



The head of a dead thistle plant is covered in spider webs in a field on the Oxbow property in Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BRIEFLY

Gov. Brown renews call for transportation funding

EUGENE (AP) — During a visit to Eugene and Springfield, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown again called on state lawmakers to approve more transportation funding. The Register-Guard reports that Brown has asked the Legislature to pass a major transportation funding package in 2017. It would be likely be paid for by higher gas taxes and vehicle registration and driver license fees.

During her visit, Brown took a short bus ride along Franklin Boulevard with local officials. The route is being considered for major upgrades and could receive money from the transportation package.

Springfield officials have long wanted to turn Franklin into an upscale development hub and Eugene officials want to improve the stretch of the road near the university. Brown wouldn't say how much money she supports raising for transportation.

Intel to cut 784 Ore. workers

PORTLAND (AP) — Intel has notified Oregon officials it plans to lay off nearly 800 workers in Washington County. The Santa Clara, California-based company announced last week it is shedding 12,000 jobs worldwide. The

move is part of a restructuring caused by declining personal computer sales.

Intel is Oregon's largest private employer, with 19,500 workers in Portland's western suburbs. State law requires employers to give advance warning before a plant closing or mass layoff. The Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development said Tuesday it has received the warning from Intel. The company said in a letter it is firing 784 workers.

Bill introduced to return Kennewick Man to tribes

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate to require the federal government to give the bones of Kennewick Man back to the Indian tribes from which he descended.

It calls for the Army Corps of Engineers to repatriate the 9,000-year-old skeleton back to the tribes for reburial.

The remains were discovered in 1996 near the Columbia River in Kennewick, triggering a lengthy legal fight between tribes and scientists.

Kennewick Man is one of the oldest and most complete skeletons found in North America. Last year, new genetic evidence determined the remains were closer to modern Native Americans than any other population in the world.

Hanford seeks possible leak in second tank

SPOKANE (AP) — Officials for the Hanford Nuclear Reservation are trying to determine if a second giant underground tank containing radioactive waste from the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons is leaking, the U.S. Department of Energy revealed on Tuesday.

Air monitors attached to an aging tank known as AY-101 recently found radiation at higher than normal background levels, the agency said.

A video inspection of the underground tank found no evidence that radioactive waste had leaked from the primary tank into the space between the two walls, Hanford officials said. While a new leak is a possibility, they have found no evidence of one.

"We want to discredit that potential before we make any statement," said Tom Fletcher, the U.S. Department of Energy's tank farms manager at Hanford.

A Hanford watchdog group on Tuesday contended the higher radiation found by the air monitors was evidence of a leak in a second tank. Hanford Challenge is based in Seattle.

"The presence of these radioactive materials in the outer shell of the tank, known as the annulus, is a solid indicator that the primary shell of the tank has failed and is leaking high-level nuclear waste into the outer shell," said Mike Geffre, a former Hanford worker now on the board of Hanford Challenge.

Earlier this month, Hanford officials revealed that a tank known as AY-102 had leaked several thousand

gallons of radioactive waste from its primary tank into the annulus.

It was the first of the 28 double-walled tanks at Hanford to be found to have leaked. That waste is being pumped back into the primary tank.

The sprawling Hanford site is located near Richland, Washington, and was constructed during World War II to make plutonium, a key ingredient in nuclear weapons. The site is now engaged in cleaning up the leftover waste at a cost of more than \$2 billion per year. The most dangerous wastes are stored in 177 underground tanks, most of them old, single-walled tanks, some of which have leaked. The double-walled tanks were presumed to be much safer.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, a frequent Hanford critic, said the situation there was urgent.

"In light of today's developments, I will also be asking the U.S. Government Accountability Office to examine what and when DOE knew about the leaks in these tanks, the adequacy of the department's tank safety efforts and responses to the deteriorating condition of all of the high-level waste tanks," Wyden said.

Fletcher, in a telephone interview with The Associated Press, said air samples checked on April 6 and April 14 showed some elevated

levels of radioactivity within the annulus of tank AY-101, which is more than 40 years old and contains about 578,000 gallons of waste.

They did a video inspection of the annulus and found no evidence of a leak, Fletcher said.

"There are a number of potential sources this could come from," Fletcher said, including a leak that might have so far escaped detection.

Fletcher said Hanford officials will continue to study the problem, but he could offer no deadline for solving the riddle.

Hanford Challenge, quoting unnamed sources inside Hanford, said the air monitor recorded above-background levels of Cesium-137 and plutonium in the annulus.

The possible failure of a second double-shell tank at Hanford is serious because Hanford is running out of space to store waste from leaking tanks, said Tom Carpenter, director of Hanford Challenge.

"There is no other realistic option but to begin building new tanks immediately," Carpenter said. Those tanks would take several years to build, the group said.

Hanford stores about two-thirds of the nation's high-level nuclear waste, Hanford Challenge said. Dealing with that waste is expected to take decades and cost billions of dollars.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast. TODAY: Times of clouds and sun. THURSDAY: Nice with clouds and sun. FRIDAY: Breezy with periods of sun. SATURDAY: Mostly sunny. SUNDAY: Pleasant with some sun. Includes temperature forecasts for Pendleton and Hermiston, an almanac, regional forecast, and sun and moon data.

REGIONAL CITIES table with columns for Today and Thu. Hi, Lo, W. Cities include Astoria, Baker City, Bend, Brookings, Burns, Enterprise, Eugene, Hermiston, John Day, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Meacham, Medford, Newport, North Bend, Ontario, Pasco, Pendleton, Portland, Redmond, Salem, Spokane, Ukiah, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Yakima.

WINDS table with columns for Today and Thursday. (in mph) Boardman: WSW 4-8; Pendleton: WSW 4-8.

UV INDEX TODAY. 1 2 4 4 3 1. 8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m. 0-2, Low; 3-5, Moderate; 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY. Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day. Includes a map of the United States with weather systems and a summary of severe storms.

NATIONAL CITIES table with columns for Today and Thursday. Hi, Lo, W. Cities include Albuquerque, Atlanta, Atlanta City, Baltimore, Billings, Birmingham, Boise, Boston, Charleston, SC, Charleston, WV, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, El Paso, Fairbanks, Fargo, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, New York City, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, ME, Providence, Raleigh, Rapid City, Reno, Sacramento, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, Washington, DC, Wichita.