

Idaho research wants to help keep crops standing tall

By JAMES DAWSON
Boise State Public Radio

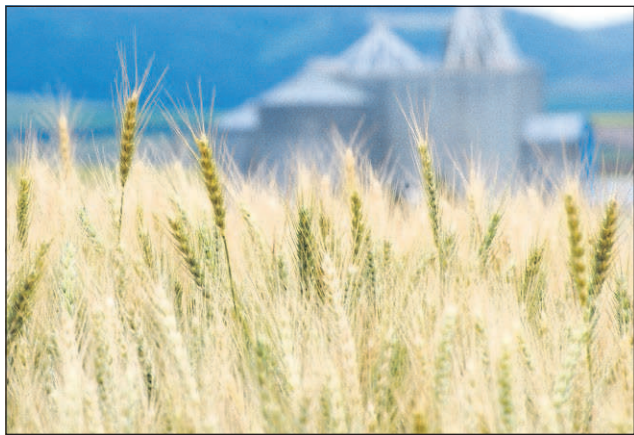
BOISE, Idaho (AP) — There are nearly 7.5 billion people on Earth and more are being born every second. In order to feed all of us, researchers at University of Idaho are looking at ways to keep our existing crops upright.

When Daniel Robertson was a kid growing up in Columbia, South Carolina, he got chased off by farmers once or twice for playing in their fields.

“We’d go out there and we’d make little forts and the stalks had fallen down. We’d kind of cut them and make little doorways to come into our fort,” Robertson says.

But it wasn’t until he was an adult when he realized that the fallen corn he and his friends used to hide in cost these farmers a lot of money.

As a mechanical engineering professor at University of Idaho, Robertson now studies what’s called stalk lodging. New varieties have beefed up how much each plant can produce, but that made them top heavy.



Barry Kough/Lewiston Tribune via AP file

Soft white winter wheat is shown turning from the green color of growth, to the brown color of harvest in a field near Mann Lake in Lewiston, Idaho.

“The grain has gotten so heavy that the wind just blows them over and knocks them down and then the grain falls to the ground and rots,” he says.

Between 5 and 25 percent of corn, rice and wheat crops are lost worldwide due to stalk lodging, according to Robertson. If someone could reduce the amount of corn that topples over by just 1 percent, he notes that would put an extra \$2 billion into farmers’ pockets.

Robertson and his team at U of I, University of Kentucky and Clemson

University will target certain plant traits that keep them upright and encourage breeders to adopt them in future varieties.

To help find these traits, he takes a CT scan of a plant and uses his mechanical engineering background to find its weakpoints and strengths. These researchers have also developed tools that farmers can use in their fields to pinpoint their weaker crops.

The National Science Foundation awarded the group a \$6 million grant to study the issue for the next four years.

Voter approval for tolls moves closer to the ballot

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

A voter initiative that would amend the state Constitution to require in certain circumstances voter approval to place tolls on existing freeways is moving closer toward the 2020 ballot.

The Oregon Department of Justice released the draft ballot title for Initiative Petition 10 on Monday, Sept. 17. The draft opens up a public comment period before the ballot title is finalized.

Dubbed “Tolls Need Voter Approval,” the initiative would require a vote of the people to toll existing freeways unless the proceeds paid only for increasing vehicle capacity. Voter approval would be required both statewide and in the county where the toll would be imposed.

Under the Constitution, revenue from transportation tolls may be used for a variety of purposes, including construction, reconstruction, repair, maintenance, operation and use of public highways and other roads.

Additionally, officials with the Oregon Department of Transportation have asked the DOJ for advice on whether the Constitution allows the proceeds to be used to pay for improving access to public transportation and carpool incentives. The idea is that both strategies remove vehicles off the freeways and decrease traffic.

Gladstone Planning Commissioner Les Poole and state Reps. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, and Julie Parish, R-West Linn, filed the initiative in response to a proposal to toll sections of Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 in Portland to raise money for highway improvements.

“Logically, a toll would sunset once the project is paid for,” Poole said. “Toll-



Pamplin Media Group

Sponsors of the “Tolls Need Voter Approval” initiative may soon be able to gather signatures to land the proposal on the 2020 ballot.

ing is a way of financing a project in lieu of bonding the entire project. Together in aggregate, all of tolling money should have to go to that specific project. They (state transportation commissioners) want to charge us just to use the roads.”

The Oregon Transportation Commission voted unanimously Aug. 16 to seek approval from the Federal Highway Administration to toll the Abernethy Bridge on I-205 and all lanes of I-5 between Northeast Going Street/Alberta Street and Southwest Multnomah Boulevard. Meanwhile, commissioners have instructed the ODOT to conduct a feasibility study of tolling all seven interstates in Portland to form a “seamless loop” around the city.

Gov. Kate Brown has expressed support for that strategy.

However, poll results suggest the vast majority of Oregonians are more skeptical of tolling.

A DHM Research poll commissioned by ODOT in December found only 22.5 percent of residents in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Clark counties were willing to pay a toll weekly or more frequently.

About 31 percent agreed ODOT should explore mul-

iple options for encouraging motorists to alter their transportation choices, including tolling.

Even if the initiative passes, the transportation commission could still impose tolls without voter approval. No vote is required if the tolls are used to pay for “new net capacity.”

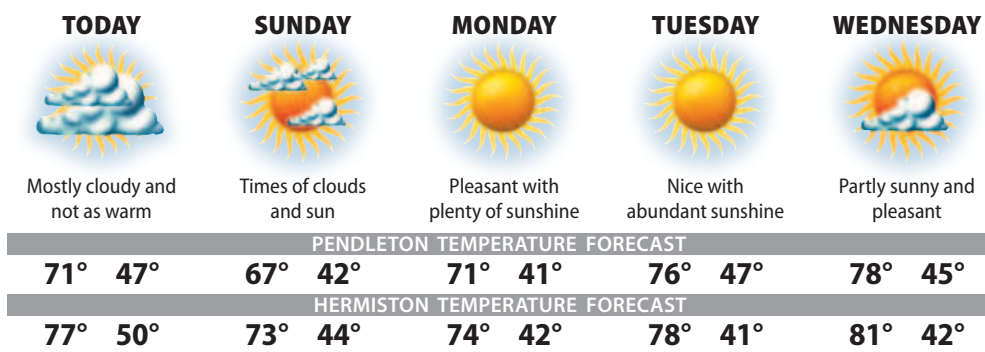
The intent is that the proceeds would go toward projects on the road or bridge where the toll applies, Poole said. That is something the survey showed more residents support.

“New net capacity” is defined as “expansion of transportation infrastructure which did not exist prior to Jan. 1, 2018, and which has not been converted from a previous form of transportation infrastructure” already built and/or operated with public money.

The state Elections Division will accept written comments on the draft ballot title until 5 p.m. Oct. 1. The comments will be delivered to the DOJ for consideration before certification of the ballot title.

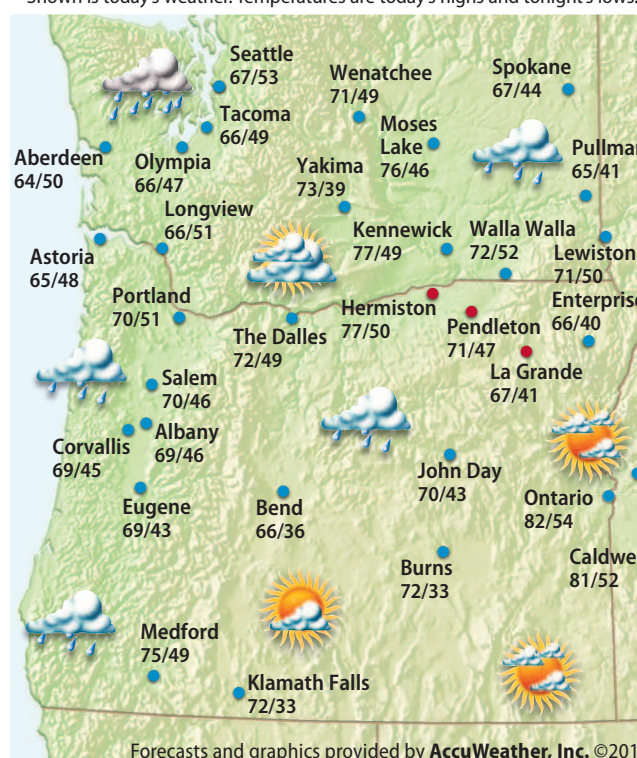
Comments may be emailed to irlistnotifier.sos@oregon.gov, faxed to 503-373-7414 or mailed to Elections Division, 255 Capitol St. N.E., Suite 501, Salem, Oregon 97301.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



AccuWeather DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP

ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	80°	43°
Normals	75°	48°
Records	94° (1897)	27° (1895)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.00"	
Normal month to date	0.35"	
Year to date	6.52"	
Last year to date	12.28"	
Normal year to date	8.73"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	80°	42°
Normals	77°	46°
Records	95° (1939)	30° (1932)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	Trace	
Normal month to date	0.28"	
Year to date	5.15"	
Last year to date	7.01"	
Normal year to date	6.40"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Sun.
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	WSW 6-12	WSW 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:42 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:53 p.m.
Moonrise today	6:14 p.m.
Moonset today	4:00 a.m.

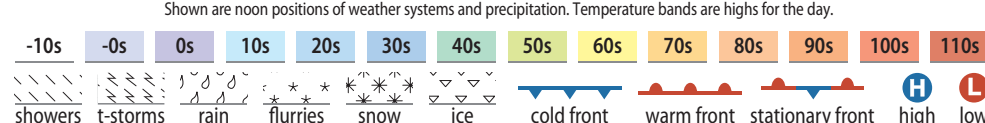
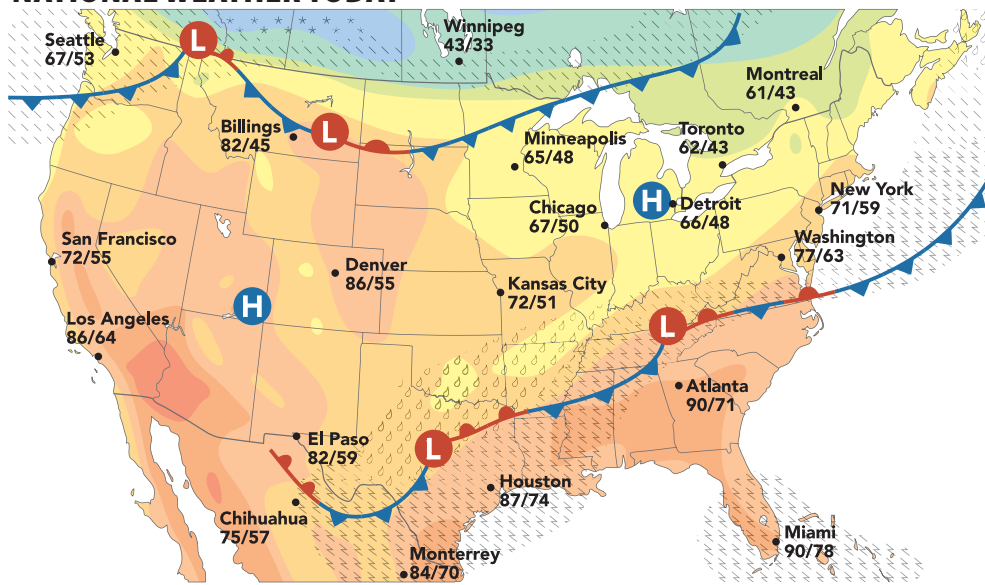


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 106° in Needles, Calif. Low 13° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



BRIEFLY

Oregon roads see a 13 percent increase in fatal crashes

PORTLAND (AP) — The number of people killed in fatal crashes in Oregon has gone up by 13 percent from last year.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Thursday that the total number of deaths on city streets, freeways and county highways was driven up this summer by one of the deadliest crashes in recent state history.

Eight people died this August in a head-on crash in Harney County in southern Oregon. Several other multiple-vehicle crashes also took place this summer.

Troy Costales with the state's transportation safety division says there were 12 more fatal crashes than last year and the number of people killed has increased by 37.

The fatality increase comes as more people are moving to Oregon while number of state troopers patrolling the highways remains lower than in 1980.

Officials call off cougar hunt after hiker's death

PORTLAND (AP) — Authorities in Oregon are ending a cougar hunt that was prompted by the fatal mauling of a hiker by one of the large cats earlier this month.

Hunters killed a roughly 3-year-old female cougar on Sept. 14 after its image was captured on a remote camera set up at the spot where 55-year-old Diana Bober's body had been found four days earlier.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

carnivore coordinator Derek Broman said Friday that it's “highly probable” the animal is the one that fatally attacked the avid hiker from Gresham.

Forensic pathologists couldn't recover DNA from the scene to match with the dead cougar's DNA because heavy rains contaminated the evidence and several days passed before Bober's body was found.

The cougar tested negative for rabies and appeared healthy.

Mike Pence plans to visit Spokane in early October

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence is tentatively scheduled to campaign for Republican U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers in Spokane on Oct. 2.

A spokesman for the congresswoman says Pence's appearance is dependent on how the schedule of Congress shakes out.

The Spokesman-Review says McMorris Rodgers and Pence were colleagues for nearly a decade in the House.

Pence would be the third political ally of President Trump to speak in the district for the congresswoman this year, following Rep. Devin Nunes and presidential adviser Kellyanne Conway.

McMorris Rodgers is the highest ranking Republican woman in the House and faces a stiff challenge this year from Democrat Lisa Brown.

Pence would be the first vice president to visit the Spokane area since 2006, when Dick Cheney visited Fairchild Air Force Base.

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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