

Sheriff’s visit to White House goes off topic with op-ed reply

Matlack and others traveled to D.C. to speak to administration about immigration

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack is back from a visit to the White House.

Over three days, Matlack and 43 other sheriffs from around the United States traveled to Washington, D.C., met with senators and representatives, and briefly met with President Donald Trump, with the goal of talking about illegal immigration.

Matlack said the purpose of the meeting was not to reach any conclusions, but to start trying to understand how to reform immigration policies.

“It was more just listening,” he said of the officials with whom the sheriffs met. “I think they’re interested. As far as ‘how do we get from here to there, to making something happen,’ I didn’t hear any of that—I don’t have that authority.”

Matlack has been a vocal opponent of illegal immigration, and said most of the sheriffs at the event were, too. He has taken several trips to the U.S.-Mexico border, and has stated his opposition to open borders. He has also said while he hopes to see habitual criminals deported, he’d like to see a path to citizenship for some immigrants.

“The people who have been here for the longest time, the most appropriate time—it could be the DACA people,” he said. “I’d like to see that as a talking point.” Matlack said the group had a roundtable discussion with several officials, including the directors of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and of Border Patrol. They also met Vice President Mike Pence and, briefly, the president.

He said the sheriffs were then split into groups, which went to meet with different senators and representatives about immigration.

“Sometimes the talks would be pretty short and sometimes longer,” Matlack



Matlack

said. “Sometimes they weren’t there or weren’t interested in talking to you.”

Many of the sheriffs also participated in an annual event called “Hold their Feet to the Fire Radio Row,” where radio hosts from around the U.S. were broadcasting from Capitol Hill, discussing immigration policy and interviewing guests, including some of the sheriffs. The radio event was sponsored by the Federation for American Immigration Reform. The group sponsored Matlack’s trip to D.C.

The Southern Poverty Law Center lists FAIR as a hate group, a designation Matlack said he disagrees with.

Matlack said the group did not spend a lot of time with the president, but they were with him when a reporter asked him about an anonymous opinion piece the *The New York Times* published that day, apparently written by a senior White House official who claimed they, and others, were part of a “resistance” in the White House, attempting to curb Trump’s impulses and



President Donald Trump responds to a reporter’s question during an event with sheriffs in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Sept. 5.

limit damage.

Trump addressed the piece when he talked to the sheriffs. He spent much of his speech calling the media “dishonest” and stating that many outlets would be out of business were it not for him.

Matlack said he was disappointed that focus was pulled from the purpose of the meeting—immigration—and that the writer was anonymous. “Even your paper doesn’t

do that,” he said, speaking of the *East Oregonian*.

He stopped short of saying he agreed with the president’s statements about the media.

“Do I think the media should be looking into things?” he said. “Absolutely, I support their efforts.”

But he said he doesn’t feel they’ve been fair to Trump, either.

“When you get the sense that someone is trying to make

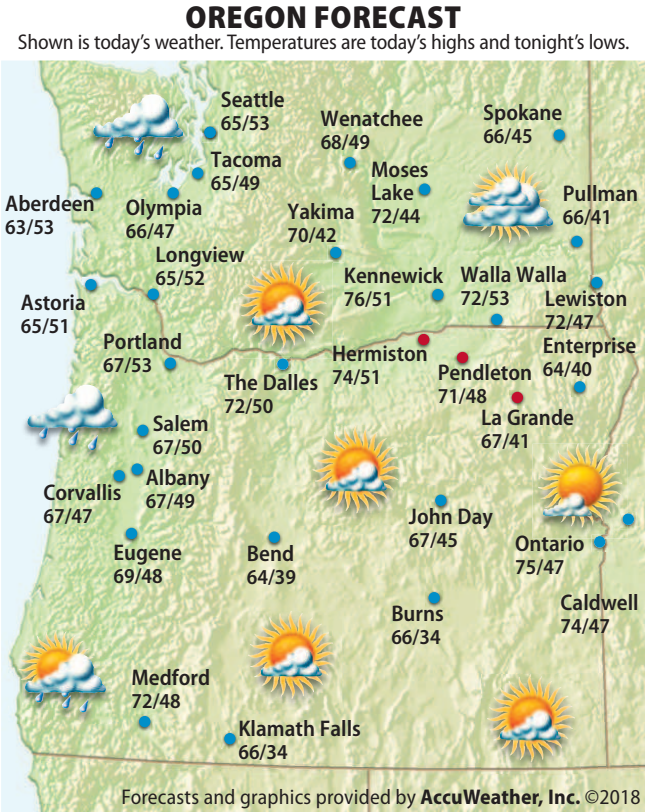
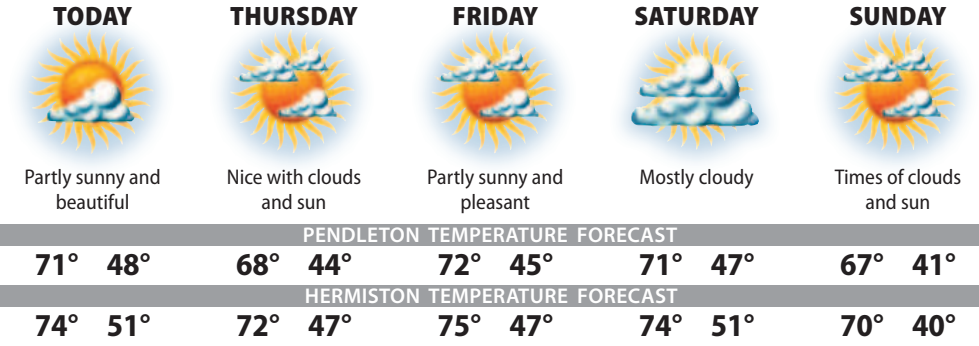
a difference for you, taking the time to meet with you—I think that’s pretty impressive.”

“There are things I think he would do better if he just wouldn’t tweet as often,” Matlack said. “But who am I—he’s the president. He makes his decisions.”

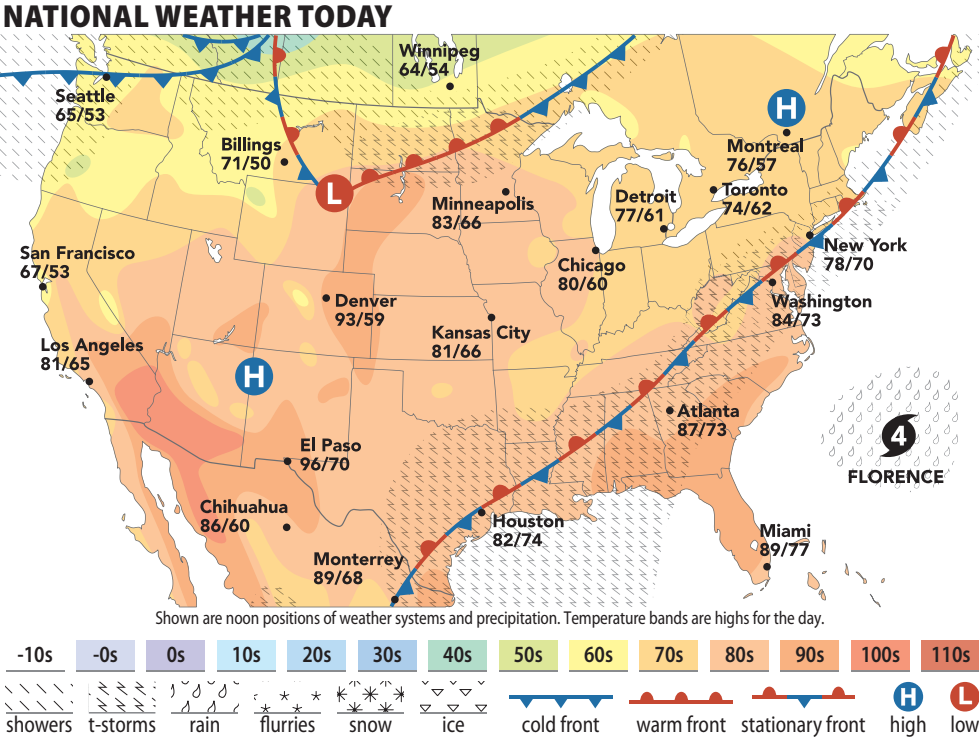
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“It was more just listening ... I think they’re interested ...”
— Ken Matlack, Morrow County Sheriff

Forecast for Pendleton Area



NATIONAL EXTREMES
Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 108° in Needles, Calif. Low 25° in Yellowstone Nat’l Park, Wyo.



Man accused in fatal DUI back to jail following ICE arrest

SALEM (AP) — A man accused of killing a Salem, Oregon, couple while driving drunk was on his way back to jail following his arrest by deportation officers.

Eduardo De La Lima-Vargas, 39, was taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents when he left the Marion County jail after posting bail Thursday. The *Statesman Journal* reports that Marion County prosecutors filed a motion to reconsider holding him without bail in order to prevent his removal from the United States so he can face prosecution for his alleged crimes here before being deported to Mexico.

According to ICE officials, De La Lima-Vargas is a citizen of Mexico residing illegally in the United States.

Marion County Judge David Leith ruled in the

prosecutors’ favor, and De La Lima-Vargas was en route to Salem from an ICE detention facility in The Dalles, Oregon.

De La Lima-Vargas was first arrested after midnight on Aug. 19 on manslaughter, DUI and reckless driving charges.

According to police, he was driving his truck pulling an occupied horse trailer on Mission Street near Interstate 5 when he ran a red light and hit a motorcycle carrying Logan Wilson, 34, and Jessica Wilson, 32.

The Wilsons, a married couple with several young children, later died at Salem Hospital.

Responding officers

described Vargas as smelling strongly of alcohol and swaying on his feet while standing. Authorities said he failed a field sobriety test and his blood-alcohol content was at .10 percent two hours after the crash.

ICE officials said they are not associated with the criminal proceedings in Marion County and would transfer De La Lima-Vargas back into local custody if Marion County prosecutors filed the appropriate motion.

Shortly after prosecutors filed the motion, the judge ordered that De La Lima-Vargas be transported back to Marion County and held without bail until a new hearing.

Corrections

In Tuesday’s “Round-Up sets another high mark for tickets,” the day of the Westward Ho! Parade was incorrect. The parade happens the Friday of Round-Up week. The *East Oregonian* regrets the error.



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