

Firefighters make slow progress against Oregon's big blazes

Associated Press

BROOKINGS — Firefighters in southern Oregon on Tuesday gained a toehold on a fire burning near the coastal town of Brookings but new evacuations were ordered after a flare-up on a different complex of lightning-caused fires in a remote area near the California border.

Authorities allowed some residents back into their homes near Brookings but several thousand more remain evacuated.

The 184-square-mile fire is now 5 percent contained with a full containment date of mid-October.

The blaze began from a lightning strike on July 12 but grew rapidly last week, at one point forcing about 4,500 people from their homes. Fire crews are bracing for more difficult conditions later this week, with very low humidity and triple-digit temperatures forecast. Winds on the fire have also been gusty and erratic.

"Typically this time of year we'd be at least 30 or 40 percent humidity and we may get to single digits later this week. That is very, very dry," said Terry Krasko, a spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service.

To the west of that blaze — and also in southern Oregon — another complex of fires has been burning since a lightning storm on Aug. 12.

The 17-square mile fire is burning in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest near and along the Oregon-California border.

Many of the smaller fires have been put out, but several of the blazes have merged into three main areas of fire activity, said Brenda Bowen, a spokeswoman for the Rocky Mountain Incident Management Team



A pair of cyclists pedal down dusty Cantrell Road against the backdrop of a smoky sunset, west of Eugene on Monday. Firefighters are confronting extremely hot and dry weather on the fire lines of two large blazes burning in southwest and central Oregon.

Authorities on Tuesday afternoon ordered mandatory evacuations in the rural community of Joe Bar, right along the Oregon-California border, as one of those active areas crept to within a half-mile of the outpost.

About six homes are affected, Bowen said.

In central Oregon, a 33-square-mile wildfire west of Sisters remains about one-third contained.

Fire crews have been effective at creating dirt lines and using naturally occurring areas of lava rock to keep it in check, said Stacy Lacey, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service. No mandatory evacuations are in effect, she said.

"The warmer weather the last few days has definitely increased the fire

"The warmer weather the last few days has definitely increased the fire activity on the lines."

— Terry Krasko, Spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service

activity on the lines, but we were prepared for it," she said.

Hot and extremely dry weather will pose challenges across the state later this week.

Nearly two dozen fires are burning in Oregon and air quality in much of the western part of the state — including in Portland — has been poor because of wildfire smoke.

Lawyer: Richardson lacks authority to change petition rules

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

the voters," said Rep. Dan Rayfield, D-Corvallis.

SALEM — Secretary of State Dennis Richardson may lack the authority to change rules he has proposed for collecting initiative petition signatures in Oregon, according to a preliminary review by the Legislature's lawyers.

Richardson, a Republican, wants to allow petitioners to gather signatures while an official ballot title is still being drafted or in dispute. The ballot title is intended to be a neutral summary of what the initiative does.

Richardson says his intention is to stop opponents of an initiative from delaying signature gathering by filing a legal challenge of a ballot title's wording.

"The reason the secretary has proposed this rule is to empower grassroots activists and improve the democratic process," said Steve Elzinga, governmental and legal affairs director in the Secretary of State's Office. "It's unfortunate that the coalition of groups currently in power are opposing changes that will empower the people of Oregon."

Critics say such changes would reverse restrictions that the Oregon Legislature and Richardson's predecessors put in place in the past several years to combat signature fraud by paid petitioners.

"The idea ... was you don't want people to gather signatures without a neutral title because that could potentially mislead

Rayfield, who is a lawyer, requested the opinion from Legislative Counsel on the proposed rule change.

Richardson said his intention is that petitioners would have to show voters the full text of their initiative in place of the official ballot title.

Deputy Legislative Counsel Dan Gilbert issued a preliminary opinion that the proposed change may be outside the secretary of state's jurisdiction, because it would go against "legislative policy choice" on the signature gathering process.

The secretary of state's rulemaking authority is limited to administering legislatively enacted laws and policies and does not grant the secretary "authority to adopt administrative rules that alter legislative policy determinations," Gilbert wrote.

Elzinga said he is still reviewing Gilbert's analysis. However, Elzinga, Richardson and Elections Director Steve Trout, who are all lawyers, and two outside lawyers reviewed state law and concluded the secretary of state has authority to change the rule.

The two outside lawyers were Dan Meek of the Oregon Independent Party and Eric Winters, who champions conservative causes. Both men have been advocates of less restrictive policies that support grassroots democracy efforts.

The secretary of state did not seek an opinion from the Attorney General's Office, Elzinga said.



Richardson

Task force brainstorms ways to lessen pension deficit

EUGENE (AP)—Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's special task force is looking at ways to ensure the state has enough money to pay pensions for eligible state employees amid a multi-billion-dollar pension fund deficit.

The state is considering commercializing its state-run liquor system, pulling money from public reserves or imposing new surcharges of up to 10 percent on all state-issued permits, licenses and registrations, *The Register-Guard* reported Tuesday.

The advisory task force, made up of seven private- and public-sector executives, is charged with drafting a plan to take \$5 billion off the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System's \$24.5 billion unfunded liability without touching government workers' retirement benefits.

The task force stressed that Oregon school districts, local governments and universities should take a greater stake in paying down individual pension unfunded liability.

"I know some of these things are very sensitive," said Don Blair, a former Nike chief financial officer. "I think that's unavoidable."

The task force is floating a new state tax of between 1 percent and 10 percent on liquor sales with the proceeds — between \$10 million and \$50 million — being dedicated to the pension fund.

The task force also is looking at state government's two big reserve funds — the Rainy Day and Education Stability funds — that

currently contain more than a combined \$1 billion. Between \$100 million and \$500 million of that could be used for a pension down payment.

Traditionally, however, those funds have been left untouched in good times, so the state can tap them to temper budget cuts during downturns.

"None of our choices are free from downsides," task force member and former state agency director Cory Streisinger said.

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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COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Manager: Mike Jensen
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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			HOT	HOT
Sunny and very warm	Pleasant with plenty of sunshine	Very warm with plenty of sun	Very hot	Mostly sunny and very hot

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

93°	59°	87°	58°	93°	63°	100°	66°	100°	61°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

96°	61°	90°	56°	96°	60°	102°	62°	104°	61°
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ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	97°	63°
Normals	84°	55°
Records	106° (1915)	36° (1927)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.07"
Normal month to date 0.40"
Year to date 11.37"
Last year to date 7.34"
Normal year to date 8.35"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	97°	59°
Normals	85°	54°
Records	102° (1972)	36° (1937)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.06"
Normal month to date 0.19"
Year to date 6.65"
Last year to date 4.99"
Normal year to date 6.11"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:14 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:37 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:19 p.m.
Moonset today	12:10 a.m.

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

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Clouds giving way to some sun today; hazy sun and smoky in the south.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly sunny and hot today, but some clouds in the south.

Western Washington: Areas of low clouds, then some sun today.

Eastern Washington: Sunshine today; however, some clouds in the north. Mainly clear tonight.

Cascades: Mostly sunny today. Not as warm; smoky in the south. Pleasant across the north.

Northern California: Mostly sunny today. Hot in central parts; pleasant at the coast.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	68	55	pc	69	51	pc
Baker City	95	49	s	87	44	s
Bend	88	47	pc	86	52	pc
Brookings	66	55	pc	74	59	pc
Burns	92	48	s	87	45	s
Enterprise	90	50	s	82	51	s
Eugene	79	52	pc	84	52	s
Heppner	90	59	s	85	57	s
Hermiston	96	61	s	90	56	s
John Day	94	54	s	86	53	s
Klamath Falls	86	45	pc	87	50	pc
La Grande	90	52	s	83	48	s
Meacham	88	47	s	81	46	s
Medford	88	55	pc	92	58	pc
Newport	64	52	pc	65	48	s
North Bend	68	54	pc	68	52	s
Ontario	96	60	pc	93	57	s
Pasco	96	56	s	89	54	s
Pendleton	93	59	s	87	58	s
Portland	79	62	pc	81	58	pc
Redmond	90	42	pc	88	47	pc
Salem	80	59	pc	85	56	s
Spokane	92	58	s	83	57	s
Ukiah	90	46	s	82	47	s
Vancouver	78	60	pc	81	56	pc
Walla Walla	94	64	s	87	63	s
Yakima	96	58	s	90	55	s

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	83	63	s	82	66	pc
Hong Kong	92	81	s	91	80	t
Jerusalem	83	64	s	82	64	s
London	60	50	r	66	51	pc
Mexico City	69	57	t	70	59	c
Moscow	63	47	pc	68	49	s
Paris	77	54	t	69	53	pc
Rome	86	66	s	85	66	s
Seoul	74	60	pc	78	60	s
Sydney	65	47	s	62	46	s
Tokyo	85	72	r	77	69	r

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	W 7-14	W 7-14

UV INDEX TODAY

1 3 5 5 3 1

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.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2017

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

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

National Summary: Catastrophic flooding from Harvey will continue in Texas even as the heaviest rain shifts into the Mississippi Valley today. Showers will sink into the Upper Midwest. Much of the West will be sunny and hot.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 115° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low 32° in West Yellowstone, Mont.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	87	62	t	89	64	c
Atlanta	74	69	sh	82	71	t
Atlanta City	74	66	pc	82	59	pc
Baltimore	77	63	pc	84	58	pc
Billings	94	66	s	91	61	pc
Birmingham	76	72	r	82	70	t
Boise	94	64	pc	91	59	s
Boston	69	60	pc	81	54	c
Charleston, SC	82	71	pc	89	76	pc
Chicago, IL	82	63	pc	80	61	c
Chicago	80	64	pc	73	56	pc
Cleveland	79	62	pc	74	54	pc
Dallas	86	71	pc	89	69	pc
Denver	93	62	pc	89	60	pc
Detroit	81	62	pc	72	50	pc
El Paso	91	65	s	91	65	s
Fairbanks	64	45	pc	66	43	pc
Fargo	81	58	s	78	60	s
Honolulu	87	73	s	86	74	pc
Houston	79	72	r	90	71	pc
Indianapolis	81	64	pc	80	59	c
Jacksonville	87	74	t	93	75	t
Kansas City	81	59	s	83	61	pc
Las Vegas	107	84	pc	101	82	c
Little Rock	78	69	r	76	67	r
Los Angeles	97	74	s	97	74	s
Louisville	86	69	pc	82	63	c
Memphis	79	70	sh	78	67	r
Miami	93	81	t	92	80	pc
Millwaukee	80	61	pc	69	57	pc
Minneapolis	81	57	pc	73	53	pc
Nashville	78	69	r	80	66	r
New Orleans	85	75	r	87	72	t
New York City	75	65	pc	83	56	pc
St. Louis	83	61	s	85	61	s
Omaha	83	60	s	86	62	s
Philadelphia	77	65	pc	84	58	pc
Portland	109	85	s	109	83	c
Portland, ME	73	52	pc	77	48	sh
Providence	73	58	pc	83	53	pc
Raleigh	84	68	pc	78	68	t
Rapid City	89	60	pc	87	60	pc
Reno	95	61	pc	95	62	s
Sacramento	96					