



The Tower Theatre, located in downtown Bend, where the population in the early 1990s was around 25,000 and leaned Republican. Demographic shifts are helping push the Republican Party into a nosedive along the West Coast.

Changing demographics in central Oregon

Underscores a stark West Coast political shift

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

BEND — In the early 1990s, the population of Bend was around 25,000 and leaned Republican. A lumber mill operated in the Oregon high-desert town along the banks of a scenic river.

Today, the lumber mill is an REI outdoor recreation store. The population has quadrupled. And for the first time in memory, the number of registered Democrats in Deschutes County recently eclipsed the number of Republicans.

The transformation shows how demographic shifts and the GOP’s tack further to the right are helping push the party into a nosedive along the West Coast.

The last Republican presidential candidate that California went for was George H.W. Bush. For both Oregon and Washington state, it was Ronald Reagan. Now, Republicans are struggling to hold seats in Congress, statehouses and city councils up and down the coast.

California, Washington and Oregon will hold their presidential primaries on March 3, March 10 and May 19, and which Democratic candidates they favor will become clear. But this much is certain: In November, none of the three states is apt to go for President Donald Trump, and there is little hope Republicans will claw back much ground in other contests.

Political districts have flipped in population centers, from San Diego in the south to Seattle in the north.

“There is no way out,” Chris Vance, a former Washington state Republican Party chairman and legislator, said.

In San Diego, by the U.S.-Mexico bor-

der, each of the nine city council districts now has more registered Democrats than registered Republicans, including one that until recently leaned strongly Republican.

In 1980, Orange County, near Los Angeles, was 80% white and a GOP stronghold. Today, Orange County is mostly Hispanic and Asian, with many displeased by Republicans’ hard stance on immigration. In 2018, voters there dealt a stunning defeat to a two-term GOP congresswoman.

The California GOP wound up losing six other U.S. House seats that year, leading a former Republican leader in the state to declare: “The California Republican Party isn’t salvageable at this time.”

Democrats also hold the California governor’s office, both U.S. Senate seats and almost complete control of the Legislature.

In Seattle, tens of thousands of tech employees have flooded into the city and its suburbs, hired by Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Facebook. The influx of highly educated workers over the past decade helped fuel a population boom that made many communities much more diverse and affluent, and turned them away from the GOP and toward Democrats.

The result: The GOP has lost all the statehouse seats it once held in Seattle’s eastern suburbs.

Vance blames the area’s exodus of college-educated white voters, particularly women, from the GOP on the party’s turn toward more fundamentalist values under

Trump. Vance himself abandoned the party in 2017 after an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate as the Republican candidate.

“This was the party of nerdy, wonky, tweedy capitalists who cared about economic growth. Now it is the party of populists: alt-right, let’s keep the immigrants out, truck- and rifle-populists,” Vance said. “That works in Mississippi and Arkansas and stuff, but it does not work in the Seattle area.”

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, among a line of Democratic governors dating back to 1985, faces no significant GOP challenge as he seeks a third term in November. Both of Washington’s U.S. senators are Democrats, and seven of its 10 U.S. House members belong to the party. Democrats hope to expand their majorities in the Legislature, where they hold a 28-21 edge in the Senate and a 57-41 advantage in the House.

And Democrats in Oregon — who already hold the governorship, both U.S. Senate seats and four of five U.S. House seats — wield supermajorities in the Legislature, and are gunning for more seats.

One of them is the House seat representing Bend, currently held by moderate Republican Rep. Cheri Helt. Challenging her is Deschutes County Deputy District Attorney Jason Kropf, whose treasurer is a veteran political fundraiser.

After the demise of the timber industry, Bend became a mecca for outdoor enthusi-

asts and beer lovers. The town of roughly 100,000 is arrayed along the Deschutes River and below the Cascade Range, with one of the highest number of breweries per capita in America.

“Bend is full of beautiful, very fit, beer-swilling jocks,” said James Foster, professor emeritus of political science at Oregon State University-Cascades in Bend.

The shifting demographic has made Bend, and Deschutes County, “much more moderate” than in the past, he said.

In 2018, about 4,100 more people moved to the county than moved out, with two-thirds arriving from 11 California counties — 10 of which are predominantly Democratic — and from the liberal bastions of Seattle and Portland, according to a new study by the Oregon Employment Department.

The growth of registered Democrats “could be a reflection of the political party affiliation of the new residents, rather than longtime locals shifting their party affiliation,” said economist Damon Runberg, who prepared the study.

Republican lawmakers in Oregon are so fed up with Democratic dominance that they began a boycott of the Legislature this week in an attempt to kill a bill aimed at stemming global warming. Helt bucked the move by remaining in the capitol.

Some Republicans also formed a group, Move Oregon’s Border for a Greater Idaho. It is collecting signatures to make rural Oregon counties part of conservative Idaho.

“I understand they’re looking at Idaho fondly,” Idaho Gov. Brad Little said on Fox News last week. “But there’s a lot of governmental hurdles and legal hurdles that would have to be jumped before they could ever do that.”

AP writers Michael R. Blood and Chris Grygiel contributed to this report.

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

48 36

48 38

49 41

50 40

50 38

50 38

51 37

A couple of showers

Partly sunny, a shower

Rain and drizzle

Partly sunny

Rain becoming steadier

Cloudy, rain possible

Cloudy, rain possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

Temperatures

High/low 53/37

Normal high/low 52/37

Record high 71 in 1968

Record low 21 in 1962

Precipitation

Thursday 0.00"

Month to date 6.41"

Normal month to date 6.94"

Year to date 24.55"

Normal year to date 17.14"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Pegasus, the flying horse, stands low in the west as darkness falls and sets by midnight.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 6:56 a.m.

Sunset tonight 6:01 p.m.

Moonrise today 9:46 a.m.

Moonset today none

First Full Last New

Mar 2 Mar 9 Mar 16 Mar 24

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time High (ft.) Time Low (ft.)

4:10 a.m. 7.9 10:56 a.m. 1.5

5:01 p.m. 6.1 10:36 p.m. 2.4

Cape Disappointment

3:59 a.m. 7.6 10:16 a.m. 1.7

4:29 p.m. 6.0 9:56 p.m. 2.8

Hammond

4:06 a.m. 7.9 10:34 a.m. 1.5

4:48 p.m. 6.3 10:15 p.m. 2.6

Warrenton

4:05 a.m. 8.3 10:40 a.m. 1.6

4:56 p.m. 6.5 10:20 p.m. 2.5

Knapka

4:47 a.m. 8.2 11:57 a.m. 1.3

5:38 p.m. 6.4 11:37 p.m. 2.1

Depoe Bay

3:11 a.m. 7.9 9:45 a.m. 1.9

3:49 p.m. 6.3 9:24 p.m. 3.0

NATIONAL CITIES

Today Sun.

Hi/Low/W Hi/Low/W

Atlanta 51/33/s 61/45/pc

Boston 39/24/pc 38/29/s

Chicago 39/33/s 57/37/pc

Dallas 72/56/pc 75/59/c

Denver 58/32/pc 47/22/pc

Honolulu 79/68/pc 80/69/sh

Houston 75/58/s 74/64/c

Los Angeles 71/52/c 62/45/sh

Miami 73/50/s 74/63/pc

New York City 37/26/pc 43/37/s

Phoenix 80/54/pc 75/49/c

San Francisco 59/45/c 62/48/c

Wash., DC 42/28/pc 52/41/s

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

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REGIONAL FORECAST

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

City Today Hi/Low/W Sun. Hi/Low/W

Baker City 46/24/sn 45/21/s

Brookings 49/35/c 52/39/s

Ilwaco 47/39/sh 46/41/sh

Newberg 49/32/sh 49/34/c

Newport 46/34/sh 47/37/sh

City Today Hi/Low/W Sun. Hi/Low/W

North Bend 49/33/sh 49/36/sh

Roseburg 48/34/sh 49/34/sh

Seaside 47/38/sh 47/39/pc

Springfield 48/33/sh 48/33/pc

Vancouver 48/35/r 49/36/sh