

Fires: A stretch of Interstate 84 near Cascade Locks closed

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But smoke also filters sunlight, limiting additional heating of potential fuels on the ground and stifling small fires, the center said.

Air quality alerts were issued for several parts of the state. Doctors recommended that anyone with existing pulmonary conditions such as asthma stay indoors.

On the northern end of the state, a fire in the Columbia River Gorge that separates Oregon from Washington state caused ashes to drift onto the town of Cascade Locks. A stretch of Interstate 84 that runs by the town was closed because of the fire, the Oregon Department of Transportation said. The highway will reopen when authorities determine that the road is safe.

Evacuation orders remained



The Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia Gorge.

in place in and around Cascade Locks for 283 structures, including 15 businesses. After quickly spreading since it started on Saturday, appar-

ently from a youngster playing with fireworks, the fire held the same position overnight and is an estimated 3,200 acres.

Native Americans who fish

Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

for salmon in the broad Columbia River consider Labor Day their busiest day to sell the smoked fish, but a market where they sell it by the Bridge



Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard
Kate Kevern guards from dangerous smoke with a mask rated for construction work as she walks home through downtown Eugene Monday.

of the Gods was quiet, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Some hikers on Pacific Crest Trail, which runs through the area, were seen in Cascade Locks and told OPB that fires had prevented them from hiking about half the trail in Oregon.

The fire in southwest Oregon, which has burned more

than 219 square miles, was also threatening a tree that marks the site of a bombing of the continental United States by the Japanese during World War II, fire management officials said.

The redwood was planted as a symbol of reconciliation over a half-century ago by the family of Nobuo Fujita, a Japanese Navy pilot who dropped incendiary bombs on the forest near Brookings, the Bulletin newspaper of Bend reported.

Firefighters wrapped the redwood in a fire-retardant sheet to protect it, and the flames were believed to be about a mile away, said Terry Krasko, a spokesman for the firefighters.

Fujita's two bombs had little effect. He returned to Brookings after the war to apologize.

Saturday was the 75th anniversary of the firebombing. Fujita died in 1997.

Patrols: 'The ultimate goal with boating enforcement is voluntary compliance'

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funding cuts, the partnership has proven useful by allowing each agency to help each other from a central location as they enforce the boating safety laws within their jurisdictions.

The program exists through a contract with the Oregon State Marine Board, which partially funded the \$130,000 River Wild boat docked at the Warrenton Marina. The sheriff's office also has a 25-foot 2008 North River boat.

The Sheriff-Coast Guard partnership enforces boating safety laws, not fish and game rules. The sheriff's office has a mutual enforcement agreement with counties in Washington state to enforce each other's laws from bank to bank on the river.

Buoy 10

The Buoy 10 season, which opened Aug. 1 and closed for Chinook salmon retention Monday, is a popular late-summer salmon fishery that stretches 16 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to a line between Tongue Point and Rocky Point.

Humphries and Deputy Justin Dimmick said they have responded to fewer accidents such as capsize, mayday calls, search and rescue missions and boat crashes. With hundreds of boats taking to the river during Buoy 10, only two crashes have occurred, with no major injuries this year.

"It actually was quite a bit better this year," Humphries said.

The deputies point to a change in law enforcement tactics as a major factor in the recent safety successes. The Oregon State Marine Board instructed law enforcement this year to prioritize ongoing violations instead of conducting random safety inspections. As a result, patrols have been better able to spot such violations and can more quickly respond to dispatch calls.

"It feels like we've been

a lot more effective in what we're doing," Humphries said.

On most days, the patrols typically keep an eye out for speeding and navigation violations. For instance, they may stop the boat behind the wall by the 17 Street Dock and check for any boaters who create a wake in the dock area, which would result in a citation. They also routinely respond to calls of large cargo ships unable to pass due to the congestion of fishing boats in the navigation channel.

Cargo ships

A 32,000-ton, roughly 616-foot-long loaded bulk cargo ship — the Aruna Hulya — had just made its way near Tongue Point on Saturday morning. It had left Portland on its way to South Korea, but crew members reported that it could not pass any further due to heavy congestion. Honking the ship's horn several times did not deter the focused salmon fishermen, so the sheriff's deputies and two Coast Guard members responded.

As the River Wild pulled up to the scene, fishers, some of whom waved at the patrol boat, stared in confusion. Humphries, who was driving the boat, grabbed a loudspeaker and instructed them to exit the channel. Once fishers moved out of the way, the patrol boat escorted the cargo ship a few miles west before it temporarily anchored north of Astoria.

"It makes our job a lot harder when people aren't paying attention to what's going on around them," Coast Guard Marine Enforcement Specialist 1st Class Craig Miller said.

As the partnership evolves and boaters become more aware of safety rules, the two agencies hope their patrols will become less active.

"The ultimate goal with boating enforcement is voluntary compliance," Miller said.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Hundreds of students attending Astoria High School gather in the cafeteria this morning before heading off to the first classes of the school year.

School: 'We have enough supports in place'

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Hammond, 26.7 percent in Seaside, 22.3 percent in Knappa and 24.5 percent in Jewell.

Across the board, chronic absenteeism started higher in preschool and kindergarten, lowered toward middle school as students became more independent of parents, and grew again in high school.

Research shows that missing school can lead to decreased academic performance, future attendance issues, increased disciplinary problems and a dramatically lower chance of graduating high school.

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research found that 87 percent of freshmen in high school who missed four or fewer days of school per semester graduated. That rate dipped to 63 percent for students who missed between five and nine days, and 41 percent for those who missed 10 to 14 days.

Strive for five

When Melissa Linder, the Astoria School District's curriculum director, looked at the state's statistics for last year's attendance, results at Astoria looked rosy, with only 8 percent of students chronically absent.

But the state calculates attendance rates based on the average of students in a district compared to the average number attending, she said, instead of following each student independently. When looking at each student's attendance independently, about 27 percent were chronically absent, she said.

Despite several initiatives, attendance hasn't significantly improved over the last several years, Superintendent Craig Hoppes said. This year, the district debuted Strive for Five, a goal for students to miss no more than a week of school the entire year.

"All we're trying to do is just bring an awareness of attendance," Hoppes said.

The school district is reaching out to parents, community organizations and local busi-



Students roam the halls of Astoria High School this morning looking for the first classroom of the day.



Students line up to see their schedules at Astoria High School before the first day of classes.

nesses to increase understanding around the importance of attendance.

As part of the campaign, the district will also survey students, staff and parents about their perceptions of school, the district's priorities and why students miss time. The data will be sent to an educational consultant and used to create attendance plans.

Engaging high schoolers

Chronic absenteeism peaked at every high school in the county during junior and senior years. More than 28 percent of upperclassmen at Astoria High School were chronically absent, according to the state. That rate topped

30 percent at Warrenton High School and 40 percent at Seaside High School.

"It's certainly a challenge, and we know that kids' success is directly related to them being here," Seaside Principal Jeff Roberts said.

"We have a pretty transient population, a lot of people in the service industry," Roberts said. "When you have the turnover in the student body that we have, it's difficult for students to have a connection with school."

Last year, Seaside hired a part-time attendance supervisor to create connections with at-risk students who had not yet reached the definition of chronically absent. One of the most effective means

to improve attendance has been to connect with kids and engage them through a variety of extracurricular activities, Roberts said.

"We need to improve our community's mental health," Astoria Principal Lynn Jackson said. "Our students, many of them have issues with depression or anxiety that make it difficult to attend."

Roberts and Jackson both said they have shied away from using truancy officers, who can fine parents who allow children to be chronically absent, because the practice hasn't been effective and doesn't address the underlying reasons students don't make it to school.

Adding tools

In November's election, Oregon voters passed Measure 98, which approved \$400 per high schooler to bolster collegiate academic and career-technical offerings, along with dropout prevention services. The measure was only half-funded by the state Legislature, but is helping school districts add more programs and support staff at the high school level.

Each district is investing in additional counseling as students transition into ninth grade, where academic success can determine graduation. The Chicago Consortium on School Research found that 93 percent of ninth-graders who averaged at least a grade of B go on to graduate. Freshmen with less than a C average were more likely to drop out than graduate.

Astoria High School is hiring a new social worker with Measure 98 funds to work with families who might face other obstacles in attending school, Jackson said.

Seaside will likely expand the presence of its attendance specialist, Roberts said.

Around town and on the radio, Astoria will continue to push the importance of attendance to the public.

"It's a pretty easy fact that if kids go to school, they're going to graduate," Hoppes said. "We have enough supports in place."



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Maritime Enforcement Specialists Craig Miller, left, and Ashly Zepeda, right, with the Coast Guard, keep a close eye on the waters of the Columbia River during a recent patrol with the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office.