

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Fire season is here, be safe

It's that time of year again. In Northeast Oregon, fire season officially kicked off Thursday. For most residents of the state, fire season started weeks prior.

Our part of the state was actually the last of the state's 12 fire districts to declare their fire seasons are underway. When fire season is declared in a district, it means that the Oregon Department of Forestry and related agencies impose certain restrictions on public and work-related activities in the state's forests. For our neck of the woods, this is about a normal start time for fire season. But for the rest of the state, the environment drier and more flammable than usual this time of year. Last year, the Northwest Oregon District, typically one of the last in the state to declare the start of fire season, didn't do so until July 10. This year it was June 21.

Northwest Oregon typically gets a good dose of rainfall during the spring, and that delays the start of an active fire season. But this spring was drier and warmer than usual, and that presages a busy fire season. And for us in Eastern Oregon, a busy smoke season. We have already seen our fair share of grass fires catching in the Stanfield and Umatilla



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Firefighters from Umatilla County Fire District 1 continue mop-up work after a blaze caught scrub brush on fire late Tuesday afternoon in the vicinity of Joy Lane and Alpine Drive, northeast of Hermiston.

areas.

Early signs suggest that we can expect a fire season that could stretch into September: Already, more than 156 square miles are burning in central Oregon, the largest near Maupin.

As of last week, more than 200 wildfires already have been reported on Oregon Department of Forestry lands. More than 80 percent of them were caused by humans, the department said.

Which brings to mind another bit of timing surrounding fire season: It's not at all unusual to have the start of the season roughly correspond with the

stretch of time during which fireworks legally can be sold in Oregon. Fireworks stands in Oregon opened on June 23 and will continue sales through July 6.

In the wake of last year's Eagle Creek fire, started when a teenager dropped a smoke bomb onto extremely dry ground in the Columbia River Gorge, we probably don't need much of a reminder about the potentially dangerous combination of fireworks and tinder-dry forest lands. But here goes anyway: Oregon law prohibits possession, use or sale of any firework that flies into the air, explodes or travels

more than 12 feet horizontally on the ground, unless you have a permit issued by the Oregon State fire marshal. Bottle rockets, Roman candles and firecrackers are illegal in Oregon without a permit.

All fireworks are prohibited on all Oregon beaches, in state parks and campgrounds and on all federal public lands.

Officials can seize illegal fireworks and charge offenders with a class B misdemeanor, which could result in a fine of up to \$2,500 per violation and a civil penalty of up to \$500. People who misuse fireworks or who allow fireworks to cause damage may be required to pay fire suppression costs or other damages — witness the Washington teenager who started the Eagle Creek fire, now saddled with a \$36 million restitution bill.

Here's something else to keep in mind as we approach the heart of fire season: If you're responsible for starting a blaze, you put firefighters at risk. Those firefighters will have plenty to do this summer; lightning strikes will keep them busy. There's no need for you to add to their workload. Act with care this summer while you're enjoying our wildlands.

OTHER VIEWS

Will Trump waste another chance to build the wall?

Building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border was Donald Trump's premier campaign promise, and he is running out of chances to keep it.

Trump has been president for nearly a year and a half, and has not yet won anywhere near the funding needed to build the wall along the 1,000 or so miles of border that he pledged to voters. Now, there have been two Republican immigration bills in the House, each calling for around \$25 billion for the wall, and Trump has blown them both off, saying he'd rather try again after November's midterm elections.

"Republicans should stop wasting their time on immigration until after we elect more Senators and Congressmen/women in November," Trump tweeted Friday. "Dems are just playing games, have no intention of doing anything to solve this decades old problem. We can pass great legislation after the Red Wave!"

Now, it is entirely possible Republicans will keep control of the House and Senate. It's also possible they will lose. But does anyone believe the GOP will gain enough seats to pass difficult legislation without somehow settling their internal disputes? Unlikely. And of course Democrats are playing games with immigration. They still will be after the election, no matter what happens.

The point is, a president only gets so many chances to do something, and when it comes to the wall, Trump is running out of time.

There's no need to go through the number of times Trump promised campaign audiences that he would build the wall. He did it so much that during rallies his loyal voters developed a call-and-response on the subject. They knew that promise better than any other.

And no, the promise was not a wall along the entire 2,000-mile border between the United States and Mexico. Agreeing with a number of pro-wall experts, Trump said on many occasions that a wall was not needed along the entire stretch of sometimes-impassable land. About 1,000 miles would do the job well.

The odds were probably always against Trump on the wall. Everyone knew Democrats would throw their bodies in front of any wall effort, do anything to stop it. And even if Trump got a wall appropriation through Congress, the politically motivated litigation designed to stop and slow the wall would be fearsome.



BYRON YORK
Comment

The only way a wall will ever happen is with determined presidential leadership. Yes, Congress has supported extensive border barriers in the past — look up the Secure Fence Act of 2006 — but the political system has never wanted to actually do it. Actually building a wall would take a president who will not give up and not settle for anything less than what he promised.

Incredibly enough, Trump made it to 2018 with a real chance to get wall funding. His maneuvers on DACA, President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, set up a simple and obvious deal: legalization of DACA recipients in exchange for money for the wall.

That money, by the way, had to be real money. It couldn't be just a down payment, or a promise to come up with real cash later. It had to be real live, appropriated, placed in a trust fund, ready for the president to use to construct a wall.

But Trump and Republicans in Congress always threw other issues into the mix. Chain migration. The visa lottery. Guest workers. Now, the hot issue of the moment is family separation. Whatever the specific add-ons, a clean DACA-for-wall deal morphed into a sort of lite version of comprehensive immigration reform, which is an endeavor that has a long record of failure in Washington.

In all of the back-and-forth, the simple clarity of the president's promise to build the wall was lost. But it will not be lost on his voters. Can Trump run for re-election in 2020 by promising to build a wall in his second term, coming up with some excuse for not doing it in his first?

He can certainly try, but even his supporters might not buy it.

Recently I texted an influential lawmaker to ask whether he thought Trump would eventually win funding for the wall. He sent back an emoji of a boy with his hands in the air in the universal how-should-I-know gesture.

That's not good enough. Trump voters expect him to do what he said, or give everything he's got trying. At the moment, the president is acting like he has all the time in the world. He doesn't.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.



INTOLERANCE STREET U.S.A.

YOUR VIEWS

Sad to see *The Oregonian* pull out of Eastern Oregon

When I picked up my Sunday *Oregonian* at Dave's Chevron this weekend, I found a yellow sheet inside informing me this was the last Sunday *Oregonian* that would be delivered in Pendleton, as well as Milton-Freewater and Walla Walla.

What used to bill itself as Oregon's newspaper has decided to leave Eastern Oregon. As someone who is involved in government and bent on trying to remind Western Oregon that we exist, it seemed like another chilling message to the contrary.

There are of course options, and I read *The Oregonian* online six days a week, but our family has gotten the printed version on Sunday since I was old enough to read. It has been a long-standing tradition.

I can, of course, read the Sunday paper online as well, but not everyone has technological options at their disposal in our part of Oregon that would permit such access. Rep. Greg Walden was in town this weekend talking to area communities about helping them enjoy the benefits of technology that are commonplace in the Valley. However, as several Umatilla County mayors reminded him, we still are not there yet. Moreover, besides the options of technology, there are still a good many Eastern Oregonians who like the feel of a newspaper in their hands.

During the past few years, the price of the *Oregonian* has skyrocketed to \$3.50 while the product has gotten thinner. Remember the days when the Sunday paper almost filled the living room? But that being said, I did not intend to discontinue my weekly trek to get the Sunday paper. It provides a summary of the week's events.

Since our television news comes from Washington, the Sunday *Oregonian* offered a weekly opportunity to catch up on what is going on in our own state. Yes, it is less comprehensive than it used to be, but we still get the high points. And, it filled the hiatus between Saturday and Tuesday when a newspaper is not available locally.

As a former newspaperman, I am admittedly a bit subjective about the need to start each day with at least an idea of what I might encounter once I reach the courthouse. In the case of the *EO*, the E-Edition provides fair warning before it actually arrives in the flesh.

If six or seven thousand of my friends and neighbors were fully satisfied with online options, the *EO* would cease to print a hard copy. But not everyone has made the transition.

I guess, in the end, this just seems like one more example of metro Oregon dismissing Eastern Oregon as an irrelevant market. We deserve better.

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Pendleton

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