

# Amazon moves ahead of its rivals, raises wages to \$15

By JOSEPH PISANI  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Amazon, the business that upended the retailing industry and transformed the way we shop for just about everything, is jumping out ahead of the pack again, announcing a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for its U.S. employees that could force other big companies to raise their pay.

The online giant also said it will push Congress to increase the federal minimum wage, now at \$7.25.

Given Amazon's size and clout, the move Tuesday is a major victory for the \$15-an-hour movement, which has organized protests of fast-food, gas station and other low-paid workers. Already, several states and cities have raised their minimum wages above the federal one.

Amazon, whose value topped an awesome \$1 trillion in September, has been under political and economic pressure to pay its employees more.

"We listened to our critics, thought hard about what we wanted to do, and decided we want to lead," said Jeff Bezos, Amazon founder and CEO.

But Amazon may also be offering raises out of neces-



AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File

**FILE - In this Aug. 3, 2017, file photo, Myrtice Harris applies tape to a package before shipment at an Amazon fulfillment center in Baltimore. Amazon is boosting its minimum wage for all U.S. workers to \$15 per hour starting next month. The company said Tuesday that the wage hike will benefit more than 350,000 workers, which includes full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal positions.**

sity: With the economy booming and unemployment near rock bottom, employers are having difficulty finding help. Amazon, with about 100 warehouses around the country, will soon need to hire more than 100,000 workers to pack and ship boxes during the holiday season.

The wage increase takes effect next month.

Amazon said the move will benefit more than 350,000 workers, including full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal positions. Employees at Whole Foods,

the upscale grocery chain Amazon owns, will get the same raise. Hourly employees who already make \$15 per hour will also see a wage increase, the Seattle company said. (Workers in Britain will also get a raise.)

Current pay for warehouse workers at Amazon is at least \$12.25 an hour in Omaha, Nebraska, \$13 in Baltimore and \$16.50 in New York, according to recent job postings.

The announcement was enough to soothe one of Amazon's fiercest critics:



Bezos

**"We listened to our critics, thought hard about what we wanted to do, and decided we want to lead"**

— Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO

Sen. Bernie Sanders. The senator, who frequently uses Twitter to point out the disparity between Amazon's hourly wages and Bezos' vast fortune, congratulated Bezos for "doing exactly the right thing" and urged other companies to follow Amazon's example.

Sanders described Amazon's move as "a shot heard around the world."

It will have repercussions beyond retailers and will put pressure on any company that operates a distribution center, said Gerald Storch of the retail consulting firm Storch Advisors.

"This will lead to a general increase in minimal wages in all industries," he said.

At the same time, Storch said, the wage increase will widen the gap between the healthy retailers, such as Amazon, Walmart and Target, and the struggling ones, which won't be able to afford to compete on salary.

"The weaker retailers have been cutting costs and squeezing every penny," Storch said. "They are in a very tough place."

Amazon, founded more than two decades ago, has expanded far beyond its book-seller beginnings. Despite its dominance, it shares a major problem with employers big and small: a tight labor market. Unemployment in the U.S. is 3.9 percent, near an 18-year low. Higher pay for workers is one way of dealing with that.

"They'll gladly cross the street and take a better-paying job," said Marc Wulfrat, president of MWPVL, a supply chain

consulting company.

Walmart raised its starting pay to \$11 an hour earlier this year and said it has seen lower turnover among its employees. Target, which announced plans last year to raise hourly wages in steps to \$15 by 2020 and now pays \$12 an hour, said the number of job applicants rose 60 percent in the days after it increased its minimum by \$2 to \$11 per hour last year.

Amazon said it doesn't expect to raise prices for its products to pay for the wage increases.

"Customers are going (to) continue to see incredibly low prices every day," said Dave Clark, senior vice president of worldwide operations.

The push for a higher federal minimum wage will be overseen by Amazon's Jay Carney, White House press secretary during the Obama administration.

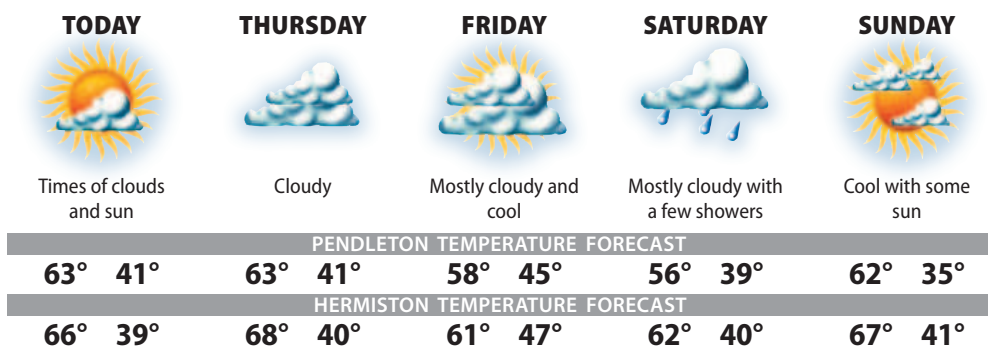
Amazon won't ask Congress to raise the minimum to a specific number.

But "we're sure \$7.25 is too low," Carney said.

## Correction

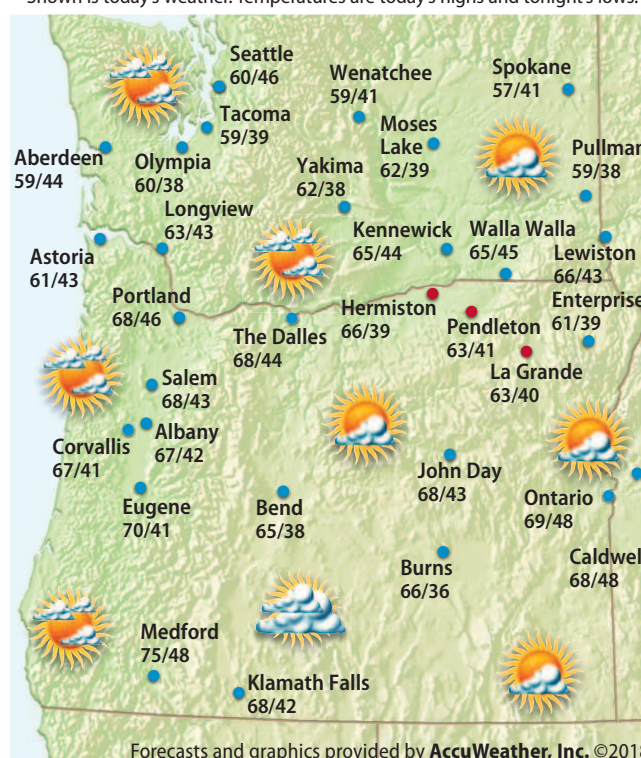
The Sept. 28 article "Umatilla County offers free vaccines in October" misstated the date of the flu vaccine clinic offered by Good Shepherd Health Care System. It will be on Oct. 20. The *East Oregonian* sincerely regrets the error.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	70°	55°
Normals	70°	44°
Records	91° (1932)	29° (1999)

PRECIPITATION  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.01"  
Month to date 0.01"  
Normal month to date 0.07"  
Year to date 6.53"  
Last year to date 12.34"  
Normal year to date 9.01"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	77°	56°
Normals	72°	42°
Records	87° (1943)	27° (1950)

PRECIPITATION  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"  
Month to date 0.00"  
Normal month to date 0.04"  
Year to date 5.15"  
Last year to date 7.04"  
Normal year to date 6.60"

WINDS (in mph)  
Today Thu.  
Boardman NE 4-8 WSW 7-14  
Pendleton NNE 4-8 WSW 7-14

SUN AND MOON  
Sunrise today 6:56 a.m.  
Sunset tonight 6:32 p.m.  
Moonrise today 12:09 a.m.  
Moonset today 3:41 p.m.

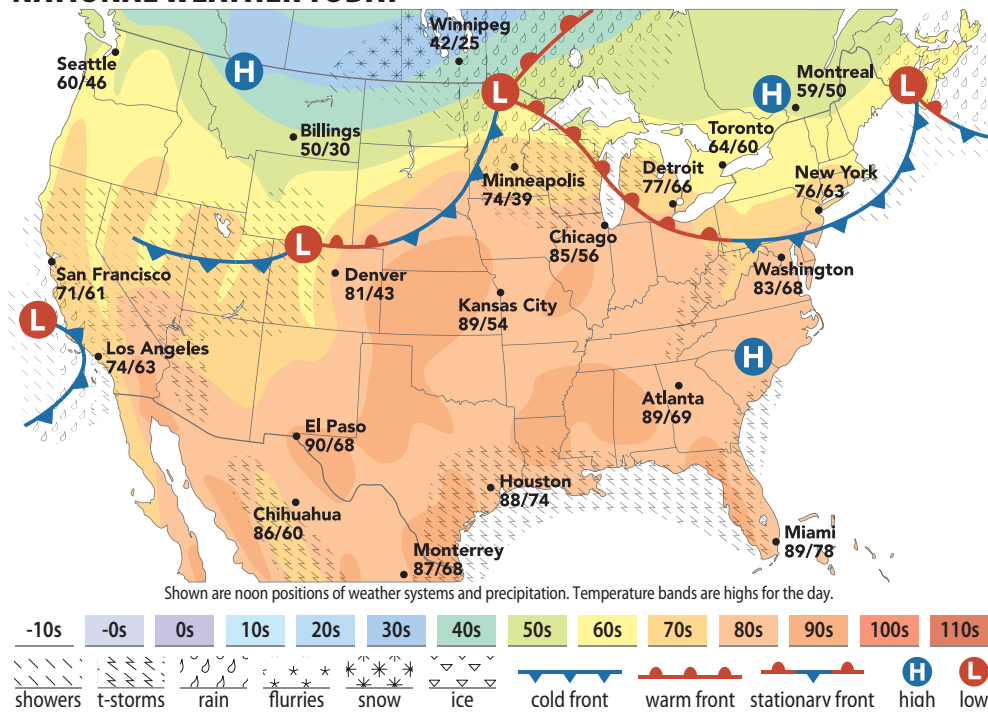
Phase	Date
New	Oct 8
First	Oct 16
Full	Oct 24
Last	Oct 31

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 96° in Tampa, Fla. Low 21° in Daniel, Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## BRIEFLY

### Portland State invests \$3M for homelessness research centers

PORTLAND (AP) — Portland State University is investing \$3 million into efforts to research homelessness and improve urban cores.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports university President Rahmat Shoureshi announced Monday the funding dedicated to a new Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative and a Digital City Testbed Center.

The collaborative aims to search for solutions to homelessness and examine its contributing factors. The testbed center will focus on how technology can be used to make urban areas more efficient, greener and healthier.

The centers will be given about three years to demonstrate their effectiveness and that they can attract outside investment.

Shoureshi aims to eventually create seven of these research centers at the university. The two pilot programs will be swapped for another idea if they are unable to become financially independent.

### Widow sues dead husband's alleged lover for \$1M

PORTLAND (AP) — An Oregon widow has filed a \$1 million lawsuit against a woman she believes was having an extramarital affair with her husband.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the lawsuit was filed Friday in Benton County Circuit Court.

In the suit, Lana Dong claims that the circumstances of the affair between her husband and Anh Tram Gia Phan led to her husband's death.

Dong claims in the suit that Phan was negligent for not doing a better job of hiding the affair.

The lawsuit says on Dec. 5, 2017, Phan's ex-husband caught the philandering pair at Phan's Corvallis nail salon.

The suit claims the ex-husband beat Mitch Xuan Dong with a baseball bat and stabbed him. He died a week later.

Phan's ex-husband, Than Duy Kim of Albany, was charged with murder and has pleaded not guilty.

Phan declined to comment on the suit.



# What is Diabetes?

**Melissa Naff**  
RD, LD, CDE  
Diabetes Educator

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