

State could lose many firefighters over Brown's vaccine mandate

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

AURORA — Oregon's pool of first responders may shrink substantially this fall.

In the wake of Gov. Kate Brown's mandate that first responders must receive the COVID-19 vaccine, fire and rescue departments across Oregon expect to lose many paid staff and volunteers who choose not to get vaccinated by Oct. 18, the vaccination deadline.

Aurora Fire District, for example, serves about 6,000 Marion County residents. Aurora's team — eight staff and 17 volunteers — answer about 1,300 emergency calls annually. Due to the mandate, the district's leaders project they will lose 25% to 50% of their team, which could halve the number of emergencies the department can respond to.

"For various reasons, I have people that have chosen to get vaccines and some who have chosen not to," said Aurora's Fire Chief



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
From left, members of the Aurora Rural Fire District, Timothy Gloy, Mike Corless, Tanner Burke and Alan Schwabauer.

Joshua Williams. "The vaccine mandate is potentially going to cause some serious issues."

Brown issued the mandate requiring vaccines for emergency medical services providers (EMS providers), including firefighters licensed as EMS providers, after a spike in Oregon COVID cases between July and September, when hospitalizations increased nearly 1,000%.

"People are dying right

now when we have safe, effective, and free vaccines readily available," said Brown's spokesman, Charles Boyle. Unvaccinated people in the workplace, Boyle said, "put themselves and everyone around them at risk for COVID-19."

Critics, however, are concerned the mandate may have unintended consequences — including the potential to push first responders to resign.

No one knows for sure

how many first responders the state will lose. Each emergency department the Capital Press talked to offered a different prediction: 10%, 25%, 50%.

Genoa Ingram, executive director of Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association, said that while no one knows final numbers yet, impacts will likely be far-reaching.

"Nearly every district or department I've talked to has indicated there will be some shortage because not everyone is willing or can be vaccinated," said Ingram.

The fallout does not appear disproportionately concentrated in rural areas, Ingram said; one large urban district is at risk of losing 80 responders.

"It isn't regional," said Ingram. "I would've thought it would be urban versus rural, but it's not. Some urban departments are losing large percentages of first responders. And then I've had some very rural departments in Eastern Oregon saying basically everyone is vaxxed."

OBITUARIES

Mary Johanna Oja

Astoria

Feb. 21, 1933 — Aug. 22, 2021

Mary Johanna Oja, 88, lifelong Astoria resident, passed away at her family home on Aug. 22, 2021.

Mary was born Feb. 21, 1933, in Astoria, the youngest child of Milison and Ester Johnson Wullger. She lived her entire life in the Youngs River Valley, an area her ancestors immigrated to in the mid-1850s.

She attended the one-room Battle Creek School in Youngs River, walking to school each day. She was a 1951 graduate of Astoria High School.

After graduation, Mary worked at First National Bank and Knutsen Insurance until she began raising her family. On June 1, 1957, she married the love of her life, Robert M. Oja. He passed away on Dec. 24, 2019.

In 1975, Mary began working at Clatsop Community College, and worked there until retiring in 1995. Mary made many lasting friendships at the college. Mary also worked with Bob at their business, Columbia River Engine Co.

Mary devoted her time to her family, was an excellent cook, and no one ever went away hungry.

Mary was a Cub Scout den mother, a room mother at Lewis and Clark Consolidated School and a 4-H leader, teaching her kids the value and joy of growing your own vegetables and flowers. She also found the patience to raise numerous black Labrador retrievers

and a few cats.

Her love of flowers led her to design bridal bouquets and floral creations for family and friends' weddings, never considering it work, always fun and an honor.

A gifted artist, she enjoyed drawing, watercolors and tole painting.

She took pottery classes and yoga before it was cool. She also helped family and neighbors wallpaper and paint their homes.

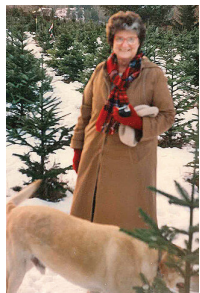
In 1984, Mary and Bob started Oja's Christmas Tree Farm. She enjoyed seeing the land produce the trees, and how much joy everyone had when they'd choose their tree each year. She was involved in running the farm until her passing.

Mary is survived by her son, Bart (Mary); daughter, Mary Louise (Paul); four grandchildren, Chris Oja (Melissa), Caitlin Oja, Andrea Phillips and Eddie Phillips; great-grandsons, Sawyer and Easton Oja; as well as beloved nieces and nephews.

Her brother, David M. Wullger, sister, Carolyn Wolfgram, and daughter-in-law, Kathie Oja, preceded her in death.

Mary was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Clatsop County Historical Society and a past member of the Alpha Iota sorority. She was also one of the last remaining members of the Youngs River Meadows Club.

A private graveside service is planned.



Mary Oja

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ASTORIA CHIROPRACTIC
Alicia M. Smith, DC
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Astoria, Oregon

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Q: What causes bad breath?

A: Basically, all food eaten begins to be broken down in your mouth. Bacteria, which accumulate with food, form a sticky film called plaque which leads to gum disease. This process creates what is known as volatile sulfur compounds resulting in bad breath. Poor brushing habits, a coated tongue, strong-odor foods, smoking and heavy alcohol drinking all contribute to bad breath. If this is you, do something about it by calling your dentist to schedule an evaluation.

Jeremy Feldman
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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
59 / 43 Mostly sunny	58 / 48 Cloudy with a shower	59 / 51 Cloudy, showers around	58 / 43 A couple of showers	55 / 41 Showers possible	58 / 43 Sunny to partly cloudy	57 / 46 Showers possible

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REGIONAL FORECAST

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

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	59/29/c	63/28/pc	North Bend	62/44/s	60/47/c
Brookings	63/46/s	59/48/c	Roseburg	62/41/pc	63/44/c
Ilwaco	58/45/pc	57/52/c	Seaside	59/43/s	57/47/c
Newberg	61/38/s	61/41/pc	Springfield	62/38/s	63/44/pc
Newport	57/42/s	56/46/c	Vancouver	60/41/pc	59/48/pc

ALMANAC

Astoria through Tuesday

Temperatures

High/low 60/49
Normal high/low 64/47
Record high 81 in 2015
Record low 34 in 1992

Precipitation

Tuesday 0.13"
Month to date 0.24"
Normal month to date 0.76"
Year to date 43.22"
Normal year to date 42.55"

Forecasts and graphics provided by
AccuWeather, Inc. ©2021

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: New moon (4:06 a.m.)

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 7:22 a.m.
Sunset tonight 6:44 p.m.
Moonrise today 8:47 a.m.
Moonset today 7:39 p.m.

	New	First	Full	Last
Oct 6	Oct 12	Oct 20	Oct 28	

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
2:21 a.m.	7.8	8:30 a.m.	0.2	
2:26 p.m.	8.6	9:06 p.m.	-0.9	
Cape Disappointment	1:55 a.m.	7.8	7:38 a.m.	0.3
2:03 p.m.	8.6	8:11 p.m.	-1.0	
Hammond	2:07 a.m.	8.1	7:59 a.m.	0.2
2:14 p.m.	8.9	8:33 p.m.	-1.1	
Warrenton	2:16 a.m.	8.2	8:14 a.m.	0.3
2:21 p.m.	9.0	8:50 p.m.	-0.8	
Knappa	2:58 a.m.	8.0	9:31 a.m.	0.2
3:03 p.m.	8.8	10:07 p.m.	-0.8	
Depoe Bay	1:07 a.m.	8.2	7:05 a.m.	0.5
1:14 p.m.	9.1	7:41 p.m.	-0.8	

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	77/68/r	77/64/pc
Boston	73/58/s	69/57/s
Chicago	71/63/r	73/61/c
Dallas	91/69/s	93/67/s
Denver	77/51/s	78/52/c
Honolulu	87/75/pc	86/74/sh
Houston	88/64/s	88/65/s
Los Angeles	69/60/c	66/54/sh
Miami	89/79/pc	87/77/t
New York City	74/63/pc	76/62/pc
Phoenix	91/69/pc	89/67/c
San Francisco	66/56/pc	66/54/c
Wash., DC	77/65/c	77/65/c

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