors, in well-ventilated areas.

If things go wrong

- For medical, fire, rescue or other public safety emergencies, call 911.

- It is also appropriate to call 911 if an essential piece of medical equipment, such as a dialysis machine or ventilator fails.

- For assistance with nonurgent situations, call these nonemergency lines:

Astoria: 503-325-4411
Warrenton: 503-861-2235

Cannon Beach: 503-436-2811

Gearhart: 503-738-5501
Long Beach, Wash.: 503-642-2911

Oregon State Police: 503-325-2231

- To report power outages, call Pacific Power at 877-508-5088. If you discover a fallen power line, immediately call 911 and then Pacific Power at the same number.

Tax: Most expensive ballot measure in state's history

Continued from Page 1A

law, such as repealing exemptions for benefit companies, or a complete overhaul such as replacing the gross receipts tax with a different corporate tax scheme.

As long as none of those proposals raise more money than Measure 97, the Legislature needs only a simple majority to approve any changes, lawmakers said.

Bolster revenue

As written, the ballot measure would bolster state revenue by nearly 30 percent, or an estimated \$3 billion annually, and avert a projected \$1.35 billion state budget shortfall for 2017-19.

Proponents say the measure would help reverse a trend in which Oregon residents pay an increasing share of state revenue, while businesses pay less.

Opponents argue the tax plan raises prices for consumers and creates inequity in what different kinds of corporations are required to pay in taxes. The measure would tax only "C" corporations with an excess of \$25 million in annual sales, while leaving "S" corporations with the same amount of sales untouched.

If the measure passes, lawmakers in 2017 can expect "a cavalcade of 10,000 lobbyists from every industry with valid stories about why their rates should be lower," Hass said.

The legislation required to redesign the tax measure will likely "be the biggest bill you've seen in your life"



Brian Boquist



Ginny Burdick

because of the complicated fixes that might be needed, said Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas.

Lawmakers will have to decide whether they want to consider each of those requests and possibly design different rates for different industries.

Some lawmakers favor overhauling the tax by reducing the rate and expanding the base of businesses that would have to pay.

Hass proposed an alternative to Measure 97 in the 2016 session that would have raised \$500 million annually by lowering the tax rate and applying it to a broader group of businesses. However, business and union groups refused to negotiate on an alternative, and Hass said he did not have the needed support in the House of Representatives to advance the proposal.

Other lawmakers are suggesting eliminating the gross receipts tax entirely and replacing it with a different corporate taxation scheme.

Other states

While five other states have gross receipts taxes, the one proposed in Oregon imposes the highest rate on the smallest number of corporations.

Our Oregon, a pub-

lic employee union-backed group, wrote the measure with the intent to target large, out-of-state corporations such as Walmart and Comcast. But the tax also affects nearly 200 Oregon corporations — including the iconic Powell's Books, Nike, Columbia Sportswear and Intel. Because the tax applies to sales, rather than profits, it would hit high-volume, low-profit outfits particularly hard, said Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland.

Burdick, who is part of a group of lawmakers looking at potential Measure 97 changes, said she would prefer to do away with the gross receipts tax and replace it with something else that would raise equal or less revenue. Burdick said she has no particular kind of tax in mind.

"I'm really trying to keep an open mind at this point," she said.

Lawmakers also could try to devise a law that would prevent Measure 97 from taxing the same item or service more than once, another problem associated with a gross receipts tax, Boquist said.

Brown recently has been mum about what changes she would make to the measure, saying she is focused on getting the measure passed.

She suggested Wednesday, Oct. 12, at a meeting of the Pamplin Media Group and EO Media Group editorial boards that an exemption in the measure for benefit companies is problematic. Businesses can register as a benefit company with the Secretary of State's Office to show cus-

tomers they have higher standards of transparency and accountability.

The designation was not meant to give businesses a tax advantage, Brown said.

Pat McCormick, spokesman for the "No on Measure 97" campaign, said the problems with the measure has "created a platform for a lot of lobbying activity" in the 2017 session.

"People can't really be sure what they're voting on if the Legislature is planning on changes," McCormick said. "We don't know what the changes will be."

The Yes on Measure 97 campaign opposes "any attempt to let big corporations off the hook to pay their fair share, especially if the business lobby attempts to make our small businesses and consumers pay more," said Katherine Driessen, spokeswoman for Our Oregon.

The controversial proposal has fueled one of the most expensive ballot measure battles in the state's history. Businesses opposed to the major have raised an arsenal of more than \$16 million and counting, and both campaigns for and against the measure have bombarded voters with advertising slots on social media and airwaves.

If the measure doesn't pass, lawmakers will face the prospect of either making cuts in services or coming up with their own tax package to boost revenue, lawmakers said.

Without additional revenue, those cuts could be 10-12 percent across the board, Brown said.

Fair: 'We made about 200 pies'

Continued from Page 1A

Cranberry cornucopia

In one corner, Janet Herring, 85, of Ocean Park, sat diligently weaving cranberry vines, something she's done for more than 20 years. She started weaving as a way to curb a smoking habit.

"They said spend your money on something you've always wanted to do," Herring said. Herring has been a mainstay at the fair ever since, selling small baskets, wreaths and coasters. Across the room, a line was forming for another fair staple: cranberry peach pie. "We made about 200 pies," Marci Bennett, owner of Simpli Edibles, said in between plating slices and pouring coffee along with Karen Bobo.

Live, oral history

Indoor demonstrations

including pottery, book making, fiber spinning and quilt making kept the atmosphere bustling. Meanwhile, smoke swirled around blacksmith Gary Lewis as he forged nails next to the railcar Nahcotta. The railcar, which operated from 1889 until 1930, was open for tours allowing attendees an inside look into the past on the Peninsula.

The live demonstrations were complimented by oral historical stories told by James A. Tweedie, Michael Lemes-hko and Sydney Stevens. On Sunday, anthropologist Julia Harrison capped the festival with a presentation covering all the juicy details of the Washington fruit industry's history from packaging to pesticides.

"It went really well," Millard said.



Luke Whittaker/EO Media Group

The "Cranberry Trolley" made routine trips between the museum and the Pacific Coast Cranberry Research Foundation giving attendees a firsthand experience in the cranberry harvest.

Rental: 'People are trying to get a free ride'

Continued from Page 1A

City and county officials suspect many homeowners who are advertising properties online are not paying room taxes.

"I think people are taking advantage of us," said Scott Lee, the chairman of the Board of Commissioners. "People are trying to get a free ride. That's not fair."

Property owners in the county who rent out their homes to visitors are supposed to collect and pay room taxes each quarter.

Storey, who used to own the Dairy Queen outlets in Astoria and Warrenton, admits she ignored the county's tax liens.

Informed of the foreclosure action, Storey said she intends to pay the back taxes as soon as possible.

But she thinks Airbnb should collect the room taxes and pay the county, not homeowners renting out their property.

"I'm paying them," she said, "and it's a lesson learned."

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