

WORLD IN BRIEF



Greg Wohlford/Erie Times-News
Soledad Hernandez stands on the roof of her car as she brushes off snow Wednesday in Erie, Pa.

Higher energy costs accompany bitter cold snap in US

PORTLAND, Maine — Plunging temperatures across half the country today underscored a stark reality for low-income Americans who rely on heating aid: Their dollars aren't going to go as far this winter because of rising energy costs.

Forecasters warned people to be wary of hypothermia and frostbite from an arctic blast that's gripping a large swath from the Midwest to the Northeast, where the temperature — without the wind chill factored in — dipped to minus 32 this morning in Watertown, New York, near Lake Ontario's eastern shore.

Even before the cold snap, the Department of Energy projected that heating costs were going to track upward this winter, and many people are keeping a wary eye on their fuel tanks to ensure they don't run out.

Prolonged, dangerous cold weather this week has sent advocates for the homeless scrambling to get people off the streets and to bring in extra beds for them. In western New York and Erie, Pennsylvania, residents were still cleaning up from massive snowfall. Frozen pipes and dead car batteries added to the misery across the region.

There was some good news for recipients of federal aid from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. President Donald Trump released nearly \$3 billion, or 90 percent, of the funding in October after previously trying to eliminate the program altogether.

But projected energy cost increases will effectively reduce the purchasing power by \$330 million, making it imperative that the remaining funding be released, said Mark Wolfe, of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association.

This winter, energy costs were projected to grow by 12 percent for natural gas, 17 percent for home heating oil, 18 percent for propane and 8 percent for electricity, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Associated Press

Islamic State kills 41 in attack on Afghan cultural center

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Islamic State suicide bomber struck a Shiite cultural center in Kabul today, killing at least 41 people and underscoring the extremist group's growing reach in Afghanistan even as its self-styled caliphate in Iraq and Syria has been dismantled.

The attack may have targeted the pro-Iran Afghan Voice news agency housed in the two-story building. The Sunni extremists of IS view Shiite Muslims as apostates and have repeatedly attacked Afghanistan's Shiite minority and targets linked to neighboring Iran.

The attack wounded more than 80 people, many of whom suffered severe burns.

Local Shiite leader Abdul Hussain Ramazandada said the bomber slipped into an academic seminar at the center and blew himself up among the participants. More bombs went off just outside the center as people fled.

The IS-linked Aamaq news agency said four bombs were used in the assault, one strapped to the suicide attacker. It said the center was funded by Iran and used to propagate Shiite beliefs.

The center was marking the anniversary of the 1979 Soviet invasion with a seminar about the event's impact on the country.

Iran, a Shiite-majority country bordering Iraq and Afghanistan, has provided heavy military and financial aid to the Syrian government as well as regional Shiite militias battling IS in recent years.

Putin says St. Petersburg explosion was terror attack

MOSCOW — The explosion at a supermarket in Russia's second-largest city was a terrorist attack, President Vladimir Putin said today, adding that another attack had been thwarted.

At least 13 people were injured Wednesday evening when an improvised explosive device went off at a storage area for customers' bags at the supermarket in St. Petersburg. Investigators said the device contained 200 grams of explosives and was rigged with shrapnel to cause more damage.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Putin made his comment at an awards ceremony at the Kremlin for troops who took part in Russia's Syria campaign but did not offer any details. He also said another terrorist attack had been thwarted in St. Petersburg but did not elaborate.

Putin has portrayed Russia's operation in Syria as a pre-emptive strike against terrorism at home. He said the threat of attacks at home would have been much worse if Russia had not intervened in Syria.

Roy Moore files lawsuit to block Alabama Senate result

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Failed U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore doubled down on his claims of voter irregularities in a last-ditch effort to stop the certification of the Democratic opponent who pulled off a historic upset last month in a traditionally deep-red state.

Moore asked a judge late Wednesday to issue a restraining order to stop Alabama's canvassing board from certifying Doug Jones' victory today. Secretary of State John Merrill said Moore's action "is not going to delay certification and Doug Jones ... will be sworn in by Vice President Pence on the third of January."

Jones defeated Moore by about 20,000 votes

in the Dec. 12 special election. Moore's campaign was deeply wounded by accusations of sexual misconduct involving teenage girls decades ago. Moore has denied the accusations and says he has taken and passed a polygraph test to prove they are false.

Moore's attorney wrote in the wide-ranging complaint that he believed there were irregularities during the election, including that voters may have been brought in from other states. He attached a statement from a poll worker that she had noticed licenses from Georgia and North Carolina as people signed in to vote.

The complaint also noted the higher-than-expected turnout in the race, particularly in Jefferson County, and said Moore's numbers were suspiciously lower than straight-ticket Republican voting in about 20 Jefferson County precincts. The complaint asked for a fraud investigation and eventually a new election.

Merrill said he has so far not found any evidence of voter fraud, but he has said that his office will investigate any complaint Moore submits.

Cities in ruins after Islamic State, little cash to rebuild

MOSUL, Iraq — For nearly 2½ miles along the western bank of the Tigris River, hardly a single building is intact. The warren of narrow streets of Mosul's Old City is a crumpled landscape of broken concrete and metal. Every acre is weighed down by more than 3,000 tons of rubble, much of it laced with explosives and unexploded ordnance.

It will take years to haul away the wreckage, and this is just one corner of the destruction. The Iraqi military and U.S.-led coalition succeeded in uprooting the Islamic State group across the country, but the cost of victory is nearly incalculable.

Three years of war devastated much of northern and western Iraq. Baghdad estimates \$100 billion is needed nationwide to rebuild. Local leaders in Mosul, the biggest city held by IS, say that amount is needed to rehabilitate their city alone.

So far no one is offering to foot the bill. The Trump administration has told the Iraqis it won't pay for a massive reconstruction drive. Iraq hopes Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries will step up, and Iran may also take a role. The U.N. is repairing some infrastructure in nearly two dozen towns and cities around Iraq, but funding

for it is a fraction of what will be needed. As a result, much of the rebuilding that has happened has come from individuals using personal savings to salvage homes and shops as best they can.

Nearly every city or town in former IS territory needs repair to one degree or another. The longer it takes, the longer many of those who fled IS or the fighting remain uprooted. While 2.7 million Iraqis have returned to lands seized back from the militants, more than 3 million others cannot and they languish in camps. Worst hit is Mosul; the U.N. estimates 40,000 homes there need to be rebuilt or restored, and some 600,000 residents have been unable to return to the city, once home to around 2 million people.

Charity gets a jolt from tax law — but due to drop next year

WASHINGTON — In this season of giving, charity seems to be getting an extra jolt because next year the popular tax deduction for donations will lose a lot of its punch.

Traditionally generous Americans may have less incentive to give to charitable causes next year because of the newly minted tax law. The changes that will make it less advantageous for many people to donate to charity in 2018 may be sparking a year-end stream of fattened contributions in anticipation, charity executives and experts say.

Starting next year, the millions of relatively small donations from moderate-income people to mainstream charities could be sharply reduced, they say. That means charity could become less of a middle-class enterprise and a more exclusive domain of the wealthy, who tend to give to arts and cultural institutions, research facilities and universities. Their use of the charitable tax deduction is less likely to be affected by the new law.

The sweeping Republican tax overhaul, delivered by the GOP-dominated Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump, doesn't eliminate or even reduce the deduction for donations to charitable, religious and other nonprofit organizations. Charitable giving should be encouraged with a tax incentive, congressional Republicans crafting the plan said early on, and the cherished deduction — though costing some \$41.5 billion a year in lost federal revenue — wasn't struck even as other longstanding deductions fell or were scaled back.

But it might as well have been, charity experts and advocates say.



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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

SCHEDULE

Evening listings

THURSDAY

THURSDAY EVENING												DECEMBER 28	
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2	KATU	(2) KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy! (P) (N)	Wheel Fortune (N)	To Tell the Truth		The \$100,000 Pyramid		Match Game		KATU News (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
3	KOMO	(4) KOMO 4 News (N)		Wheel Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (P) (N)	To Tell the Truth		The \$100,000 Pyramid		Match Game		KOMO 4 News (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel
4	KING	(5) NBC News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	Evening	Superstore	Will & Grace	Great News (N)	Chicago Fire "Down Is Better"			KING 5 News (N)	(35) Tonight Show
5	KOIN	(6) KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory	Young Sheldon	Big Bang Theory	Mom	S.W.A.T. "Pamilya"		KOIN 6 News (N)	(35) Colbert
6	KIRO	(7) KIRO 7 News (N)	Evening News (N)	KIRO 7 News (N)	Ent. Tonight	Big Bang Theory	Young Sheldon	Big Bang Theory	Mom	S.W.A.T. "Pamilya"		KIRO News (N)	(35) Colbert
7	KGW	(8) KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Live at 7 (N)	Inside Edition	Superstore	Will & Grace	Great News (N)	Chicago Fire "Down Is Better"			KGW News (N)	(35) Tonight Show
8	KRCW	(3) Modern Family	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	iHeartRadio Music Festival	The legendary concert event from Las Vegas. Pt. 1 of 2	News at 10 (N)	Mom	Two and a Half		Two and a Half	(35) Tonight Show
9	KOPB	(10) Mickela Mallozi	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)		Oregon Art Beat	Oregon Guide	Midsomer M.	(50) Midsomer Murders "Left for Dead"	(35) Masterpiece Mystery!	"Breathless" 3/3		
10	KPTV	(12) 6 O'Clock News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	Gotham "They Who Hide Behind Masks"		The Orville "Majority Rule"		10 O'Clock News (N)		News (N)	Page Six TV
11	KPDx	(5) Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's News (N)		9 O'Clock News (N)		Family Guy	American Dad!	The Game	The Game
12	KCPQ	(13) Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Gotham "They Who Hide Behind Masks"		The Orville "Majority Rule"		Q13 News at 10 (N)		Q13 News (N)	Simpsons Pt. 1 of 2
13	TBS	(20) Family Guy	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan	
14	KZJO	(22) Friends	Friends	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half	Two and a Half
15	ESPN	(29) NCAA Football	Alamo Bowl Stanford vs. TCU Site: Alamodome -- San Antonio, Texas (L)			SportsCenter (N)		SportsCenter (N)	ESPN Films	NCAA Football Military Bowl Virginia at Navy			
16	NICK	(31) The Thundermans	The Thundermans	Henry Danger "Danger and Thunder"		** Megamind (2010, Animated)	Jonah Hill, Brad Pitt, Will Ferrell.		Fresh Prince	Fresh Prince	Friends	Friends	
17	DISN	(32) Suite Life on Deck	Suite Life on Deck	Suite Life on Deck	Suite Life on Deck	Life on Deck 1/3	Life on Deck 2/3	Life on Deck 3/3	Suite Life on Deck	Audi Mack	Liv and Maddie	Bizaardvark	Raven's Home
18	FAM	(34) Movie		*** Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002, Family)	Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Daniel Radcliffe.							The 700 Club	
19	FMC	(35) (5:00) *** The Wolf of Wall Street (2013, Drama)	Jonah Hill, Kyle Chandler, Leonardo DiCaprio.	(40) *** The Wolf of Wall Street (2013, Drama)	Jonah Hill, Kyle Chandler, Leonardo DiCaprio.								
20	LIFE	(36) Grey's Anatomy "Under Pressure"	Grey's A.	"Blues for Sister Someone"		*** Stepmom (1998, Drama)	Susan Sarandon, Ed Harris, Julia Roberts.					JamieandDoug	JamieandDoug
21	ROOT	(38) NCAA Basketball	San Francisco at San Diego (L)			NCAA Basketball	Loyola Marymount at St. Mary's (L)			Press Pass (N)	Press Pass	JamieandDoug	AMA Supercross
22	F51	(39) NCAA Football	Holiday Bowl Washington State vs. Michigan State Site: San Diego County Credit Union Stadium -- San Diego, Calif. (L)					TMZ Sports (N)		Skip and Shannon: Undisputed Opinions on the biggest sports topics of the day.			
23	SPIKE	(43) Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends Pt. 1 of 2	Friends Pt. 2 of 2	*** The Day After Tomorrow (2004, Action)	Jake Gyllenhaal, Ian Holm, Dennis Quaid.				
24	COM	(44) South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park
25	HIST	(45) Mountain Men	Mountain Men	Mountain Men	Mountain Men	Mountain Men: Fully Loaded		Mountain Men	(05) Alone	(05) Mountain Men			
26	A&E	(46) The First 48 "Teardrops/Almost Home"		The First 48 "M.I.A."		The First 48 "Deadly Lies/Stay Down"		The First 48 "Runner Runner"		Menendez M "Final Verdict" (F) (N)	(05) The First 48 "A Fighting Chance"		
27	TLC	(47) Unexpected "Labor and Delivery"		Unexpected "Home Alone"		Unexpected "Ticking Clocks"		Unexpected "What's in a Name"		I Catfished My Kid (P) (N)	Unexpected "What's in a Name"		
28	DISC	(48) Naked and Afraid "Frozen in Fear"		Naked and Afraid "Ashes to Ashes"		Naked and Afraid: Survival School (N)		To Be Announced		To Be Announced		Naked and Afraid "Eye of the Storm"	
29	NGEO	(49) Drain the Sunken Pirate City		Drain the Ocean: WWII		Drain the Titanic		Drain the Bermuda Triangle		Drain Alcatraz		Drain the Bermuda Triangle	
30	TNT	(50) (5:00) NBA Basketball	Houston Rockets at Boston Celtics (L)	NBA Basketball	Philadelphia 76ers at Portland Trail Blazers Site: Moda Center -- Portland, Ore. (L)			Inside the NBA				NBA Basketball	Houston vs Boston
31	AMC	(51) (5:45) Fear the Dead "The Good Man"		Fear the Walking Dead "Monster"		Fear the Dead "We All Fall Down"		Fear the Dead "Ourorobos"		Fear the Dead "Blood in the Streets"	(05) Fear the Walking Dead "Captive"		
32	USA	(52) Law & Order: S.V.U. "Torch"		Law&Order: SVU "Decaying Morality"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Parole Violations"		Law&Order: SVU "Devastating Story"		Damnation "A Different Species" (N)	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Unstable"		
33	FOOD	(53) Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Chopped "Naa'n the Wiser"		Chopped "Better Duck Next Time"		Chopped "Cocktail Party"		Beat Play (N)	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play	Beat Bobby Play
34	HGTV	(54) Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip-Flop Ft. Worth	Flip or Flop Vegas	House Hunters	House Hunters	House Hunters	House Hunters
35	FX	(56) X-Men: Days of Future Past		Blue Bloods "Payback"		Blue Bloods "New Rules"		White House Down	Channing Tatum.	Blue Bloods "Worst Case Scenario"	Blue Bloods "Absolute Power"		
36	CNN	(57) CNN Report "All the Best, All the Worst"		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		Anderson Cooper 360		CNN Report "All the Best, All the Worst"		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Newsroom	
37	FNC	(58) Hannity		The Ingraham Angle		Fox News @ Night		Tucker Carlson Tonight		Hannity		The Ingraham Angle	
38	CNBC	(61) Shark Tank		Shark Tank		The Profit "Top 10 Rules For Success"		The Profit/PuertoRico		The Profit in Cuba		Paid Program	
39	BRV	(63) Million Listing "Two Tops Never Work"		Million Dollar Listing "Who's Your Daddy?"		Million Listing "Who's Your Daddy?"		Listing "It Wasn't in My Budget!" (N)		T. Chef "Little Tools, Big Challenge" (N)		WatchWhat	Million Dollar List
40	TCM	(64) (5:00) The Dolly Sisters Betty Grable.		(15) *** Annie Get Your Gun ("50) Howard Keel, Louis Calhern, Betty Hutton.				(15) *** On the Town (1949, Musical)	Frank Sinatra, Betty Garrett, Gene Kelly.			The Band Wagon ("53) Fred Astaire.	
41	SYFY	(65) (4:30) Thor ("11, Act) Chris Hemsworth.		** G.I. Joe: Retaliation ("13) Dwayne Johnson, Adrienne Palicki, Channing Tatum.				Van Helsing "Crooked Falls" (N)		Ghost Wars (N)		Superstition "Uncle Bubba" (N)	
42	RFD	(62) SF Machinery	Small Town	Giants "2017 Six Horse Hitch Final"		Steve Lantvit	Rural Eve. News	Market Journal	GA Farm Monitor	SF Machinery	Small Town	Time Life Library	