

# Task force returns from Eagle Creek fire

## Local firefighters help protect homes

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
East Oregonian

After nine grueling days working to protect homes from the massive Eagle Creek fire in the Columbia River Gorge west of Hood River, local firefighters returned home Tuesday afternoon, exhausted but unscathed.

The blaze, which has grown to nearly 35,600 acres, started Saturday, Sept. 2 and is now 11 percent contained. It is one of 113 large wildfires burning in Oregon and Washington, totaling more than 1 million acres.

With so many fires straining resources around the region, the Oregon State Fire Marshal has called upon county crews to help fight the flames and keep communities safe. On Monday, Sept. 4, a task force from Umatilla, Morrow and Union counties was deployed to Cascade Locks, where the Eagle Creek fire was creeping uncomfortably close to town.

No sooner did they arrive than the inferno made its first big run, fanned by strong winds that pushed the fire 14 miles west to Corbett in a matter of hours. Casey Zellars, lieutenant with



Genna Martin/seattlepi.com via AP

**Fire crews work to protect Multnomah Falls and the Multnomah Falls Lodge, which was built in 1925, from the Eagle Creek Fire, Sept. 6, near Troutdale. The lodge survived the worst of the fire, but hot spots continue to burn and trees continue to fall from the hills nearby.**

the Boardman Rural Fire Protection District and task force leader, said the scene early on was utter chaos.

"Everything was progressing really fast," Zellars said. "We were a little sleep deprived."

As task force leader, it was Zellars' job to oversee a team of 16 personnel, four fire engines and one water tender, while also reporting to incident commanders to make sure tactical objectives were being met. Resources were pulled

together from Boardman as well as Umatilla County Fire District in Hermiston, Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District and La Grande Rural Fire District.

Their job, Zellars said, was structure protection — specifically, helping residents to create a buffer space around their homes in case the fire approached.

"We did a lot of assessing homes to see if we could make them more defensible," he said.

Zellars estimates the

task force assisted in safeguarding 250 homes from Corbett to west of Hood River, doing things like cleaning gutters, trimming trees, removing propane tanks from near houses and setting sprinklers.

"We just have to think outside the box a little bit about what our game plan is going to be, because things can change in an instant," Zellars said.

Jesse Brown, a firefighter and medic with Umatilla County Fire District, said

**"Everything was progressing really fast. We were a little sleep deprived."**

— **Casey Zellars**, lieutenant with the Boardman Rural Fire Protection District

the team was put to the challenge right off the bat. At about 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 5, they were roused from their sleep and alerted that the blaze was on the move, forcing them to scramble to get ahead of the situation.

The Eagle Creek fire has destroyed four houses in the Gorge as of Saturday, according to reports. Witnesses say the fire was started by a group of teenagers lighting and tossing fireworks into Eagle Creek Canyon, though no charges have been filed and the official cause of the fire is listed as "unknown."

Brown said the task force had to work quickly to orient themselves with the landscape and fuel types, which differ widely from Eastern Oregon.

"Not knowing the area and not knowing what we were heading into, we weren't sure what we could expect," Brown said. "We

were playing catchup the first day and a half, trying to get ahead of the fire. Then it was kind of playing on our terms."

By removing woody debris and fire fuels from around homes in the area, Brown said it gave them the best chance to weather the potential firestorm. Working together with task forces from Clackamas, Polk and Marion counties, the local crews were able to assess the entire area west of Hood River.

In return, Zellars said the community of Corbett banded together to make sure the firefighters were well fed and taken care of.

"They fed us breakfast and dinner every night," Zellars said. "Just the support out of the Corbett community, I've never seen anything like that. It was just overwhelming."

The task force was released Tuesday morning, and are set to return to work at their home stations. Zellars said they are tired, but otherwise safe and sound.

"Nine days of sleeping on the ground is enough," he said with a laugh. "But we're in good spirits. Our whole task force works well together."

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## For \$500, state gives voter list to fraud commission

SALEM (AP) — Oregon officials have handed over a statewide list of voters to President Donald Trump's commission investigating allegations of voter fraud, for a \$500 fee.

Made available were names, addresses, registration dates and status, birth year, precinct name and political party affiliation. But information that was not disclosed included Social Security and driver's license numbers or how a person voted.

Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's office said in a statement Friday that Oregon law requires disclosure of the list to anyone

paying the \$500, as long as it's not for commercial purposes. Oregon policy also prohibits disclosure of the information that was withheld, the office noted.

Richardson has already told commission vice chairman and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach that there is "very little evidence" of voter fraud or registration fraud in Oregon.

Kobach and the commission on Tuesday visited New Hampshire, where he said he's no longer certain that fraudulent out-of-state voters led to a Democrat's victory in a U.S. Senate race in New Hampshire. Kobach acknowledged

that New Hampshire allows college students and others to vote in the state without getting driver's licenses if they consider the state their home.

Two members of Oregon's congressional delegation and Gov. Kate Brown had urged Richardson, a Republican in Democratic-leaning Oregon, to refuse the request that went to secretaries of state around the country earlier this year.

Trump, who lost the popular vote in the 2016 presidential election, created the commission through an executive order in May. He has said voter fraud existed in the election that he won by Electoral College votes.

## PENDLETON

### Suspects from car crash face charges

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The two men Pendleton police arrested Monday evening after their car crashed on railroad tracks faced charges Tuesday.

Joseph Higheagle Jr., and Delbert Edwin Ferraris, both 30 and Pendleton residents, had arraignments Tuesday in Umatilla County Circuit Court, Pendleton. Court records show they appeared in court via video from the county jail.

Higheagle faces charges of first- and second-degree criminal trespassing for being on Union Pacific Railroad Co. property and trying to hide from police on private property at 515 S.E. Fourth St. Ferraris also appeared in jail via video

and faces the following charges: felony and misdemeanor attempting to elude a police officer; driving under the influence of intoxicants (alcohol); recklessly endangering another person; reckless driving; and driving while suspended or revoked.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts reported the two were in a car that fled an officer, then crashed moments later on railroad tracks near Southeast Fourth Street. The pair remain in the Pendleton jail, although the court approved a conditional release for Higheagle and set bail for Ferraris at \$40,000.

**Editor's note:** The story on the crash and arrest that appeared in Tuesday's paper misspelled Ferraris' last name. The East Oregonian regrets the error.

## EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

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Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and Dec. 25, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Copyright © 2017, EO Media Group

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### AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Cooler with periods of sun	Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Beautiful with clouds and sun	Pleasant with some sun
<b>76° 49°</b>	<b>70° 46°</b>	<b>69° 43°</b>	<b>71° 48°</b>	<b>76° 51°</b>
<b>78° 46°</b>	<b>74° 47°</b>	<b>73° 42°</b>	<b>74° 44°</b>	<b>75° 50°</b>

### ALMANAC

#### PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
92°	53°
Yesterday	79°
Normals	79°
Records	95° (1892) 25° (1921)

#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.18"
Year to date	11.37"
Last year to date	7.69"
Normal year to date	8.56"

#### HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

#### TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
92°	48°
Yesterday	80°
Normals	49°
Records	96° (1953) 31° (2014)

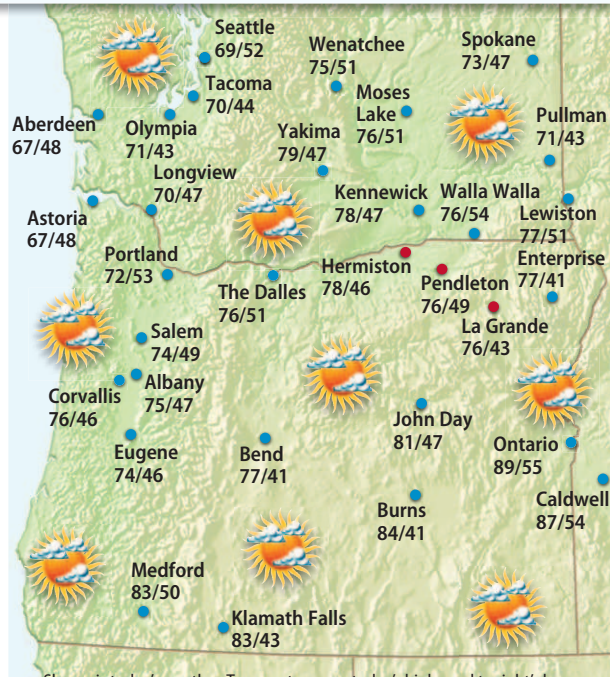
#### PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.00"
Normal month to date	0.14"
Year to date	6.65"
Last year to date	5.40"
Normal year to date	6.26"

#### SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:31 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:10 p.m.
Moonrise today	none
Moonset today	2:44 p.m.

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



### REGIONAL FORECAST

**Coastal Oregon:** Times of clouds and sun today. Partly cloudy tonight.

**Eastern Washington:** Times of clouds and sun today; smoky in the north and toward the Cascades.

**Cascades:** Not as warm today with times of clouds and sun. Partly cloudy tonight.

**Eastern and Central Oregon:** Clouds and sun today; cooler across the north and near the Cascades.

**Western Washington:** Clouds and sunshine today. Partly cloudy tonight. Times of clouds and sun tomorrow.

**Northern California:** Clouds and sun today; a thunderstorm in spots in the interior mountains.

### REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	67	48	pc	71	46	pc
Baker City	81	43	pc	65	35	sh
Bend	77	41	pc	64	38	pc
Brookings	69	53	pc	68	52	pc
Burns	84	41	pc	62	30	pc
Enterprise	77	41	pc	60	39	c
Eugene	74	46	pc	72	44	pc
Heppner	75	48	pc	68	45	pc
Hermiston	78	46	pc	74	47	pc
John Day	81	47	pc	65	41	pc
Klamath Falls	83	43	pc	68	36	c
La Grande	76	43	pc	64	38	pc
Meacham	73	39	pc	63	37	pc
Medford	83	50	pc	74	45	s
Newport	63	47	pc	64	47	pc
North Bend	65	50	pc	65	47	pc
Ontario	89	55	pc	70	49	pc
Pasco	79	47	pc	74	45	pc
Pendleton	76	49	pc	70	46	pc
Portland	72	53	pc	75	51	pc
Redmond	80	38	pc	67	34	pc
Salem	74	49	pc	75	47	pc
Spokane	73	47	pc	67	46	c
Ukiah	75	39	pc	60	37	pc
Vancouver	72	49	pc	74	47	pc
Walla Walla	76	54	pc	70	49	pc
Yakima	79	47	pc	75	44	pc

### WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	86	65	pc	86	64	pc
Hong Kong	93	82	t	91	79	pc
Jerusalem	91	69	s	86	69	s
London	63	47	pc	62	46	sh
Mexico City	74	55	pc	70	53	pc
Moscow	74	53	t	61	56	sh
Paris	65	51	r	61	48	sh
Rome	78	61	r	77	65	pc
Seoul	78	57	s	81	61	s
Sydney	89	52	s	64	52	s
Tokyo	84	71	pc	82	67	pc

### WINDS

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

### UV INDEX TODAY

1	3	4	4	2	1
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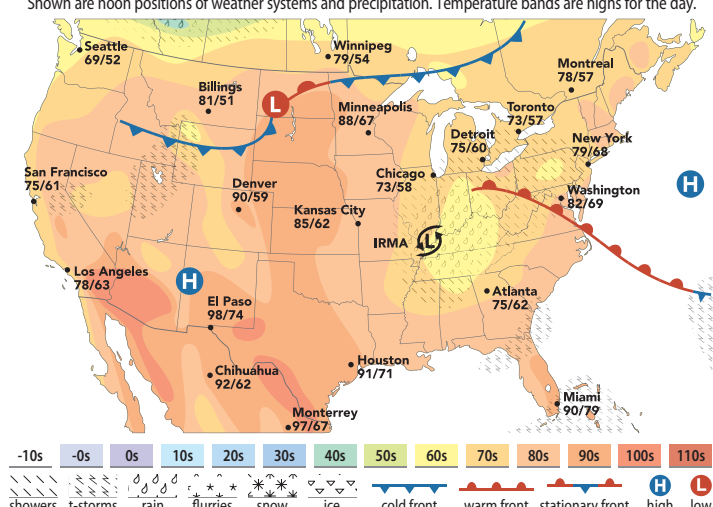
8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.  
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

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.



**Yesterday's National Extremes:** (for the 48 contiguous states)  
**High 110°** in Needles, Calif. **Low 32°** in Bodie State Park, Calif.

### NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.			Today			Thur.			
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Albuquerque	91	64	pc	86	60	pc	Louisville	65	60	r	77	61	pc
Atlanta	75	62	pc	80	65	s	Memphis	73	65	r	85	68	s
Atlanta City	77	69	pc	79	67	t	Miami	90	79	pc	90	78	t
Baltimore	79	64	pc	79	61	t	Millwaukee	75	57	pc	75	61	pc
Billings	81	51	pc	58	42	c	Minneapolis	88	67	s	89	66	pc
Birmingham	70	61	c	82	65	s	Nashville	64	60	r	79	62	pc
Boise	87	57	pc	73	48	pc	New Orleans	86	68	s	87	72	pc
Boston	81	66	pc	82	65	pc	New York City	79	68	pc	81	65	pc
Charleston, SC	86	70	pc	86	68	pc	Oklahoma City	87	60	c	92	70	s
Chicago, IL	79	59	c	70	57	c	Omaha	90	66	s	90	68	s
Cleveland	80	61	c	73	59	sh	Philadelphia	78	68	sh	81	65	t
Dallas	92	68	s	96	74	s	Portland, ME	80	57	s	80	59	