

Seattle crushes rain record, Portland wet too

SEATTLE (AP) — Soggy Seattle has broken another rainfall record, and Portland is inching closer to smashing its own record.

Seattle measured 44.7 inches of rain between October and April, making it the wettest such period since records began in 1895, the National Weather Service in Seattle said.

It marks the second year in the row that the city has topped the historic rainfall record for that period.

With several days left to go this month, this year's record will likely be padded some more, said Mike McFarland, a meteorologist with the service in Seattle.

"This has been a terrible winter. It was just wet. There's no way around that," he said Tuesday.

While many Seattleites have grumbled about the relentless rain, longtime resident Meghan Shepard revels in it.

"It's soothing. I like the color of the sky when it rains. It's this beautiful green. I like being out there," said the retired 77-year-old. She has lived all over the United States, but prefers the rainy Northwest.

To the whiners, Shepard said: "I don't have a lot of patience. If they don't like it, move."

Portland residents are weathering a winter that's similarly bleak.

The National Weather Service has measured 45.5 inches of rain at Portland International Airport since Oct. 1, making it the second-wettest winter in the city in more than 75 years of record-keeping.

The city has also had the most days of rain ever, with 145 days of the wet stuff since Oct. 1, said Colby Neuman, a meteorologist for the agency in Portland. This year's February was also the wettest on record with 10.356 inches of rain.

Those are numbers Olga Vargas can



In this Jan. 18 file photo, pedestrians huddle under umbrellas as they walk past the Pike Place Market and in view of Elliot Bay, behind, in Seattle. The National Weather Service says the city has measured 44.67 inches of rain in the city between October 2016 and so far in April. That makes it the wettest such period since records began in 1895.

vouch for. The native of Puerto Rico moved to Portland four years ago and said the typically rainy winters didn't bother her much — until this year. Mudslides earlier in the winter cut off roads that she uses for her morning commute, she said.

"My kids are going nuts. They're like, 'We want to go to the pool! We want to go to the pool!'" Vargas said. "Why can't we break the record for sunniest? That would be awesome!"

In Seattle, the previous record was 44.5 inches of rain for the October 2015 to April 2016 period. The normal amount of rain during that period is usually 30.9 inches.

In the Pacific Northwest, cold-weather systems move through the region with dry breaks in between. McFarland said "we're missing those breaks."

The winter storm season was notable for back-to-back weather systems that were slightly wetter and warmer than

normal, he said.

Seattle also set a record number for wet days from October through April.

They are classified as days with at least 0.01 inches of precipitation. The city had 144 wet days from October through April and only five dry days so far this month.

Some parts of Washington state have had it much worse than Seattle.

Quillayute Airport near the town of Forks along the state's northwestern Pacific coast has received 116.1 inches of rain since Oct. 1.

One resident of the Pacific Northwest, however, took a more practical attitude toward the never-ending wetness. Valerie Bass moved to Oregon 43 years ago for college from Southern California and stayed. Now, she's so used to the rain she doesn't use an umbrella.

"There has been quite a bit of rain," she conceded. "As long as we don't have to shovel it, right?"

BRIEFLY

In Oregon, May Day rally at Capitol focuses on immigration

SALEM (AP) — Some leaders of Oregon's Latino community say they plan to use a May Day rally at the Capitol to protest federal immigration agents arresting immigrant farmworkers.

Ramon Ramirez, president of the Oregon farmworkers union, known by its initials in Spanish as PCUN, said increased raids would deplete the work force of farmworkers to pick crops, damaging Oregon agriculture.

The PCUN asked growers and nurseries to shut down or limit operations on May 1 to allow their workers to attend the march and rally in support of immigrant families at the capitol. Ramirez said he hopes farmers join the rally at the capitol in Salem.

President Donald Trump's hard line against illegal immigration has rattled America's agricultural industry, which fears a crackdown will deprive it of needed labor.

Anti-fascists, neo-Nazi protesters exchange shouts in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — Springfield Police made no arrests after monitoring a chant exchange between a group of self-professed neo-Nazis and a group of anti-fascist counter protesters in Oregon.

The (Eugene) Register-Guard reports the confrontation began Monday night after news of a planned neo-Nazi meeting leaked on social media.

About 30 to 40 anti-fascist counter protesters showed up and chanted from across the street. Jimmy Marr led the

neo-Nazi group of about eight people. Police say the incident broke up about two hours after it began.

Oregon man convicted of taking already dead trophy elk

ALBANY (AP) — An Oregon man has been convicted of unlawfully taking a trophy bull elk that had been killed by an acquaintance.

The Oregon State Police says 53-year-old Jeffrey McCraven of Lebanon was in a search party last September that was unable to find the elk on the day it was shot.

McCraven found the dead elk the next morning and shot it with arrows to make it appear as if he had killed it. He then validated his archery elk tag.

McCraven was found guilty Monday in Linn County. He was ordered to forfeit his bow and arrow to authorities and give the elk meat and antlers to the person who killed the elk. He must also pay \$15,000 restitution to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and pay more than \$1,000 in other fees.

A judge suspended his hunting privileges for three years.

Landslide stops Amtrak service between Seattle and Portland

SEATTLE (AP) — Officials say Amtrak service has been temporarily disrupted between Seattle and Portland because of a landslide.

Amtrak said Tuesday that BNSF Railway, which owns the tracks, has placed a 48-hour moratorium on all rail traffic in the area until Thursday.

The slide occurred between Vancouver and Kelso, Washington.

Oregon takes Zoom Health Plan into receivership

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon insurance regulators took Zoom Health Plan into receivership after they "became aware of a material difference between the company's 2016 annual financial statement and its actual financial condition," state officials said Monday.

The Oregon Insurance Division has been on site at the offices of the upstart Portland insurance company since April 5, after they took the company into supervision. At the time, Zoom had informed the state it was exiting the business after sustaining big losses in 2016.

In the ensuing weeks, state officials became aware of the discrepancy between Zoom Health's financial numbers and reality, said Lisa Morawski, spokesman for the Oregon Insurance Division.

She declined to elaborate. Len Bergstein, a spokesman for Zoom, said the company has been cooperating with state regulators. Zoom has \$9 million in the bank, more than enough to handle its responsibilities to its customers, Bergstein added.

David Sanders and Albert DiPiero, both medical

doctors and classmates at the University of Michigan, founded ZoomCare in 2006. Sanders, the brash visionary, hopes his company will help revolutionize the business of health care with a chain of clinics offering same-day care, online scheduling and transparent pricing.

The company currently boasts 35 clinics in the Portland metro area, Salem, Vancouver and Seattle. The clinics are not subject to the receivership.

ZoomCare diversified into insurance, which it called Zoom Health, earlier this decade. It was attempting

to build an integrated health care model — like a mini-Kaiser Permanente — in which Zoom's insurance customers were treated at Zoom clinics.

But the move into insurance was exquisitely ill-timed, coming just as the industry and the public struggled to adjust to the Affordable Care Act. Zoom Health lost \$3.8 million in 2015 and another \$4.7 million in 2016.

Last year's loss slashed its capital in reserve by half and left the company perilously close to the minimum capital surplus required, according to state regulators.

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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National Weather Today. Shows a map of the United States with weather systems and precipitation. Includes a National Summary: Rain will soak New England, the Northwest and areas from the southern Plains to part of the Upper Midwest today. Storms can be severe in parts of the middle and lower Mississippi Valley. Includes National Extremes and National Cities weather forecast.