

TOP OREGON STORIES OF 2016

By STEVEN DUBOIS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — It was truly a story for all of 2016. Ammon Bundy and his followers seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge on the day after New Year's and remained in the headlines through December. Unsurprisingly, the armed takeover and its aftermath was overwhelmingly selected Oregon's story of the year in the annual vote conducted by The Associated Press.

Every editor or news director who submitted a ballot of 10 top stories included the takeover on his or her ballot, and nearly everyone had it No. 1.

After that, it was a jumble. The gap between Bundy and the second-biggest story — the defeat of Measure 97 — was larger than the gap between the No. 2 story and the 10th-place finisher.

Here are 2016's top 10 stories:

1. Ranching standoff

Ammon Bundy, joined by his brother Ryan and a small band of followers, took a "hard stand" against federal control of Western lands and the imprisonment of two ranchers. They seized a wildlife refuge in Harney County and spent weeks in a slow-motion standoff with authorities.

The Bundys were eventually arrested in a Jan. 26 traffic stop that included the fatal shooting by police of occupation spokesman Robert "LaVoy" Finicum. Four holdouts remained at the refuge until Feb. 11.

Eleven men pleaded guilty ahead of a fall trial that ended with the surprise acquittals of the Bundy brothers and five co-defendants. In an explosive ending, a team of federal marshals tackled defense lawyer Marcus Mumford as he yelled at the judge. Paperwork flew as Ammon Bundy's attorney writhed on the ground, screaming.

The year closed with some defendants trying to withdraw their guilty pleas and government prosecutors pressing ahead with a February 2017 trial for seven remaining defendants.

2. Measure 97

Concerned about paying higher prices, voters rejected a measure that would have required corporations with at least \$25 million in Oregon sales to pay more in tax to help fund education and other services. Opponents and supporters of Measure 97 battled bitterly during the campaign. More than \$43 million was spent, making it the most expensive ballot measure fight in Oregon history.

3. Train derailment

A Union Pacific train moving crude oil derailed June 3 while traveling through the Columbia River Gorge. The derailment in Mosier released 42,000 gallons of oil and sparked a massive fire



In this June 3, 2016, file image, from video provided by KGW-TV, smoke billows from a Union Pacific train that derailed near Mosier, in the scenic Columbia River Gorge. The derailment released 42,000 gallons of oil and sparked a massive fire that burned for 14 hours.

that burned for 14 hours. Protesters and some government officials said the crash showed that transporting oil by train is dangerous, unnecessary and should be prohibited.

4. Higher minimum wage

Lawmakers boosted the minimum wage, agreeing to a tiered, geographical system that gained national attention. On July 1, Oregon's minimum wage increased to \$9.50 in rural counties and \$9.75 in urban counties. It was the first of several increases scheduled to take effect every July through 2022. In that final year, Portland's minimum will be set at \$14.75, smaller cities at \$13.50 and rural areas at \$12.50.

5. Marijuana legalization

The decision by Oregon voters to approve recreational marijuana was the No. 1 story of 2014 and putting it into practice ranked No. 3 last year. It hit the Top 5 again in 2016 as communities grappled with ordinances to regulate the hours of operation and the locations of producers, processors, wholesalers, as well as retailers and medical marijuana grow sites. Scores of communities approved local sales taxes on recreational marijuana sales. Some places that had opted out of allowing marijuana businesses reversed course.

6. GOP victory

Dennis Richardson became the first Republican to win a statewide race in 14 years with his victory over Democrat Brad Avakian in the race for secretary of state. The last Republican secretary of state was Norma Paulus, who held the position in the 1980s.

7. Oracle settlement

The state's long-running legal battle against Oracle over the failed Cover

Oregon health exchange reached a quiet conclusion. Oregon said the company defrauded the state by charging \$240 million for a health insurance website that didn't work. After seeking \$6 billion in damages, the state settled for \$25 million in cash plus software licensing agreements and technical support. Oracle also agreed to contribute \$10 million to a state technology education program.

8. No coal

In a victory for environmentalists, Oregon lawmakers approved a bill to eliminate coal from the state's energy supply by 2030 and provide half of customers' power with renewable sources by 2040. The legislation made Oregon the first state to eliminate coal by legislative action, and placed it among a handful of other states with renewable energy standards 50 percent or higher.

9. Trump protests

Progressives in Portland were in the vanguard of protests following the presidential election that sent Donald Trump to the White House. Though most marchers remained peaceful, some blocked traffic, vandalized storefronts, sprayed graffiti and smashed car windows. More than 100 people were arrested during two weeks of demonstrations.

10. Duck dynasty collapses

In January 2015, Oregon played in the first College Football Playoff national championship game. This year, the Ducks won just two Pac-12 Conference games, capping their worst season since 1991 with a 10-point loss to, gulp, Oregon State. The swift collapse of a team known for its high-octane offenses and ever-changing uniforms led to the firing of coach Mark Helfrich.

Richardson names ousted officials to top posts

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon's new Secretary of State, Dennis Richardson, has named an ousted elections official to a top administrative position along with a former state manager who was tied to a multimillion-dollar tech failure.

Richardson has appointed Leslie Cummings as deputy secretary of state. Cummings managed tech-security for the Oregon Employment Department until 2013, when she resigned after being caught up in accusations of nepotism and wasting millions in public funds.

For elections director, Richardson selected Steve Trout, who held the position from 2009 to 2013 under then-Secretary of State Kate Brown. Trout left after Brown faced criticism for giving candidates short notice that the date of their election would change — a responsibility of the elections director.

Richardson, 67, defeated Democrat Brad Avakian in November, becoming the first Republican to win a statewide race since 2002.

His communications director, Michael Calcagno, defended the appointments, telling *The Oregonian/OregonLive* that Cummings and Trout are "amazingly qualified and credentialed."

Cummings, who holds a doctorate in leadership, jointly oversaw a tech project to allow businesses to enter unemployment information with the department. But the system didn't work as planned, audits show. That slowed other projects, pushed them over budget and forced businesses to enter information manually.

Despite the problems, the project had at least one defender: her husband, Bob

Cummings, a fiscal analyst on state technology for the Legislature. He spoke favorably about his wife's project to agency managers and told them he wouldn't note its problems in budget documents, records show.

His intervention sparked complaints that led to an Oregon Department of Justice investigation and ethics commission probe. Justice officials declined to pursue charges citing insufficient evidence, and the ethics case was dismissed.

Leslie Cummings denied the allegations investigated by officials and said she had little to do with the tech project's failures. Audits that found the undertaking rife with waste were biased, she said.

After her resignation, Cummings found work as a senior analyst conducting security and risk management audits for the Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority.

Trout said Brown, who is now governor, asked him to resign but said it had nothing to do with the election scheduling entanglement.

After leaving state government, Trout took a job as director of election innovation at Boston-based startup Clear Ballot Group. In returning to the public sector, Trout said he hopes to rebuild trust in elections by bolstering transparency and applying laws without partisanship.

"Elections are under attack in the press and in social media," he said. "I've spent my whole career trying to defend the election process and make sure the public's will is reflected in the votes no matter who the winner is."



Richardson

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.

EAST OREGONIAN

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
39° 28°	30° 18°	21° 8°	14° -2°	10° -2°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
37° 28°	33° 21°	26° 10°	19° 2°	15° 2°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE
HIGH LOW
Yesterday 46° 36°
Normals 39° 27°
Records 63° (1920) -12° (1968)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.17"
Month to date 2.29"
Normal month to date 1.55"
Year to date 13.59"
Last year to date 10.09"
Normal year to date 13.06"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE
HIGH LOW
Yesterday 46° 36°
Normals 39° 27°
Records 66° (1949) -13° (1990)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.01"
Month to date 1.24"
Normal month to date 1.41"
Year to date 9.14"
Last year to date 7.17"
Normal year to date 9.91"

SUN AND MOON
Sunrise today 7:36 a.m.
Sunset tonight 4:21 p.m.
Moonrise today 9:02 a.m.
Moonset today 7:09 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Jan 5	Jan 12	Jan 19	Jan 27

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

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Increasing cloudiness today, rain in the northwest late and tonight with mountain snow.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly sunny across the south today, increasing cloudiness north. Cloudy tonight.

Western Washington: Cloudy today with rain this afternoon. Snow level 1,000 feet in the Olympics.

Eastern Washington: Sun will fade behind increasing cloudiness today. Cloudy with snow at times tonight.

Cascades: Increasing cloudiness today. Snow later today and tonight will slow travel.

Northern California: Morning clouds will break to allow some sun today. Clear to partly cloudy tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	47	35	r	41	26	sh
Baker City	17	3	s	16	0	sn
Bend	34	19	pc	28	7	sn
Brookings	50	35	pc	43	31	sh
Burns	19	-1	s	24	-7	sn
Enterprise	26	11	pc	21	9	sn
Eugene	41	33	pc	40	25	sn
Heppner	34	23	pc	28	13	sn
Hermiston	37	28	pc	33	21	sn
John Day	34	18	pc	27	11	sn
Klamath Falls	33	16	c	29	12	sf
La Grande	29	18	pc	24	12	sn
Meacham	28	17	pc	22	11	sn
Medford	40	28	pc	38	27	c
Newport	44	36	r	43	26	sh
North Bend	48	35	pc	44	29	sh
Ontario	17	4	pc	19	7	sn
Pasco	41	26	pc	36	24	sn
Pendleton	39	28	pc	30	18	sn
Portland	40	32	r	40	24	sn
Redmond	35	18	pc	31	10	sn
Salem	41	34	r	39	24	sn
Spokane	28	17	pc	25	12	sn
Ukiah	31	17	pc	23	8	sn
Vancouver	40	33	r	38	24	sn
Walla Walla	39	27	pc	31	19	sn
Yakima	34	21	pc	34	18	sn

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	41	17	s	46	21	pc
Hong Kong	72	66	c	74	67	pc
Jerusalem	50	37	pc	51	37	s
London	47	40	c	46	34	r
Mexico City	73	48	pc	73	45	pc
Moscow	35	34	c	37	32	c
Paris	32	26	c	38	35	pc
Rome	51	31	pc	53	39	s
Seoul	42	27	pc	47	38	pc
Sydney	79	71	pc	82	69	sh
Tokyo	50	41	s	54	41	s

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Sunday
Boardman	SW 7-14	N 6-12
Pendleton	S 6-12	WNW 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

0 1 1 1 0 0

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

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: A quick-moving storm system will spread light snow across the Great Lakes and into northern New England today. Rain will fall farther south across the Ohio Valley to the Gulf Coast.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 76° in Marathon, Fla. Low -13° in Afton, Wyo.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sun.				Today			Sun.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W		Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	46	31	sh	47	31	c	Louisville	45	35	r	48	45	r
Atlanta	50	42	r	54	50	r	Memphis	49	45	r	57	54	c
Atlanta City	46	40	pc	50	39	pc	Miami	78	70	pc	84	74	pc
Baltimore	46	33	pc	50	36	pc	Millwaukee	37	22	c	37	29	pc
Billings	32	10	pc	18	1	sn	Minneapolis	26	21	c	35	29	pc
Birmingham	51												