

# Oregon State Police seek statutory staffing minimums

Gov. Brown asks to fill 50 trooper positions in July

By AUBREY WIEBER  
Capital Bureau

For 26 years, Travis Hampton worked out of patrol offices for Oregon State Police. Year after year, he saw calls and car accidents increase as the disparity between the population and number of troopers grew.

Sitting in those offices, he thought about the work he would do if he ever climbed to the top of the ranks.

"I always made myself the promise that if I were ever in this position, I would make sure that citizens and legislators knew the dire straits we're in," Hampton said.

Hampton is no longer in a patrol post. As state police superintendent, he's fulfilled that promise.

Gov. Kate Brown is proposing filling 50 trooper positions in the next state budget that goes into effect next July.

That would be the biggest expansion of the state patrol in recent years. Hampton said that could be the difference in whether a trooper is on shift when you crash your car in rural Oregon or stops a drunk driver on Interstate 5 in the early morning.

As the agency's trooper force dwindled, Hampton has become increasingly vocal about the shortages. He says he's not comfortable with such advocacy but he'd rather be annoying than cut services or lay people off.

"Virtually my entire career has been a plea for more resources," Hampton said. Brown appointed him superintendent in 2016.

Hampton, a Gresham



Aubrey Wieber/Capital Bureau

**Oregon State Police Superintendent Travis Hampton flips through charts and graphs showing the impacts of OSP's short staffing. In 2017, the agency was unable to respond to 11,880 calls for service due to staffing levels.**

native, started with OSP in 1990 when he was 19. He came on 10 years after the state severed the tie between gas tax revenue and OSP's trooper division.

That meant the state agency had to compete with scores of others for a share of general fund budgets.

Meantime, Hampton saw Oregon's population rise as the number of troopers lagged. When he started, the state had 512 troopers. Today, it's budgeted for 454 positions. That's eight troopers for every 100,000 Oregonians. Only Florida has a lower trooper per capita ratio.

The bottom line of that is troopers can't respond to every call. In 2017, the agency recorded 11,880 calls for service that it didn't respond to, or about 33 per day.

State police officials have pushed for decades for more funding, but never found a governor sympathetic enough to the agency's shortfalls.

"We really have a champion in Governor Brown, where we have not in the past," Hampton said.

When Brown announced her budget in late November, Hampton had been told there would be some incremental increases to keep his operation afloat.

He was surprised to hear the funding bump and her plan to double the number of troopers over the next decade.

"I was elated, thankful," Hampton said. "For the first day I was afraid I was going to wake up and it was a bad dream."

Hampton started lobbying Brown two and a half

years ago when she interviewed him for the job. He hasn't stopped. Leading up to this budget cycle, he often talked with her staff as she pursued re-election.

Heidi Moawad, Brown's public safety advisor, said Hampton was a strong advocate for his agency. He showed her that continuing to run on a slim budget was "untenable."

The added staffing, Hampton said, means there is a better chance a trooper could respond when someone reports traffic threats, such as a swerving vehicle. More than one trooper might be able to respond to a high-way crash to close off the road and provide medical attention. Some patrol stations around the state would return to 24-hour operation.

Now, there are significant gaps.

"You could conceivably enter the state in Ashland on I-5 at 3 in the morning behind a drunk driver and leave the state four hours later in Portland and not have a state trooper on duty the entire length of I-5," Hampton said.

The state police do more than patrol highways. They manage sex offenders, authorize gun sales, provide forensic services, and conduct fire investigations. When such services need money, Hampton's usual option is to pull from resources going to troopers and criminal investigations.

He typically gets money by keeping trooper positions empty — about 40.

He endures that cut to patrol services as the state's population has skyrocketed, putting more cars on the highways. In 2011, there

were just over 300 fatal crashes on Oregon roadways. Fatalities peaked in 2016 at 450 and have only slightly lowered since.

Moawad said the state needs more troopers on the highway stopping speeders and responding promptly to accidents.

For years, OSP has lobbied for more funding. In the current budget, the agency was given \$6 million for 20 new trooper and detective positions. But it was told to cut other spending by \$12 million.

"It's literally me offering to buy you lunch, then I steal your wallet on the way out," Hampton said.

Hampton doesn't know how long he will be on the job. Every four years, the superintendent needs to be approved by the Senate and governor. But if it's not him, someone else will be fighting for dollars. He has support from Brown, but she will oversee just one more budget.

To stabilize the state police, Hampton said that by 2030, the state should have 15 troopers per 100,000 Oregonians. And he wants that standard written into law so it never hits the lows he's experienced.

Hampton's goal would put Oregon in the middle of the pack nationally on trooper-to-resident ratio. "That is definitely not the Cadillac," Hampton said. "That's the used Honda Accord of policing. Right now, we are in the Pinto."

Reporter Aubrey Wieber: [aubrey@salemreporter.com](mailto:aubrey@salemreporter.com) or 503-575-1251. Wieber is a reporter for Salem Reporter who works for the Oregon Capital Bureau, a collaboration of EO Media Group, the Pamplin Media Group, and Salem Reporter.

## Umatilla Co. economic development grants available

PENDLETON — Umatilla County Community & Economic Development is seeking applicants for its small grants program.

Eligible businesses and nonprofit groups that operate in Umatilla County are eligible to apply. The next quarterly grant application must be submitted by Dec. 19 at 5 p.m. For more information or to obtain a grant application, visit <http://umatillacounty.net/BCC/grants.html>.

Submit applications to Gail Nelson, Economic Development, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton, OR 97801 or email to [gail.nelson@umatillacounty.net](mailto:gail.nelson@umatillacounty.net).

## Hospice lights up holiday season

HERMISTON — The community is invited to support Vange John Memorial Hospice during the holiday season.

In its 30th year, the Light Up A Life fundraiser runs throughout the month. People are invited to make a suggested donation of \$15 to honor someone or in memory of a loved one or friend. A symbolic light and ornament will be illuminated in the window display area provided by Victory Baptist Church at 193 E. Main St., Hermiston.

A special Light Up A Life reading will include the names submitted. It will broadcast Sunday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. on KOHU 1360 AM. The tax-deductible dona-

## BRIEFLY

tions help support services for patients and their families provided by the local hospice throughout the year. To Light Up A Life, provide the person's name the donation is honoring and mail a \$15 check to Vange John Memorial Hospice, 645 W. Orchard Ave., Suite 500, Hermiston, OR 97838. For more information or to receive a donation form, call 541-667-3543.

## Pendleton library sets paint class

PENDLETON — A simple art lesson will provide instruction on how to paint a snowman.

The free event for adults and teens is Wednesday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. in the meeting room at the Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion

Ave. Although there is no fee, those that want to participate need to register in advance.

For more information, contact heather.culley@ci.pendleton.or.us or 541-966-0380.

## McKay Creek plans holiday celebration

PENDLETON — McKay Creek Estates is setting the table for its annual holiday meal and celebration.

The public is invited to celebrate the season with residents of the assisted living facility.

The menu features Christmas goose, prime rib and ham with all the fixings. In addition, desserts include pecan, pumpkin and apple pie. The event is Thursday, Dec. 20 at 5 p.m. at 1601 Southgate, Pendleton. The

cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under.

Those planning on attending need to register by Friday, Dec. 14. For more information or to RSVP, call 541-276-1987.

## Do-si-do at square dance holiday event

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Muddy Frogs Square Dance Club invites the public to learn more about square dancing.

The club is holding a Holiday Open House on Sunday from 2-3:30 p.m. at the Milton-Freewater Community Building, 109 N. E. Fifth St. There is no admission charge.

**AMERICA'S ORIGINAL BUTCHER SINCE 1917**  
**OMAHA STEAKS**

The Family Gourmet Feast

- 2 (5 oz.) Filet Mignons
- 2 (5 oz.) Top Sirloins
- 4 Boneless Chicken Breasts (1 lb. pkg.)
- 2 (4 oz.) Boneless Pork Chops
- 4 (3 oz.) Kielbasa Sausages
- 4 (4 oz.) Omaha Steaks Burgers
- 4 (3 oz.) Potatoes au Gratin
- 4 (4 oz.) Caramel Apple Tartlets
- OS Seasoning Packet

55586LDF | ~~\$99.99~~ | **\$49.99** separately  
Plus 4 more Burgers FREE

Limit 2/pkg. Free gifts must ship with #55586. Standard S&H will be added. Expires 2/28/19. ©2018 OCG | 18M531 | Omaha Steaks, Inc.

Call 1-877-717-9688 ask for 55586LDF  
[www.OmahaSteaks.com/cook31](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/cook31)

**Special Offer SAVE 20%**

**SPECIAL OFFER! ONLY \$23.99\***

Order Now and SAVE 20% Only \$23.99\* (reg. \$29.95), plus \$8.50 shipping & handling per item. Visit [CrownMapleSpecial.com](http://CrownMapleSpecial.com) to order item SC-101-DA\_Ea. Use Promo Code CROWN10. Order by Dec. 14, 2018 for Christmas delivery. Offer ends December 31, 2018 or while supplies last.

**855-977-9436**

**EVERY LIVE GAME. EVERY SUNDAY.**

ONLY ON DIRECTV.

Out-of-market games only. Select NFL games excluded.

**SUNDAY TICKET 25**

Ask me how to Bundle and save. CALL TODAY!

AT&T Preferred Dealer

iv Support Holdings 1-855-502-2578

**EARTHLINK INTERNET**  
HIGH SPEED INTERNET

Enjoy 10x-time internet speeds without spending big bucks.

Get Connected for as low as **14.95/mo.**

HyperLink™ High-Speed Internet  
Connection speeds up to 75 Mbps\*

Get Connected for as low as **\$49.99/mo.**

Satellite Internet  
What you get with HyperLink Satellite Internet

**855-977-9436**

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED RETAILER

Authorized Dealer

EarthLink

Imagine The Difference You Can Make

**DONATE YOUR CAR**

**1-844-533-9173**

FREE TOWING  
TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Help Prevent Blindness  
Get A Vision Screening Annually

**Heritage for the Blind**

Ask About A FREE 5 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!

**DENTAL Insurance**  
Physicians Mutual Insurance Company

A less expensive way to help get the dental care you deserve

- If you're over 50, you can get coverage for about \$1 a day!
- Keep your own dentist! You can go to any dentist you want.
- NO annual or lifetime cap on the cash benefits you can receive.
- No wait for preventive care and no deductibles - you could get a checkup tomorrow.
- Coverage for over 350 procedures including cleanings, exams, fillings, crowns...even dentures.

**FREE Information Kit**  
1-877-599-0125  
Or [www.dental50plus.com/25](http://www.dental50plus.com/25)

**Mom & Baby Support Group**

We meet every Friday 9AM - 11AM at St Anthony Hospital in Conference Rooms 3 & 4

This support group is Free and specifically geared toward Moms and Caregivers.

We provide Free snacks, support, breastfeeding help and baby weigh ins.

**CHI St. Anthony Hospital**  
Imagine better health.™

St. Anthony Clinic  
3001 St. Anthony Way  
Pendleton, Oregon  
[www.sahpendleton.org](http://www.sahpendleton.org)