

IDAHO: Received support from Malheur County food producers

Continued from 1A

and the 20 Washington Counties east of King County join Idaho. That scenario would see Oregon’s population drop by about 13 percent and Washington’s population by 22 percent, while Idaho’s population would rise by 125 percent to 3.68 million.

Since the 435 seats in the House of Representatives are apportioned every 10 years based on the states’ population count in latest census, Washington would likely lose two of its 10 representatives to Idaho, and Oregon could possibly lose one of its five representatives to another state.

Electoral College votes, meanwhile, are based on the number of senators and representatives a state has serving in Washington, D.C. If reliably blue state Washington lost two representatives and reliably red state Idaho gained two, future Republican presidents could count on another two “safe” Electoral College votes in the foreseeable future — possibly three, depending on whether Oregon grew enough to hang on to all of its representatives. In a tight race like 2016, it could make a difference.

The odds to all of that happening are slim to none, however. And Parsons understands that he’s fighting an uphill battle. But he did say he was encouraged by what seemed like genuine interest from a variety of Malheur County food producers who told the media last fall that they would join Idaho in a heartbeat if offered the chance.

“Everything about Malheur County is more identified with Idaho,” Owyhee Produce general manager Shay Myers told the *Capital Press* at the time. “I wish I knew how to actually make this happen.”

If Malheur County led the way, Parsons said, it was possible a handful of other counties would be on board with supporting an effort to redraw state lines.

“It all comes back, to me, to Malheur County,” he said. “If they don’t want to move into Idaho I don’t see any other counties having the economic and political incentive.”

Parsons said he is looking to be more of a “facilitator” than a leader on any movement toward secession, which is why he made a Yahoo group on the issue, which later spurred a Facebook group called “E. Washington/E. Oregon join Idaho.”

That group drew 240 members, who have discussed topics such as messaging (they prefer talk of “shifting boundaries” to “seceding”) and the differences in responses by Idaho, Oregon and Washington on political questions such as allowing Syrian refugees into their state.

“One of the nice things about having Eastern Washington and Oregon be a part of Idaho, is that (maybe) people on the east side would stop viewing Democrats as awful Seattle and Portland liberals, but as Spokane or Boise moderates who want to reach a reasonable compromise,” page administrator Dan Wallace wrote.

Parsons said even if the boundaries between the states never do change, generating public discussions around the issue sends a message to Democrats in Salem and Olympia that they shouldn’t just run over the concerns of Republicans representing the eastern counties on topics such as minimum wage.

“It’s saying, ‘Listen, the people in eastern Oregon and eastern Washington are upset. They don’t like what you’re passing,’” he said.

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L.A. chief defends two fatal weekend shootings

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles police chief on Monday defended the use of deadly force against two men in separate fatal shootings over the weekend, saying one turned toward officers with a gun and the other pointed what looked like a real gun at police.

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck released new details of Saturday’s shooting of 18-year-old Carnell Snell in South Los Angeles and a fatal police shooting of an unidentified Hispanic man on Sunday.

The shootings come amid heightened tensions over police actions involving black people and other minorities across the country.

In Snell’s shooting, officers tried to pull over a car he was in because it had paper plates that didn’t match the year of the vehicle — a possible indication of a stolen car and something commonly seen in drive-by shootings, Beck said.

Snell, seated in the back, looked at officers and then ducked down “as if to hide from them,” Beck said.

When officers tried to pull the car over, Snell jumped out holding his waistband and the foot pursuit began, he said.

After a chase of several hundred yards, Beck said, Snell took a gun from his waistband and turned in the direction of the pursuing offi-

cers, prompting the shooting. Snell died at the scene and police recovered a fully loaded semi-automatic gun with one round in the chamber within 5 feet of where Snell lay, Beck said, adding that the weapon had not been fired.

Beck did not say whether one or more officers fired, how close they were to Snell, or whether the car turned out to be stolen.

The officers were not wearing body cameras, but a surveillance video from a business clearly showed Snell was armed, Beck said.

The shooting occurred in a Los Angeles neighborhood where nearly 450 people have been shot this year,

making it the worst in the city for gun violence, Beck said.

“We are doing our absolute best to take guns out of the hands of those that would use them against others, and sometimes that leads to circumstances where Los Angeles police officers are put into peril and have to defend themselves,” the chief said.

A group of people protested outside Beck’s news conference, chanting, “No justice, no peace, no racist police.” Three were arrested for unlawful assembly after refusing orders to leave police headquarters and take their demonstration to a public street.

The protesters rejected the police department’s description of the shooting and called on them to release the video if they have nothing to hide, something Beck said was being considered but could only happen when all the evidence has been collected and analyzed.

Snell was on probation after pleading no contest to one felony count of assault likely to produce great bodily injury, according to court records.

If Snell did turn toward police with a gun, then the fatal shooting would be justified, said Samuel Walker, a retired criminal justice professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

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