

# 'Atmospheric river' dumps more rain, snow across West

Massive rainstorm fueled by a plume of moisture

By JOHN ANTCZAK  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A storm fueled by a plume of moisture stretching over the Pacific Ocean almost to Hawaii dumped rain on California today, boosting the threat of debris flows from saturated slopes and flooding from rising creeks and rivers.

The storm made stronger by the phenomenon called an atmospheric river hit Northern California and southern Oregon on Wednesday before moving down the coast overnight and threatening the southwestern corner of California.

In Washington, thousands of Puget Sound Energy customers lost power, and Interstate 90 was closed for a second day Wednesday across Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascade Mountains. The town of North Bend declared a state of emergency because of several feet of snow.

In Oregon, transportation officials closed about 20 miles of the westbound lanes of Interstate 84 in the



Water from Deer Creek begins to lap at the base of Lefty's Grill in Nevada City, Calif.

Elias Funez/The Union

Columbia River Gorge east of Portland because of icy conditions that caused numerous wrecks and stranded drivers for hours. Authorities brought stranded travelers water and food and tried to get gas to vehicles that needed it. Flash flood warnings were issued for residents living near slopes burned bare by a summer wildfire in the Santa Ana Mountains southeast of Los Angeles.

Earlier, a woman was rescued from the wreckage

of her Northern California home after it slid down a hill. KNTV reported at least 50 homes were evacuated after the mudslide struck a neighborhood in Sausalito, north of San Francisco.

Atmospheric rivers are long bands of water vapor that form over an ocean and flow through the sky. Formed by winds associated with storms, they occur globally but are especially significant on the West Coast. When an atmospheric

river originates near Hawaii it is commonly referred to as a "Pineapple Express."

South of San Francisco, authorities urged people to leave homes near the Guadalupe River in San Jose. Forecasters also said numerous other rivers were expected to crest over flood stage today.

The tempest followed more than a week of severe weather in the Pacific Northwest and was the latest in a series that has all but eliminated drought-level dryness in California this winter.



AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

Umbrellas were put to use across the West.

Even before the height of the storm, mandatory evacuations were ordered near the burn scar in the Santa Ana Mountains where officials said the risk of debris flows was high.

Tim Suber said he has lost count of how many times his hillside neighborhood in Lake Elsinore has been evacuated between last summer's devastating wildfire and this winter's succession of storms.

"I'm not going this time," Suber said Wednesday after Riverside County sheriff's deputies warned him that he could end up trapped if roads flood. "I've got 35 chickens and a daughter who won't leave them behind. So we're staying."

The real estate agent

said he was confident culverts and washes in the area will handle any runoff after crews removed dozens of truckloads of dirt following the last storm. But just in case, "my car is gassed up and ready to go at a moment's notice," said Suber, 54.

Winter storm warnings were posted in the snow-laden Sierra Nevada, where the forecast said up to 7 feet of new snow could be dumped at elevations above 9,000 feet.

The National Weather Service recorded winds gusting to 132 mph atop the Mount Rose ski resort southwest of Reno, Nevada.

A backcountry avalanche warning was issued throughout the Sierra.

## Settlement: Investigators identified \$336,000 in questionable expenditures

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"We do not know if this is because of financial difficulties due to the loss of funds, or for some other reason," they wrote. "Additionally, we have heard that some sponsors and benefactors are quite anxious, and hope that their donations are being used in service of the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program's stated aims and ideals."

Blam, who won Miss Oregon in 1974, said, "Let's look at the minutes of their meetings, financial reports. I'd like to get each executive director to submit us a list of scholarships that are outstanding to titleholders and runner-ups to district, to see if the scholarship foundation has the wherewithal to meet those commitments."

The former pageant winners are asking for an opportunity to meet with Teri Leeper Taylor and Sue Pickell, the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program executive directors, along with the board of directors and representatives of the community foundation.

While the Phillips' have stepped aside, questions remain, Blam said. "Where is that money, what was



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Contestants in the Miss Oregon pageant in Seaside make their way down the runway in 2018.

appropriate, what happened, whose watch was that on? Do those people still sit on the board or does the board consist of new people?"

Kristina Edmunson, a spokeswoman for the Department of Justice, said investigators identified \$336,000 in questionable expenditures from the Oregon Scholarship Foundation, but some of them were "likely appropriate and

related to the organization's operations."

The Phillips' voluntarily transferred \$75,000 to the scholarship foundation shortly after the Department of Justice investigation began.

"Under the circumstances, we concluded that the payment of an additional \$150,000 was an appropriate settlement, given the costs and uncertainty associated

with litigation," Edmunson said.

After the settlement was announced, Dana Phillips denied that the couple personally profited from the pageant.

The agreement with the state referred to unlawful trade practices, but does not allege fraud, Phillips said. "At no time did we ever use the Miss Oregon pageant for personal gain

or wrongdoing," she said.

Investigators also determined the organization's records were incomplete and not maintained in a manner that allows for a complete accounting.

According to the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program, in a statement earlier this month, all requested documentation was submitted on time and as requested.

"Our organization participated fully with the Oregon Department of Justice in this investigation and audit," the scholarship board of directors and leadership team wrote. "While we are more than troubled at the findings and outcome we look forward to receiving official notification that our portion of the audit has found the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program, under its current leadership, to be both organizationally and financially sound in scope and practice."

James Moore, the president of the scholarship program's board, said he has been in touch with the former pageant winners and wants to hear their concerns.

"Anybody who has questions that we can answer, we would happily do," Moore said. "It appears that there

are specific questions about the foundation, about monies that have either been held or are in a different account. It seems to me the former Miss Oregons are looking out for any previous winners that had received monies and not yet used them."

The scholarship program works with the Oregon Community Foundation, which holds money not only for Miss Oregon Scholarship Program contestants, but other nonprofits.

"I am confident that the funds that were held for every single one of our local winners and local boards, and any former Miss Oregons that need their funds, I believe that money to be all there for them," Moore said.

Moore said he wants to put the former contestants at ease that their money is set aside, and all money will be available when requested.

A split between the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program and the Oregon Community Foundation may be ahead. The Miss Oregon Scholarship Program is looking to turn to a different foundation to hold their money "just for perception."

## Funding: In-state tuition has gone from \$64 to \$102 per credit over past decade

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investment is contingent on the state Legislature raising an additional \$2 billion in revenue this session.

The college board on Tuesday approved a resolution calling for a \$787 million community college budget recommended by the state Higher Education Coordinating Commission and Oregon Community College Association. The higher budget would cover career-technical education expansion and additional support for first-generation and underrepresented students.

The college this year budgeted nearly one-quarter of its funding from state appropriations, along with 35 percent from property taxes and 26 percent from tuition and fees. In-state tuition has gone from \$64 to \$102 per credit over the past decade. Each \$1 hike creates an estimated \$25,000 in revenue.

The college will look at ways besides tuition increases to bridge any funding gap, including scaling back investments and keeping positions vacant, Breitmeyer said. He is confident funding for community colleges will be higher than the governor's recommendation.

"I think worst-case scenario is we'll be flat, \$570 (mil-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Clatsop Community College may have to raise tuition.

lion), so we'd be down from cost increases," he said.

JoAnn Zahn, the college's vice president of finance and operations, said the college is budgeting for next year as if finances will stand pat.

"One advantage we have, is because we get a smaller amount of state funding, we're not as affected by large increases or decreases in the state fund," she said.

Clatsop receives about 1 percent of the state community college fund, in part because local property tax receipts are so high. Other community colleges with a larger share face tuition increases

of 5 to 10 percent, and some small schools even more than that, said Cam Preus, executive director of the Oregon Community College Association.

But like Breitmeyer, the association is predicting at least a flat funding picture.

"What we have been hearing back from legislators is that nobody thinks that \$543 million for community colleges is anywhere near acceptable," said John Wykoff, deputy director of the association. "Even the governor said it wasn't acceptable. She was showing the contrast of the state budget with and without the additional revenue."

## Bar: Partners plan a wall of whiskey with more than 100 varieties

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They quickly zeroed in on the pink, 96-year-old, Mediterranean-style Wieveseik Building. The three-story building, including basement storage, street-level retail and apartments above, is the sole structure along the one-block stretch of 13th Street connecting Duane and Exchange streets.

Local property maven Rose Marie Paavola purchased the building in 2000, had it renovated after an electric fire in 2011 and relocated Columbia Travel there in 2012 until her recent retirement. To Howard, the building always looked like it should be a whiskey bar.

On one side of the main floor, the partners are planning a wall of whiskey, with more than 100 varieties from around the world served neat, grouped in flights and mixed into cocktails. Paired with the whiskey and other drinks will be shared food boards of meats, cheeses, nuts, chocolates and other small bites.

On the other side will be a lounge heavy on leather furniture, with a glass-encased fireplace looking out on 13th Street. The entire space will be encircled by wainscoting, dark woods and nods to the region's fishing, logging, maritime and other traditional industries.

"When you walk in here, you're walking into kind of the old world of whiskey and the old world of

Astoria," Angiletta said.

Regular attendees will have private lockers to store their own bottles, journals to document their tasting experiences, a members' club and a promotion for trying all the varieties of whiskey.

The Duane Street corridor west of local behemoth Fort George Brewery has become home to an array of smaller-scale alcohol-related businesses, beginning with Pilot House Distilling (then North Coast Distilling) in 2014; Reach Break Brewing and Reveille Ciderworks in 2016; and Bridge & Tunnel Bottleshop and Taproom just over a year ago. The family behind Munkiki, an art gallery and tiki mug and stein store in a former auto dealership a little farther west, is also planning a tiki bar in the coming years.

Howard sees the cluster as less about alcohol and more about walkability.

"It's less traffic than when you're up on" Commercial Street, Howard said. "It's pedestrian traffic if you're here, versus walking on Commercial or Marine. It's just much easier to walk around this area."

In addition to local advisers, Howard and Angiletta have local financial backers helping bankroll the buildout of the whiskey bar, which they expect to start next month and finish sometime in spring.