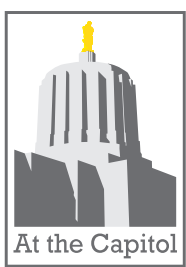


Advocates seek more money for veteran services

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon veterans' groups have been up in arms since the governor's budget reduced allocations to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs from the state's general fund and backfilled it with most of the lottery fund dollars set aside for veterans' services by a voter-approved ballot measure.



At the Capitol

Now they've brought their concerns to a Legislature busy trying to fill a \$1.6 billion shortfall.

Ballot Measure 96 amended the state's constitution to allocate 1.5 percent of state lottery net proceeds to direct services for veterans.

Advocates have been vocal about what they say is a need for more support — such as for veterans' services officers, who help returned veterans sign up for federal

benefits. Byron Whipple, a veterans' services officer in Union County, told legislators last month that in his area of northeastern Oregon, veterans face problems accessing travel to get medical care.

In February, community members housed a 75-year-old veteran with dementia for five days because local agencies could not arrange services for him sooner, Whipple wrote in testimony to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development.

"We do not have local missions and shelters that certain cities and counties have," Whipple wrote. "We do not have the extra tax dollars to fund these emergencies. Last November, we did have hope."

In December, Gov. Kate Brown released a budget that decreased the amount

of general fund dollars for veterans' services from \$10 million to \$2 million, provoking the ire of veterans' advocates, who said that the ballot measure was intended to supplement, not supplant, current state funding for veterans.

The Governor's Office said in a statement this week that at \$19.8 million, the governor's budget reflected the intent of Measure 96 by increasing the overall budget for the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Although \$19.8 million would be a near doubling of funding for veterans' services in the next budget cycle, veterans groups' say it's not enough, and that the governor's plan may meet the letter, but not the spirit, of Measure 96.

The co-chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, the legislative budget-writing committee, proposed \$23.5 million in combined lottery and general funds for veterans' services as part of their preliminary spending

framework in January.

Some legislators have called for boosting the amount higher still.

State Rep. Paul Evans, D-Monmouth, is one of them.

Evans acknowledged in a statement Thursday that state legislators were facing an "extraordinarily difficult budget environment."

"Now we have to find a way to increase funding to a level where we can do some real good for the men and women we've sent into harm's way, while also strengthening our schools, providing quality health care and investing in other critical services," Evans said.

Freshman Rep. Ron Noble, R-McMinnville, wants to bump the amount of money the veterans' services program gets by amending the agency's funding bill, bringing the total to about \$30 million for veterans' services.

Noble says he wants to obey the will of the voters. According to the Oregon

Secretary of State's Office, 83 percent of Oregon voters voted in favor of Measure 96.

However, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Office, the measure did not require that the amount of money allocated to veterans' services in the general fund be maintained.

"There's nothing in the bill that says you cannot supplant the dollars," Noble said. "But I think that's, I'm going to be blunt, I think that's just a chicken way out."

Noble did not have specific proposals Thursday as to where he'd cut back elsewhere in the state's general fund to increase veterans' services.

He said the state could be more efficient, and that he is preparing to provide more details at future meetings of the Ways and Means Subcommittee reviewing the ODVA budget, of which he is a member.

Supporters of more funding, such as Noble and

State Rep. Julie Parrish, R-Tualatin/West Linn, argue that an up-front investment in direct services will bring more revenue to the state down the line by increasing the amount of federal benefits Oregon's veterans receive. They claim it will also lessen the burden on other areas of the state budget, such as health care and housing.

Parrish was behind the legislative proposal that was referred to voters, and said in a phone interview Thursday that it was not her intention to backfill a lower general fund budget with the lottery funds.

Furthermore, she believes the state has the resources to pay for the veterans' services that advocates want.

She said she was working on a bill to curtail the costs of healthcare for public employees. "We have the money," Parrish said, "We're just not holding state agencies accountable for how we're spending it."

Braves, warriors, chieftains: State takes on tribal mascots

GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

BANKS — This fall, the football team in the tiny Oregon logging town of Banks will once again take the field as the Braves. But this time, they have the approval of the tribe that originally inhabited the area.

It's one of many changes in the works this spring across Oregon prompted by the nation's long-running uproar over Native American sports mascots. School districts in the state with tribal mascots must do away with them by July 1 or risk punishment that could include the withholding of state funds.

However, the state will make exceptions for districts that get the approval of one of Oregon's nine tribes — and the Banks School District is one of more than a half-dozen tiny districts trying to take advantage of that provision.

The state Board of Education voted unanimously on Thursday to approve



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

The Banks High School mascot is visible on track hurdles at the school in Banks on Thursday. In Oregon, school districts with Native American mascots must abandon them by July or risk punishment that could include the withholding of state funds.

an agreement between the Banks district and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the first such deal to reach the board.

The current deal, nearly two years in the making, allows the district to keep the name Braves. In exchange, it gives up the "Indian head" image — a Native American

man with a partially shaved head, face paint, ear hoop and feathers — and implements a curriculum developed by the Grand Ronde that teaches the history of its people from a tribal perspective.

The process highlights the dilemma facing small schools across the U.S. as attention has focused on high-profile

battles over mascots such as the Washington Redskins.

Minnesota and Wisconsin have banned Native American mascots at school districts for decades, but elsewhere communities have wrestled with the issue for years, said Jennifer Guiliano, a history professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Oregon's statewide approach is unique, and its willingness to allow an exception for districts that collaborate with tribes calls to mind the NCAA's longstanding ban on Native American mascots that don't have tribal buy-in, she said.

But even with collaboration, agreements at the high school and college levels can raise questions about the nature of the long-term relationship once a deal is inked, she said.

State education officials initially did not want to allow any exceptions to the mascot ban but eventually bowed to pressure from lawmakers last year. At

the time, some tribal rights groups were angry at the weakening of the policy that had been one of the toughest in the nation.

"You can have curriculum without exploiting and dehumanizing Native American people," said Sam Sachs, founder of No Hate Zone, a racial rights advocacy website. "I think it's great they're having these conversations, but we only got here because there was a threat of taking away their discriminatory, race-based mascots."

The exemption has prompted a state lawmaker to introduce a bill that would ban all Native American mascots, with or without tribal

input. Other opponents have threatened lawsuits over racial discrimination in schools.

In Banks, nearly all the residents made it clear they didn't want to give up the name Braves — and the tribe was willing to listen.

"It's been the nickname or the mascot for 70-plus years or so and it's a symbol of pride and respect for our community," said district Superintendent Jeff Leo, who oversees 1,000 students in the K-12 district 25 miles west of Portland.

"We just didn't say, 'Oh, we're going to keep the name. We looked into it, we read things. We didn't take it lightly at all.'"

Corrections

A brief in the March 22 East Oregonian incorrectly stated that folk musician Elwood would be performing Friday in the Hamley Slickfork Saloon in Pendleton. Elwood will be performing in Hamley Saloon, inside Hamley Steakhouse, from 9 p.m. to midnight. The EO regrets the error.

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: Mostly cloudy, showers around. SATURDAY: Variable clouds, a shower or two. SUNDAY: A few afternoon showers. MONDAY: Clouds and sun, showers around. TUESDAY: Mostly cloudy with a shower. Includes temperature forecasts for Pendleton and Hermiston.

ALMANAC

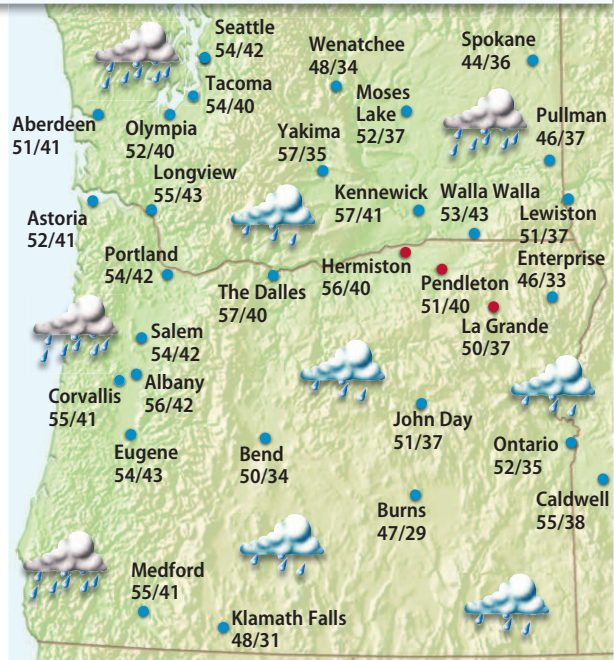
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yesterday TEMPERATURE HIGH 54° LOW 32° Yesterdays 54° 32° Normals 57° 37° Records 74° (1960) 20° (1904) PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.03" Month to date 1.52" Normal month to date 1.02" Year to date 5.44" Last year to date 3.84" Normal year to date 3.53"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday TEMPERATURE HIGH 56° LOW 34° Yesterdays 56° 34° Normals 60° 36° Records 79° (1940) 19° (2013) PRECIPITATION 24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00" Month to date 0.86" Normal month to date 0.69" Year to date 4.32" Last year to date 2.70" Normal year to date 2.93"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 6:50 a.m. Sunset tonight 7:13 p.m. Moonrise today 5:07 a.m. Moonset today 3:34 p.m. New Mar 27, First Apr 3, Full Apr 10, Last Apr 19



Regional Forecast: Coastal Oregon: Mostly cloudy today with a little rain. Eastern Washington: Rain today; icy mix in the morning, then rain and sleet in the mountains. Cascades: Rain today; however, a bit of snow and rain in the south. Northern California: Rain today, except a snow shower in the interior mountains; colder in central parts.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table of regional cities with columns for Today and Sat. High/Low and W/P. Includes Astoria, Baker City, Bend, Brookings, Burns, Enterprise, Eugene, Heppner, Hermiston, John Day, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Meacham, Medford, Newport, North Bend, Ontario, Pasco, Pendleton, Portland, Redmond, Salem, Spokane, Ukiah, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Yakima.

WORLD CITIES

Table of world cities with columns for Today and Sat. High/Low and W/P. Includes Beijing, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, London, Mexico City, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Seoul, Sydney Airport, Tokyo.

WINDS

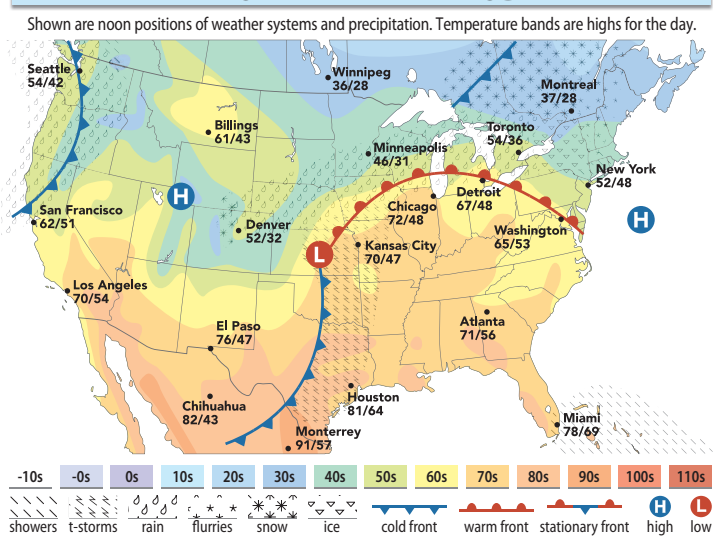
Table of wind speeds in mph for Boardman, Pendleton.

UV INDEX TODAY



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



National Summary: A wintry mix will fall on the Northeast today while snow blankets part of Colorado. Rain will soak areas from western New York to Nebraska and Central California to Washington as severe storms hit the Plains.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states) High 98° in Presidio, Texas Low -20° in Saranac Lake, N.Y.

NATIONAL CITIES

Table of national cities with columns for Today and Sat. High/Low and W/P. Includes Albuquerque, Atlanta, Baltimore, Billings, Birmingham, Boise, Boston, Charleston, SC, 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, Portland, ME, Providence, Raleigh, Rapid City, Reno, Sacramento, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Tucson, Washington, DC, Wichita.