

NORCOR has released inmates to save space for ICE detainees

By CONRAD WILSON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

A regional jail in The Dalles that houses detainees for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has suggested local sheriffs keep their “numbers low” in the jail to make room for immigrant detainees.

The Northern Oregon Regional Corrections Facility — or NORCOR — has housed immigration detainees since 1999, when the facility first opened. Critics of that process say it violates Oregon’s sanctuary law and have sued the jail.

Documents included in that lawsuit give potential insight into how NORCOR allocates space for ICE detainees.

In a Sept. 29, 2016 email, then-NORCOR Lt. Dan Lindhorst wrote ICE to ask that they increase their number of detainees at the jail.

“I see this morning we are down to 26 ICE detainees,” Lindhorst wrote. “Could you please see if you can get these numbers up. We have been keeping the county numbers low

to make room for the 40 detainees that you had asked for. If you are not going to use us to that extent, please let me know that as well so I can advise my sheriffs.”

Less than three hours later, an ICE official wrote back indicating detainees would soon arrive from the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington.

“Tacoma is working on vetting more detainees to go to NORCOR,” ICE official Larry Peterson wrote. “I will let you know when they are ready for transfer.”

“Thanks, I have been getting pressed for people,” Lindhorst wrote back.

“No problem,” Peterson wrote. “I will keep hounding them for more.”

Lindhorst has since been promoted to NORCOR’s commander. He declined to comment on Thursday, citing the pending litigation.

NORCOR is the regional jail for Hood River, Gilliam, Sherman and Wasco counties. It also contracts with Benton County to house inmates.

But in recent years, the jail has become particularly reliant on funding



NORCOR is a cinder block jail surrounded by a high chain-link fence and razor wire in an industrial section of The Dalles.

Conrad Wilson/Oregon Public Broadcasting

from its increasingly lucrative contract with ICE. Last year, the federal agency paid NORCOR more than \$900,000 to house detainees, according to the jail’s budget documents. That’s more than 11 percent of the jail’s 2017-18 budget.

The county’s contract with ICE doesn’t guaran-

tee how much the federal agency will use NORCOR. But in 2016, then-jail administrator Bryan Brandenburg told OPB that ICE does “their best to keep our numbers up a little bit.”

In 2016, Wasco County failed to continue a property tax levy to fund the jail, making the jail even more

reliant on its contract with ICE.

“Huge,” Gilliam County Sheriff Gary Bettencourt said when describing the problem if the jail’s ICE contract went away. “It would be a huge problem.”

Bettencourt said the jail uses a matrix system when the inmate population starts

to reach capacity. He said there’s a “very low number of people we matrix.”

Historically, the jail’s population has been slightly more than 200 adult inmates and detainees.

“If we get over that, we initiate the matrix system that just starts pushing people out the door,” Bettencourt said. “It’s kind of a grading system; somebody who’s not a threat to the community or themselves, so it’s got to be a pretty low-level crime.”

He said an inmate’s criminal history is also taken into consideration before that person is let out to make room for more serious offenders.

“We think our local bed numbers are adequate,” Bettencourt said.

He said there’s never been a time when the ICE contract has prevented someone arrested locally from getting booked into the jail.

“We’re never not able to take a local person,” he said.

The sheriffs of Hood River, Sherman and Wasco counties did not return requests for comment.

“We’re never not able to take a local person”

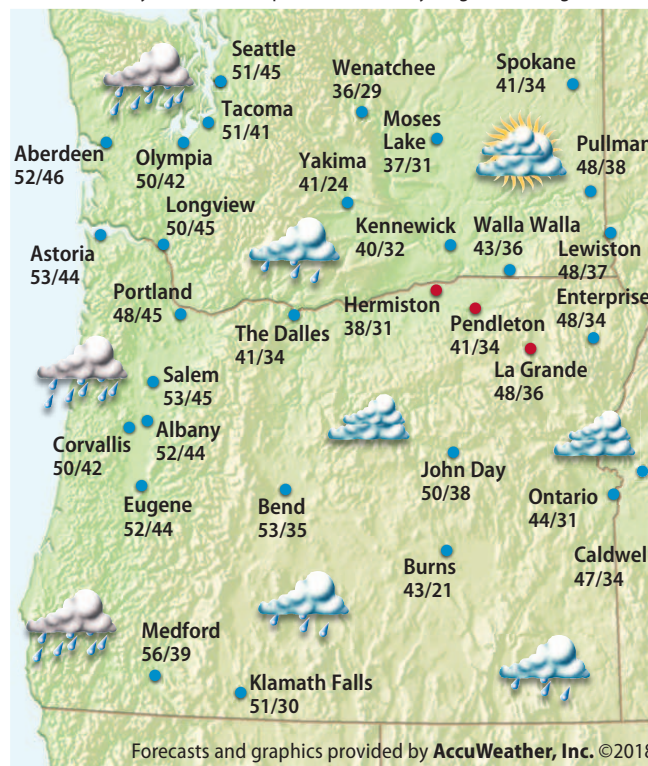
— Gary Bettencourt, Gilliam County sheriff

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy and chilly	Cloudy with spotty showers	Mostly cloudy with a shower	Partly sunny	Mostly cloudy
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
41° 34°	53° 39°	49° 35°	47° 33°	48° 35°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
38° 31°	52° 40°	50° 36°	52° 32°	50° 35°

OREGON FORECAST

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

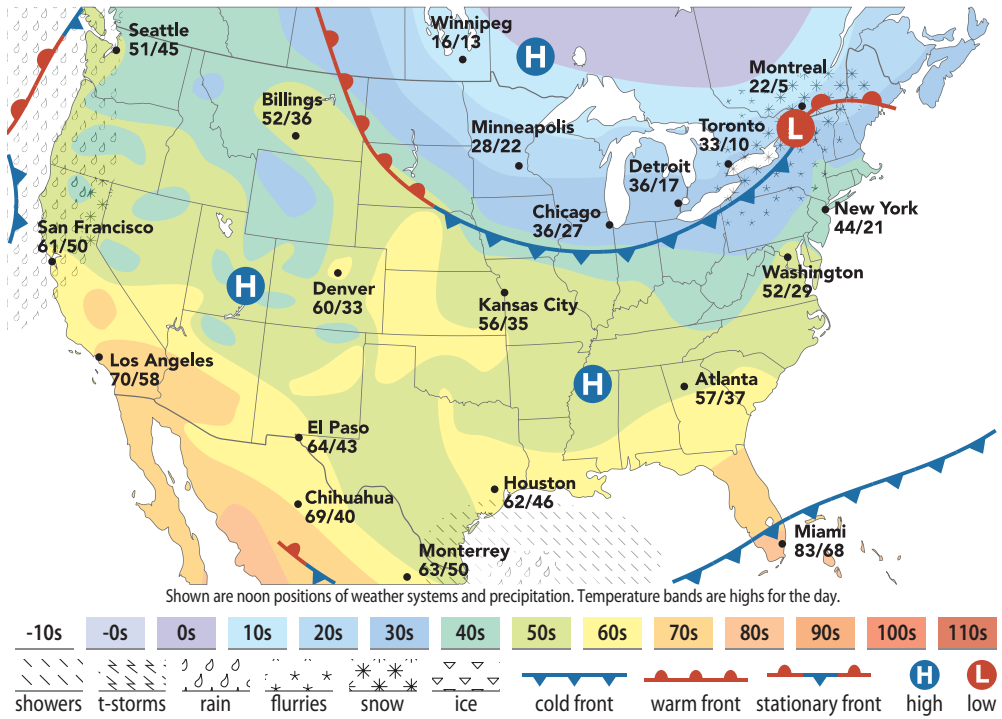


NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 88° in Hollywood, Fla. Low -20° in Cotton, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	31°	20°
Normals	47°	32°
Records	69° (1958)	9° (1977)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.10"
Normal month to date	0.92"
Year to date	8.25"
Last year to date	14.58"
Normal year to date	10.91"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	32°	28°
Normals	48°	32°
Records	65° (1962)	6° (1929)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.01"
Normal month to date	0.76"
Year to date	6.46"
Last year to date	8.46"
Normal year to date	8.04"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Thu.
Boardman	NNE 3-6	S 4-8
Pendleton	ENE 3-6	SSW 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:03 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:19 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:55 p.m.
Moonset today	4:57 a.m.



Report: Oregon needs a separate state agency for legal marijuana

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Cannabis Commission is recommending the state set up an independent agency to regulate legal marijuana rather than having three different agencies share the job, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

Marijuana is currently regulated by the Oregon Health Authority, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and the Oregon Department of Agriculture, but their responsibilities also include public health, alcohol and crop services.

The Statesman Journal obtained a draft report through a public records request that says having three agencies manage marijuana creates confusion and each agency has a different mindset about how to address cannabis.

Law enforcement officials and growers also find the multi-agency approach “confusing and difficult to navigate,” the report said.

The lines regarding who’s responsible for what have changed over time.

Certain medical growers were required as of July 1 to use the OLCC’s Cannabis Tracking System, which recreational licensees also use. To help track medical

marijuana, the OLCC in August revealed it planned to seek \$7 million per biennium in recreational pot tax money from the 2019 Legislature.

Mark Pettinger, a spokesman for the OLCC, told the newspaper he had heard mention of the new agency recommendation, but said it was “not our issue to comment on.”

The cannabis commission was formed by the 2017 Legislature.

Jonathan Modie, spokesman for the Oregon Health Authority, stressed the recommendation is still a draft. The cannabis commission meets Nov. 27 via conference call to discuss recommendations included in the draft report.

If the commission approves the recommendation, Modie said, the report will be presented to a legislative committee when the session begins.

Jim Moore, a political science professor at Pacific University, said proposals like this usually come about after an audit reveals problems, but this one appears to be spontaneous.

“I think it will have good political support,” he said.

BRIEFLY

Lawmakers ordered to comply with subpoenas over misconduct

PORTLAND (AP) — A Multnomah County Circuit Court judge has ruled that Oregon legislative leaders must comply with subpoenas for documents and testimony in the sexual harassment investigation at the Capitol.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Judge Christopher Marshall said Monday the subpoenas were reasonable in scope and had been issued lawfully by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. But he also found the Legislature’s top officials initially had cause to object, rejecting the agency’s request for a contempt order and \$1,000-a-day fines.

He gave lawmakers until Dec. 5 to provide documents and Dec. 18 to provide testimony.

Through their attorneys, Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek had argued that supplying the information would jeopardize the privacy of people who had complained about misconduct.

On Monday, labor agency lawyer Nena Cook said the alleged victims’ information would be kept private under a protective order.

The Bureau of Labor and Industries had identified two interns who reported being sexually harassed while working for

mer Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg. Kruse resigned following the allegations, which he denied.

The labor agency’s investigation dates back to Aug. 1, when Democratic Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian took the extraordinary step of filing a complaint with his own agency alleging that Courtney and Kotek knew or should have known about complaints about Kruse and the “broader sexually hostile environment in the Capitol.” Avakian’s complaint also named seven other individuals including the Legislature’s human resources chief and top lawyer, plus the entire Legislature and Department of Administrative Services, which handles human resources for much of the state government.

Wyden: Public needs more time to study nuke waste proposal

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden says the public needs more time to comment on a proposal to reclassify radioactive waste stored at the nation’s nuclear weapons production complex.

The Oregon Democrat this week joined calls for the process to be slowed down.

The U.S. Department of Energy is considering a change to how it interprets the legal definition of high level radioactive waste.

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays
www.eastoregonian.com
To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255
or go online to www.eastoregonian.com
and click on 'Subscribe'

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Copyright © 2018, EO Media Group

Subscriber services:
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 1-800-522-0255 ext. 1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings off cover price
EZPay	\$14.50	41 percent
52 weeks	\$173.67	41 percent
26 weeks	\$91.86	38 percent
13 weeks	\$47.77	36 percent

*EZ Pay = one-year rate with a monthly credit or debit card/check charge

Single copy price:
\$1 Tuesday through Friday, \$1.50 Saturday

Circulation Manager:
Bonny Tuller, 541-966-0828

ADVERTISING
Regional Publisher and Revenue Director:
Christopher Rush
541-278-2669 • crush@eomediagroup.com
Advertising Services:
Angela Treadwell
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com
Grace Bubar
541-276-2214 • gbubar@eastoregonian.com
Multimedia Consultants:
• Kimberly Macias
541-278-2683 • kmacias@eastoregonian.com
• Jeanne Jewett
541-564-4531 • jjewett@eastoregonian.com
• Dayle Stinson
541-278-2670 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com
• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising
1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

NEWS
• To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Tammy Malgesini at 541-564-4539 or Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit www.eastoregonian.com/community/announcements
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips: 541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

Business Office Manager:
541-966-0822

COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Manager: Mike Jensen
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com