

More than half of eligible Oregonians have already voted

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — A day before the deadline to vote, Kevin Cadwallader walked into a grocery store on Monday and put his ballot into an official drop box festooned with American-flag balloons.

"I wanted to see if there was going to be anything else that comes out in the press," Cadwallader said once he was back in the parking lot after inserting his envelope

through the slot in south Salem. There was a lot of "he said, she said" in the U.S. presidential race, Cadwallader noted, but nothing that changed his vote.

A total of 50.3 percent of Oregon's 2,567,282 registered voters had cast ballots by mail or in drop-boxes by Monday morning, a day before election day on Tuesday, the Oregon secretary of state's office said. That's a slightly smaller percentage than in the 2008

and 2012 elections.

Just a couple of blocks from the Oregon State Capitol, which is quiet this time of year with the Legislature not in session, the Marion County Clerk Bill Burgess' office was a hive of activity.

Burgess had about 100 part-time workers sitting at rows of tables and standing at counters, going through stacks of incoming ballots that are enclosed in envelopes with each voter's signature.

Those ballots that seemed to have more than one vote for a candidate or for a measure, or a write-in candidate, received extra scrutiny in another room.

"We cherish the idea that everyone's vote is important and sacred," Burgess, who was wearing an American-flag tie, told a visiting mother and her four young children, who were staring goggle-eyed at all the activity.

In a backroom, the shelves were laden with ballots,

whose results have been digitally tabulated by his people but not yet counted. The results will be added up by computer after polls closed. He said there were about 80,000 ballots in the room already, available to be hand-counted in case a recount is ordered.

Similar activities were being done Monday in all of Oregon's 36 counties.

Grant County, in eastern Oregon, has the highest return rate so far on ballots,

with 62.7 percent. Columbia County had only 43.6 percent.

Oregonians vote by mail. While it's too late to mail in a ballot for it to be counted, voters can take them to drop boxes as long as they do so by 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Cadwallader, a construction worker with six children, said a lot is resting on the outcome. "It comes down to, what kind of country do I want my kids growing up in?" he said.

RODEO: Lilly thanked her financial supporters and God

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and progressed from there. Ashley, 30, has a similar story. A barrel racer since she was small, she qualified for the INFR at about Lilly's age (though she didn't go) and competed at the Pendleton Round-Up.

Lilly credits her aunt with shaping her as a barrel racer. The two train together and spend hours on the road.

"She always been there for me," Lilly said.

"She is like the daughter I never had," Ashley said, shooting a warm look at her niece.

Lilly, whose first run is around 1 p.m. on Tuesday, admitted she is nervous, but is confident that her pre-competition ritual will calm and focus her.

"Me and Ashley — we pray before every run," she said.

Claire, who is a grand-

daughter of the storied thoroughbred Secretariat, is ready for prime time after a busy season and regular workouts to maintain her muscles and lungs. Training involves trotting and galloping in pastures and on a four-speed hot walker on her grandparents' Cayuse acreage. She guides Claire through a miniature three-barrel course. She also prepared Hammer, a speedy male chestnut that will share the trailer with Claire and provide backup.

Ashley expressed confidence in her niece

"Lilly's got as good a shot as anybody if she can keep the barrels standing," she said. "It'll be tough, but she didn't get to the national finals by accident."

Lilly thanked her financial supporters and God.

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In this photo taken Oct. 19, a man fishes for salmon in the Snake River above the Lower Granite Dam in Washington state. There is a renewed push to remove the Lower Granite and multiple other dams on the Snake River to save wild salmon runs.

Jesse Tinsley/The Spokesman-Review

Judge's order revives movement to remove Snake River dams

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Conservationists and others have renewed a push to remove four giant dams from the Snake River to save wild salmon runs, after a federal judge criticized the government for failing to consider whether breaching the dams would save the fish.

The judge earlier this year rejected the government's fifth and latest plan for protecting threatened and endangered salmon in the Columbia River system.

Agencies must take a new look at all approaches to managing the southeast Washington dams, including breaching, said U.S. District Court Judge Michael Simon in Portland, Oregon.

"This is an action that (government agencies) have done their utmost to avoid considering for decades," he wrote.

His order triggered 15 public meetings in Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon, where the dam removal issue has percolated for two decades.

The first meeting was held last month, and the final one is scheduled for Dec. 8. After that, a plan to save the salmon must be created.

The Snake River, at just over 1,000

miles, is the 13th longest in the United States, flowing from the western border of Wyoming to its confluence with the mighty Columbia River in Washington. For much of its history, the river and its tributaries produced salmon runs in the millions that sustained Native American tribes who lived near its banks. The best salmon spawning grounds were in Idaho, and were hampered by the construction of the four dams.

Environmental groups say restoring the salmon runs is impossible with the four dams in place.

The dams provide about 5 percent of the region's electricity, roughly enough power for a city the size of Seattle. A recent report by the federal Bonneville Power Administration said if the Snake River dams are removed, a new natural gas plant would be required to replace the lost electricity.

Thirteen runs of Columbia and Snake river salmon and steelhead remain endangered or threatened despite billions of dollars spent over decades to save them.

Sam Mace, a spokeswoman for Save Our Wild Salmon, said the dams' benefits are not worth the loss of the iconic fish.

"There is more than one way to get wheat to market," Mace said. "But

salmon only have one way to travel, and that's in the river."

Salmon supporters say restored salmon runs will help the economy.

"Healthy salmon populations could support tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars annually in the recreation and tourism economy," said Liz Hamilton of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association.

Idaho's Nez Perce Tribe also has called for removing the dams and restoring the fish to harvestable levels.

"The four dams on the lower Snake River have had a devastating impact on salmon," said McCoy Oatman, the tribe's vice chairman.

Opponents of breaching the dams say they provide irrigation, hydropower and shipping benefits, and allow grain barges to operate all the way to Lewiston, Idaho, more than 400 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River.

Wheat from as far as North Dakota is shipped downriver by barge for export to Asia. The Snake River also is used to transport about 60 percent of Washington's wheat and barley crop to Portland. A tug pushing a barge can haul a ton of wheat 576 miles on a single gallon of fuel.

POTATOES: Production two tons per acre higher than usual

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the plants and cause them to rot before they can be sold to supermarkets or food processors.

Fortunately, the early start allowed most growers to avoid that issue, Brewer said. The Columbia Basin is also home to sandy, well-drained soils that dry out more quickly, meaning farmers don't have to wait long after it rains to get back out into the fields.

"I really don't think it was an issue," Brewer said. "Most people were done by the time the moisture really started coming."

Greg Harris, farm manager for Threemile Canyon Farms near Boardman, said they finished harvesting storage potatoes by Oct. 10, which was a few days ahead of schedule. The farm grows 7,000 acres worth of spuds — including several varieties of Russets — which are sold to processors including french fry giant Lamb Weston.

"Because most of the rain came during the second half of October, most people had the bulk of storage done," Harris said. "Otherwise, it definitely would have been a problem for us."

Along with storage, Threemile Canyon delivers potatoes directly from the field to customers through early November. That's where having sandy, absorbent soils comes as a benefit, Harris said. In particular,

processing plants around the Tri-Cities leaned heavily on the farm during the late October rains.

"They were almost doubling our output out of here for three or four days to get potatoes to those plants," he said.

The early season growing conditions have made for an excellent crop, Harris said. He estimates production to be about two tons per acre higher than usual.

"We're happy with how it turned out," he said. "Certainly, it was one of our better crops."

Statewide, Oregon farmers grew nearly 1.22 million tons of potatoes in 2015, worth \$176.45 million. Brewer said the region from Hermiston to Boardman averages 30-plus tons per acre, mostly for processing into products like fries, potato chips and potato flakes.

Basin Gold, a cooperative of Oregon and Washington growers, also specializes in producing and marketing fresh market potatoes, like the ones on supermarket shelves. Bud-Rich Potato, of Hermiston, is part of that co-op.

Most farms should be producing at or above average throughout the area, Brewer said.

"Everybody had a pretty good fall harvest," he said.

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ELECTION: Umatilla and Morrow county voters make up 1.7 percent of state's electorate

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32 percent of Dems were undecided compared to 22 percent of Republicans.

Democrat Gov. Kate Brown also could be in for a tense election night. Survey USA's October poll for KATU News had Brown leading Bud Pierce, a Salem oncologist who has never held public office, 46 percent to 42 percent, with 8 percent undecided and 4 percent picking "other."

Former Portland Trail Blazer turned Republican gubernatorial candidate Chris Dudley was within reach of taking the office in 2010. Also a political newcomer, he was up

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against Gov. John Kitzhaber, trying for a third term in the top office after an eight-year hiatus. Kitzhaber won 49 percent to 48 percent, a meager difference of 22,238 votes, according to election results from the Oregon Secretary of State. The total voter turnout was 71.9 percent.

Kitzhaber won in eight of Oregon's 36 counties, which included Lane, Multnomah and Washington, the state's population bases and Demo-

crat strongholds. While Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 200,000 voters that year in Oregon, Republican turnout hit almost 80 percent, about 5 percent more than Democrats.

But Dudley needed just a bit more. He won Clackamas County, taking 83,516 votes to Kitzhaber's 69,250. More than 6,300 voters there cast ballots for third-party candidates.

In all, Clackamas counted 159,112 votes in the governor's race, but the county had 214,391 registered voters, meaning almost 26 percent of them did not vote.

Oregon voters turned in 82.8 percent of ballots in

2012, the last presidential election, and this year 50.3 percent of Oregon voters have already cast their ballots. Morrow County surpassed the statewide average, with 55.7 percent return, while Umatilla County's return rate was 50.1 percent.

Umatilla and Morrow county voters combined make up about 1.7 percent of the state's electorate of about 2.5 million voters. Republican voters in the two counties are about 36 percent of that and nonaffiliated voters make up another 32 percent.

Eligible voters can cast a ballot right up until 8 p.m. Tuesday, and that is the poll that counts.



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