

# Report: I-5 corridor best in U.S. for self-driving trucks

SEATTLE (AP) — The most productive freeway corridor for self-driving trucks in the United States appears to be Interstate 5 through Washington and Oregon, according to a report released this week by the Kirkland-based INRIX data company.

The *Seattle Times* reports that the runners-up are I-95 from Jacksonville to Miami, Florida; I-75 from Valdosta, Georgia, to Miami; I-70 from Utah to Kansas, and I-85 from northeast Georgia to Greensboro, North Carolina, where companies could reduce the cost to move freight once self-driving vehicle technologies are ready.

INRIX looked at four criteria to make the

rankings. First, I-5 carries a lot of freight. State counts show nearly 21,000 daily truck trips through Tacoma and 12,000 at Longview.

Second, the highway is less congested than several other U.S. freeways on a 24-hour basis to operate trucks — despite INRIX's own assertion this spring that Everett experiences the nation's worst peak-time highway delays. Congestion eases throughout southern Washington and southern Oregon for interstate trips.

Third, the corridor is long — some 637 miles between Vancouver, B.C., and Yreka, California, where a self-guided truck could roll for hours at

a time. Finally, high incident rates throughout I-5 can cause sudden slowdowns. Autonomous trucks may be more valuable in avoiding secondary crashes if they can "see farther ahead" and reduce speed sooner than human drivers, said INRIX spokesman Mark Burfeind.

INRIX chose its criteria based on a future business model where an autonomous truck powered by electric batteries or diesel-hybrid motors would cross long highway miles and then be taken over by people who would pilot the rigs through crowded cities to the final loading dock or port, said Avery Ash, INRIX's autonomous vehicle director.

## Facebook growing its Prineville data center

PRINEVILLE (AP) — Facebook announced it will build two more buildings at its data center outside the Central Oregon town of Prineville, growing it to the size of 66 football fields.

The California social media company said Thursday it expects the expansion

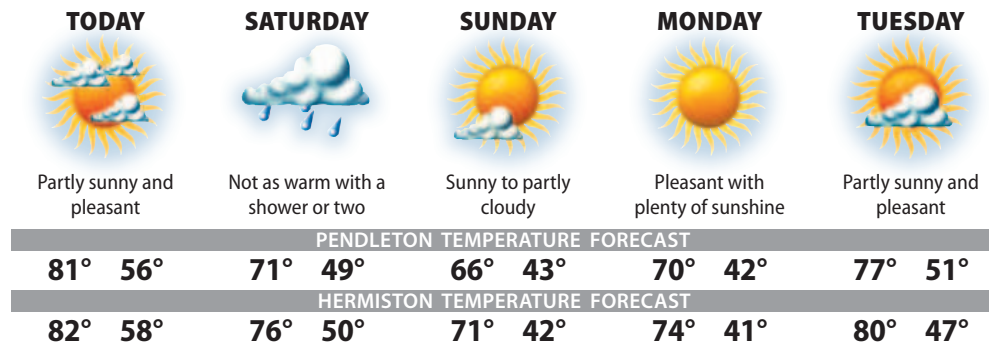
to come online in 2020.

In a statement, Facebook said this new construction will bring its total Prineville footprint to more than 3.2 million square feet, representing an additional investment of \$750 million.

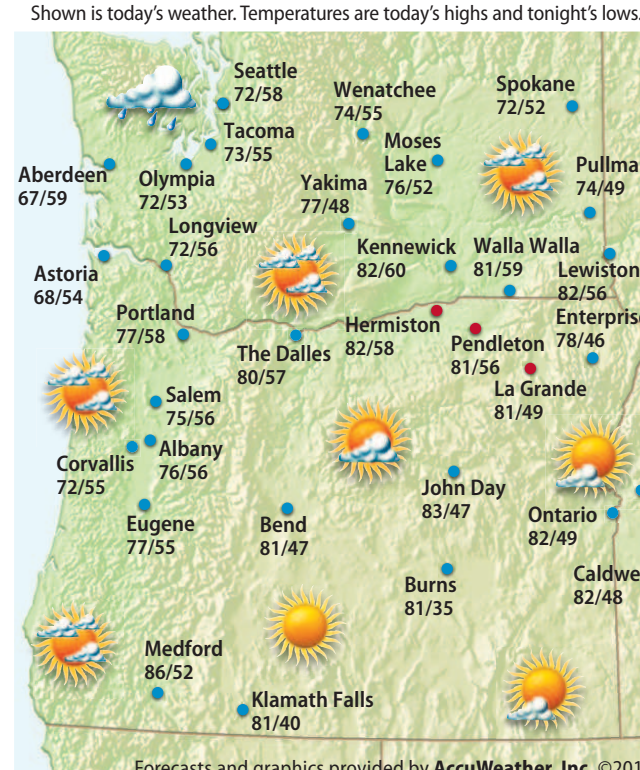
Prineville, whose cool high-desert evenings cool

the servers, was the site of Facebook's first data center, which opened in 2011. The expansion will make the Prineville data center the biggest, a spokeswoman said. The company also has them in Forest City, North Carolina; Lulea, Sweden; and Altoona, Iowa.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST



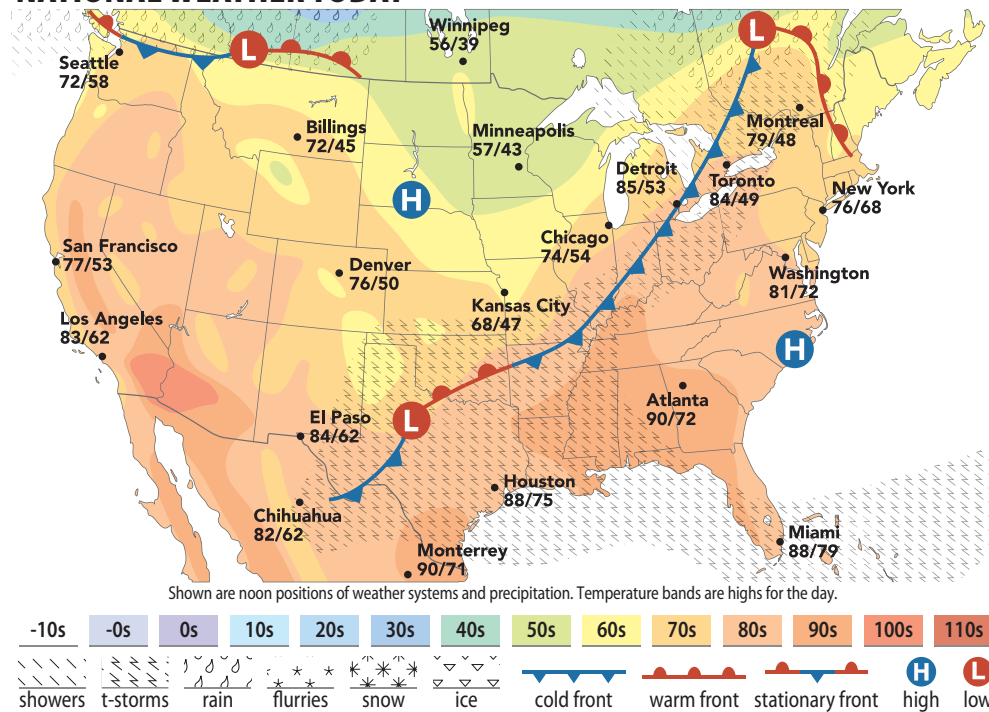
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.	
TEMP. HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 71°	50°
Normals 76°	48°
Records 92° (1917)	31° (1912)
PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.00"
Normal month to date	0.32"
Year to date	6.52"
Last year to date	12.28"
Normal year to date	8.70"
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.	
TEMP. HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 73°	51°
Normals 77°	47°
Records 93° (1967)	30° (1983)
PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.26"
Year to date	5.15"
Last year to date	7.01"
Normal year to date	6.38"
WINDS (in mph)	
Today	Sat.
Boardman SW 4-8	WSW 7-14
Pendleton NW 4-8	W 6-12
SUN AND MOON	
Sunrise today	6:41 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:55 p.m.
Moonrise today	5:44 p.m.
Moonset today	2:59 a.m.

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
 High 102° in Jasper, Ala. Low 16° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., speaks at a rally and news conference Thursday at a Planned Parenthood office in Portland urging voters to insist on an investigation into decades-old allegations of sexual assault against U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh before moving forward. Backing Merkley are fellow Oregon Democrats, from right, Gov. Kate Brown, Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Sen. Ron Wyden.

# Oregon Democrats blast Kavanaugh at rally

By GILLIAN FLACCUS  
 Associated Press

PORTLAND — Gov. Kate Brown joined Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and some Democratic members of Oregon's congressional delegation on Thursday to condemn U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and call for an independent investigation into decades-old allegations of sexual assault against him.

At a rally and news conference at a Planned Parenthood office in Portland, speakers — including U.S. Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenauer — told attendees that Kavanaugh's successful nomination could also threaten a woman's right to an abortion even in a liberal state like Oregon.

Kavanaugh has been accused by Christine Blasey Ford, a California college professor, of sexually assaulting Ford at a party in the 1980s in a Maryland suburb of Washington.



AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

People hold signs of U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh at a rally and news conference Thursday at a Planned Parenthood office in Portland.

Kavanaugh has denied the allegations.

The press conference came at the same time that a Ford attorney told the Judiciary Committee that her client would testify next week to the Senate about her accusation against Kavanaugh if agreement can be reached to "terms that are fair and

which ensure her safety."

The message resurrected the possibility that the panel would hold a dramatic hearing at which both Ford and Kavanaugh could give their versions of what happened at the party when they were both high schoolers.

The allegation has shaken Kavanaugh's prospects for winning Senate confirmation to be a justice, which until Ford's emergence last week had seemed all but certain.

Wyden said the hearing was not enough and called for a formal investigation into Ford's allegations.

"There are credible and serious allegations against Brett Kavanaugh and there needs to be a credible and serious process, rather than something where you just ram this thing through and then say, 'Gee, I guess we're too busy, for example, to even listen to witnesses!'" he said.

Both senators said they would not vote for Kavanaugh.

# Secretary of State requesting money for Medicaid audit team

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
 Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Secretary of State's Office is requesting \$779,797 in the next two-year budget for three auditors who will focus on Medicaid programs, state records show.

The next two-year budget begins in mid-2019.

The request comes after auditors initially raised questions in May 2017 about whether everyone enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan, the state's Medicaid program, were eligible for the benefit.

About 1 million Oregonians are covered by OHP, which is jointly funded by the state and federal governments and covers low-income Oregonians and other qualifying groups.

The Oregon Health Plan costs about \$9 billion annually.

In November, auditors from the Secretary of State's Office found that the Oregon Health Authority could strengthen its efforts to find and prevent improper payments. Auditors said they found about 31,000 questionable payments and failure to do annual eligibility determinations in a timely fashion could have cost the state millions of dollars.

OHA has some internal monitoring processes, such as the Office of Program Integrity, which oversees detection, prevention and recovery of improper Medicaid payments.

The agency also sends the Governor's Office monthly updates on its progress resolving Medicaid-re-

lated issues.

The proposed Medicaid unit at the Secretary of State's Office would audit eligibility determinations and "appropriateness of payments made on behalf of Medicaid clients," said Deb Royal, Secretary of State Dennis Richardson's chief of staff, in an email.

The team would include an audit manager, lead auditor and a staff auditor that would complete one to two audits per year, depending on their scope, according to the budget request.

"Because the program is both high risk and costly, we believe it warrants a dedicated audit team," Royal wrote.

Louisiana, New York and Massachusetts have full-time auditors dedicated to Medicaid, Royal 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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