

# Hurricane Willa threatens Mexico's Pacific coast

By MARIA VERZA  
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — A potentially catastrophic Hurricane Willa swept toward Mexico's Pacific coast with winds of 145 mph Monday night, threatening a stretch of high-rise resort hotels, surfing beaches and fishing villages.

Farther south, Mexican officials reported 12 deaths related to heavy rains from Tropical Storm Vicente.

After briefly reaching Category 5 strength, Willa's maximum sustained winds weakened some. But it remained "extremely dangerous" and was forecast to bring "life-threatening storm surge, wind and rainfall" to parts of west-central and southwestern Mexico ahead of an expected Tuesday landfall, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

Hotel workers started taping up windows, and officials began evacuating people and shuttered schools in a low-lying landscape where towns sit amid farmland tucked between the sea and lagoons. A

decree of "extraordinary emergency" was issued for 19 municipalities in Nayarit and Sinaloa states, the federal Interior Department announced.

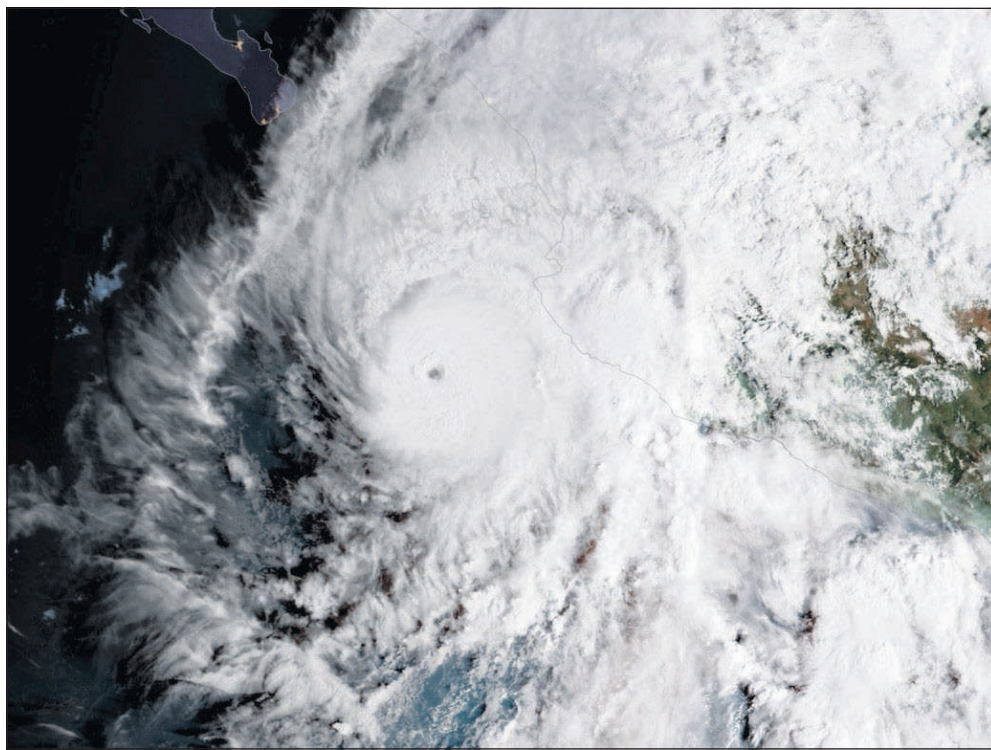
Officials said 7,000 to 8,000 people were being evacuated from low-lying areas, mostly in Sinaloa state.

The hurricane was expected to pass over or near the Islas Marias — a set of islands about 60 miles offshore that include a nature preserve and a federal prison — early Tuesday.

Forecasters said Willa would then blow ashore in the afternoon or evening somewhere along a 140-mile stretch extending from the resort town of Mazatlan to San Blas.

It was projected to weaken somewhat before hitting land but was still expected to be extremely dangerous.

Yamilé Bustamante, assistant general manager at the Crown Plaza de Mazatlan, said hotel executives were not ruling out the possibility of evacuating guests but were await-



This GOES East satellite image provided by NOAA shows Hurricane Willa in the eastern Pacific, on a path toward Mexico's Pacific coast on Monday.

NOAA via AP

ing instructions from authorities.

The governments of Sinaloa and Nayarit ordered coastal region schools to close and began preparing emergency shelters.

Enrique Moreno, mayor of Escuinapa, a municipal-

ity of about 60,000 people on Willa's track, said officials were trying to evacuate everybody in the seaside village of Teacapan. He estimated 3,000 were affected but he expected some would try to stay.

"The people don't want

to evacuate, but it's for their security," he said.

About 60 miles up the coast in Mazatlan, with a metropolitan-area population of about 500,000, Mayor Jose Joel Bouciguez said officials prepared shelters and were closely

monitoring low-lying areas. Mazatlan is a popular vacation spot and home to a large number of American and Canadian expatriates.

Late Monday, Willa was centered about 85 miles southwest of the Islas Marias and 195 miles south-southwest of Mazatlan. It was moving north at 9 mph.

Hurricane-force winds extended 35 miles from the storm's center, and tropical storm-force winds were up to 125 miles out.

The U.S. hurricane center warned that Willa could bring 6 to 12 inches of rain — with up to 18 inches in some places — to parts of Jalisco, Nayarit and Sinaloa states, with flash flooding and landslides possible in mountainous areas.

Farther south, Tropical Storm Vicente weakened and was expected to dissipate soon, but it still dropped heavy rainfall that caused dangerous flooding in southern and southwestern Mexico.

Officials in Oaxaca state said seven adults and five children had lost their lives in drownings or mudslides.

## FOSSIL: 'Family wage' jobs, benefits

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and running for two weeks and all of the employees are from the Fossil area.

According to a department press release, the agency received more than 639,000 calls last year from taxpayers with various questions on filing, paying, and other topics.

Krawczyk said the department's Salem office and its five regional offices will continue to field questions, although the Fossil call center isn't open to the public for in-person services.

"This team will help the department continue to improve the assistance taxpayers receive and the experience they have when they call us with questions, concerns, or problems," depart-

ment Director Nia Ray said in a statement.

At less than 1,500 people, Wheeler County is the least populous county in Oregon, and recent events don't seem to suggest that will change.

In June, Wheeler County Sheriff Chris Humphreys announced that he would resign within the next four to six months and all three of his full-time deputies were also departing.

That same month, all the members Wheeler County High School's graduating class said they don't plan to return to the county after completing their college educations. The class of 2018 started with more than a dozen students in first grade, but by the time they reached graduation, the class had shrunk to three.

Despite the trends in Wheeler County, Smith said the call center could help the area reverse its fortunes.

Smith said all of the jobs at the call center were "family wage" jobs with benefits.

If the sheriff's office hired a new deputy, their spouse could take a job at the call center, Smith said. Together, they could afford to buy a house and a car.

Smith said he didn't see why there was any reason that the Fossil call center couldn't be replicated in other counties with sparse populations and services.

According to the department of revenue press release, the grand opening ceremony will take place at the Wheeler County Courthouse in Fossil on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

## HAMLEY: Looked to buy in 2016

Continued from 1A

field "is not our issue." He also said as far he knew, the tribes do not own property within the city limits of Pendleton. The Hamley sites would be the first. Paul Chalmers, Umatilla County tax assessor, said that seemed right but it would require a sufficient search of property records to be certain.

Wildhorse Resort & Casino, which the tribes own, looked to buy the Hamley businesses in 2016 for more than \$3.1 million, according to court documents in the lawsuit. Wildhorse, in 2017, began its latest expansion on the reservation — an \$85 million project for a new hotel tower, a 32-lane bowling alley and additions

and improvements for dining, gaming and the cinema. Sams said Wildhorse would manage the Hamley establishments if the tribes bought them.

Woodfield and Pearce got involved with the Hamley enterprise in 2005 when it was failing. They oversaw the renovation of the century-old building, reopened the Hamley store in September of 2005 and in the next two years expanded the operation with the steakhouse and the Slick Fork Saloon, an event space. The Hamley businesses employ 75-80 people.

Theodore Piteo of Portland represents Woodfield in the bankruptcy case and during a Sept. 4 hearing in Portland told Judge Trish M. Brown about the tribes'

offer.

"They have made a purchase offer on the Hamley's assets currently for \$2 million," he stated, according to the court recording.

HIPO's attorney, Albert Kennedy of Portland, also attended the hearing and said he knew of the letter of interest but did not know if the tribes were willing to go through an auction to buy Hamley assets and suggested setting another meeting.

Parties in the bankruptcy came together Friday in Portland for a settlement conference, but nothing indicates they made a deal.

Sams said there would be more details if the tribes and the Hamley owners reach an agreement, but the tribes have yet to hear back.

## ADS: 'What we are seeing now is the candidates trying to define who their opponent is'

Continued from 1A

But last year, Buehler disclosed in a Facebook post that he didn't vote for Trump. Instead, he wrote in the name Ohio Gov. John Kasich for president.

Buehler has repeatedly criticized Trump's policies and conduct in other interviews and on social media. He also called on Trump to withdraw Kavanaugh's nomination as the Senate confirmation hearing unfolded.

"With nothing positive to say about her own record or her vision for Oregon, Kate Brown has completely overplayed her hand with a ridiculous and 100 percent false attack against Knute Buehler comparing Knute to Donald Trump," wrote Jordan Conger, Buehler's campaign policy director, in an email. "There are legitimate issues and differences to debate in the race for governor; this is not one of them."

Buehler's campaign, meanwhile, in an ad earlier this month, claimed that revenue from a new payroll tax to fund mass transit services — which Brown supported — forces workers in the rest of the state to pay for Portland service.

"Kate Brown has always been a politician who thinks about Portland first and the rest of Oregon last," Troutdale resident Kelly Fisher says in the ad. "Why else would Brown raise a payroll tax on a working person like me to pay for Portland's mass transit system?"

Christian Gaston, Brown's campaign spokesman, said the ad on the transit tax is "completely false" and "based on a lie."

"This whole campaign has been a constant barrage of misinformation from Knute Buehler and Priority Oregon (political action



Jonathan House/Pamplin Media Group

The campaigns of GOP nominee Rep. Knute Buehler, left, and incumbent Democrat Gov. Kate Brown are releasing multiple TV and social media ads as the gubernatorial campaign enters its final days.

committee)," Gaston said. "It has been really difficult to push out fact checks fast enough."

In fact, the taxes paid by employees in densely populated areas, such as Portland, help pay for transit services in sparsely populated areas such as Gilliam and Harney counties, said Karyn Criswell, a state transportation project manager.

About 42 jurisdictions around the state get money from the transit tax. Sixteen cover areas with so few workers that they get \$50,000 a year from the state as a base, Criswell said.

Conger said the ad is accurate because as a Troutdale resident, Kelly's payroll taxes go toward TriMet, which provides transit services largely to Portland. But TriMet maps show service is also offered to Troutdale.

In ads aired recently, Brown's campaign stated that Buehler wants to restrict access to abortion.

The campaign and some pro-choice advocates have offered as evidence Buehler's vote against the state's

Reproductive Equity Act in 2017. The act, among other things, expanded reproductive health care to undocumented immigrants.

Buehler has said repeatedly he is pro-choice and would make no changes to the state's abortion laws, which are among the least restrictive in the nation.

"Yes, he voted against that act, but does that mean he is not pro-choice? Heck, no," said Moore, the state political scientist from Pacific University. "He is definitely pro-choice. He just didn't take this further step."

"When you look at any major Republican candidate, he is a wild radical on choice."

Buehler's campaign also takes issue with an ad by Brown's campaign that said Buehler voted to "take coverage away from ... hundreds of thousands of Oregonians."

The ad refers to Buehler's vote against a bill to enact a mix of health care provider taxes to temporarily fund the Oregon Health Plan, the state's version of Medicaid.

The taxes hit hospitals, insurers, the Public Employees Benefits Board and coordinated health care organizations, which are regional networks of Oregon Health Plan providers.

Buehler did vote against the taxes because he felt they were "unfair and targeted small businesses and school districts while exempting large corporations," Conger said.

He wanted a longer-term solution for funding health care and with other legislators proposed legislation to do so. Their ideas never made it to a vote.

Gaston defended Brown's ads as "narrowly on actions Buehler has taken."

"His campaign is about ... selling this image of himself as a candidate that is different from what he has done as a legislator," Gaston said.

In another ad, Buehler's campaign said that Brown "cut career-focused education by 43 percent."

The claim refers to voter-approved Measure 98 in 2016. The ballot measure dedicated about \$150 million per year toward high school career-technical education and other programs to boost the graduation rate.

A year later, Brown proposed increasing career-technical education funding by \$75 million a year — not the full amount approved by voters. Legislators, including Buehler, ultimately passed a budget that instead allocated \$85 million a year for career-technical education funding.

Buehler voted against the state education budget for several reasons, including that short funding of career education, his campaign said.

"He thought at the time that was the more appropri-

ate time to present that message, and frankly, he wanted to make sure some funding on Measure 98 made it through," Conger said in a phone interview with the Oregon Capital Bureau.

Conger defended calling the funding for Measure 98 a cut.

"Voters recognized this as a priority and made the funding available for it, and even then, she proposed cutting it in half," Conger said. "If cutting voter-approved funding doesn't amount to a cut, I don't know what will."

Gaston called the ad "complete trash politics."

"It's galling that (Bue-

hler) has the temerity to say we are doing anything but stating the truth about his record, when he is saying Governor Brown cut CTE (career-technical education) funding," Gaston said.

Buehler's ad also implied that Brown's policies contributed to Oregon's third-worst graduation rate in the nation.

Oregon already held that distinction before Brown became governor. Since she took office in February 2015, the graduation rate has inched up slightly but not enough to change the state's third-worst national ranking.



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