

# Decades later, Courtney again takes aim at DUI threshold

By **AUBREY WIEBER**  
Oregon Capital Bureau

As a state representative in 1983, Peter Courtney introduced legislation to lower the drunk driving threshold from 0.10 blood alcohol content to 0.08.

It was a radical move from a new lawmaker who was expected to bide his time. Courtney had little support outside of a budding advocacy group called Mothers Against Drunk Driving, but he introduced the bill anyway.

It passed and Oregon and Utah became the first states to move to a 0.08 threshold for drunk driving. Courtney proved to be ahead of the times, as it wasn't until 1998 that President Bill Clinton called on all states to enact the 0.08 standard.

Now Courtney wants Oregon to be a leader again. He is taking the political point to push Oregon to an even more strict limit — 0.05.

"You're not as good after you drink as you are before you drink," he said.

Today, Courtney said,

drivers are confronted in their cars with more lights and screens than ever. Add in bike lanes and homeless people walking around at night, and there is too much distraction while driving something that can be used as a deadly weapon, he said.

He knows his proposal will be unpopular.

"Sooner or later, you're going to have to fight that battle," Courtney said. "You don't wait until the timing's perfect. You don't wait until everything lines up."

Courtney said he's always been keenly aware of the downsides of alcohol, which has killed several chronic drinkers in his family. But this isn't about drinking, it's about safety, he said.

"I'm not trying to stop you from drinking," Courtney said. "I'm not trying to stop this explosion of brew pubs. Go, all of you. Go tonight, go every night. I'm not trying to make a statement about drinking."

Utah is the only state with such a standard, which went into effect Dec. 30 after nearly two years of hot debate and pushback from

the restaurant industry, citizens and some lawmakers.

That was in teetotaling Utah, where the religious beliefs of two-thirds of the state mandate they abstain from alcohol. It was even fought before a Mormon-dominated legislature, prompting former Sen. Jim Dabakis to famously drink two mimosas before a floor speech to show he wasn't impaired.

So far, Courtney is missing crucial allies.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving so far isn't endorsing the Courtney move and Oregon State Police are "neutral" on the idea. Capt. Tim Fox said there is no research on the difference of impairment at 0.05 and 0.08. Superintendent Travis Hampton said if the new limit were to pass, OSP wouldn't have enough troopers to enforce the new law.

Courtney is undeterred. "I'll be talking with him," Courtney said of Hampton.

And that's the law enforcement and anti-drunk driving community. Oregon also has robust wine, craft beer, spirits and restaurant industries with powerful lobbies.



Courtney



The Register-Guard/Chris Pietsch

**Eugene police secure the scene in front of Cascade Middle School in Eugene on Friday after an officer involved shooting.**

# Police kill armed man at Eugene middle school

By **ANDREW SELSKY AND GILLIAN FLACCUS**  
Associated Press

EUGENE — Police shot and killed a man who showed up Friday with a gun at an Oregon middle school amid a custody dispute, authorities said. No one else was injured.

The man had been escorted from Cascade Middle School in Eugene when he began struggling and pulled a gun, police Lt. Jennifer Bills told reporters. She initially said the shooting was inside the school.

Students were locked in classrooms, and the school was locked down for nearly four hours.

By Friday afternoon, officers were escorting small groups of children to a

nearby church where parents had gathered.

Yellow crime scene tape surrounded the school's main parking lot and a yellow tarp covered the suspect's body just a few feet from an entrance. His name was not immediately released.

"No students were harmed whatsoever. All the students are safe," Bills said.

Parent Stephanie Martin waited for her two children at the church in Eugene.

She said her son, a sixth-grader, called her to say he and his sister, a seventh-grader, were OK.

"The kids are all safe, that's all we know. But that's all I care about," Martin said. "It's crazy, the world is crazy."

Andrew Ramos-Aguirre, a sixth-grader at the school,

said that when word of the shooting spread, his physical education classroom quickly followed a drill they had practiced.

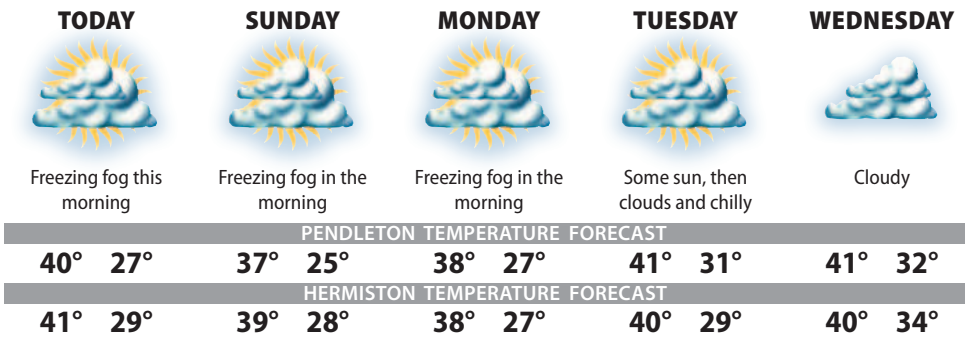
"We had to lock down the room, we had to be really quiet, no movement," Ramos-Aguirre said after he was reunited with his mother, who teared up as she heard her son's account.

"I felt afraid and nervous because there was an intruder at my school," the boy said.

The area saw one of the first school shootings to seize the national spotlight.

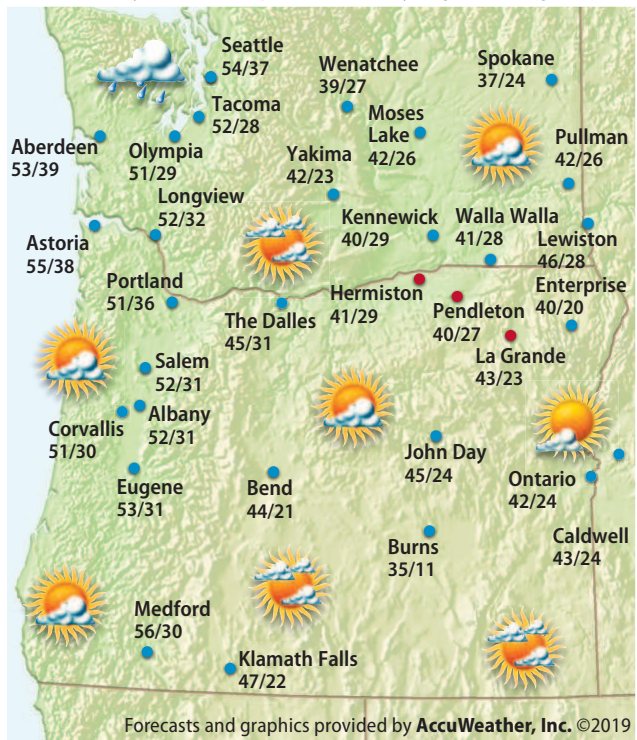
More than 20 years ago, then 15-year-old Kip Kinkel killed his parents before fatally shooting two students and wounding 26 others at Thurston High School in nearby Springfield. Kinkel remains in prison.

## 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	35°	29°	
Normals	41°	27°	
Records	63° (1953)	-11° (1963)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.12"		
Normal month to date	0.62"		
Year to date	0.12"		
Last year to date	0.53"		
Normal year to date	0.62"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	40°	34°	
Normals	41°	28°	
Records	61° (2014)	-10° (1937)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.18"		
Normal month to date	0.45"		
Year to date	0.18"		
Last year to date	0.43"		
Normal year to date	0.45"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Sun.		
Boardman	NE 4-8	NE 4-8	
Pendleton	N 4-8	N 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:34 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:33 p.m.		
Moonrise today	11:05 a.m.		
Moonset today	11:15 p.m.		
First	Full	Last	New
Jan 13	Jan 20	Jan 27	Feb 4

## BRIEFLY

### Oregon snowpack fails again to reach normal standard

SALEM (AP) — Oregon's snowpack is below normal again and data shows the state is reaching historically normal levels less often.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service shows the state's snow-water equivalent in the mountains is 72 percent of normal, with the number lower in western Oregon, the *Statesman Journal* reported Thursday.

The state has reached a normal snowpack level only in four of the last 10 years, according to the federal data.

"It's pretty clear that the idea of what's normal is shifting, and that we've just become accustomed to these bad or below average years," said Kathie Dello, a climate scientist with Oregon State University. "That's particularly true in years where people are still

able to go skiing — we just don't notice it as much."

Lower elevations in western Oregon had meager snowfall, largely accounting for the state's low snowpack. Snow in the Cascade Range at about 5,000 feet is doing OK, but it sharply drops off below that elevation, said Scott Oviatt, snow survey hydrologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"While we might be seeing snow at 5,000 feet, places below that are seeing more rain than snow," Oviatt said.

The normal snowpack standard is based on historical data from 1981 to 2010. The standard will be updated in 2020 to take into account data over the prior decade.

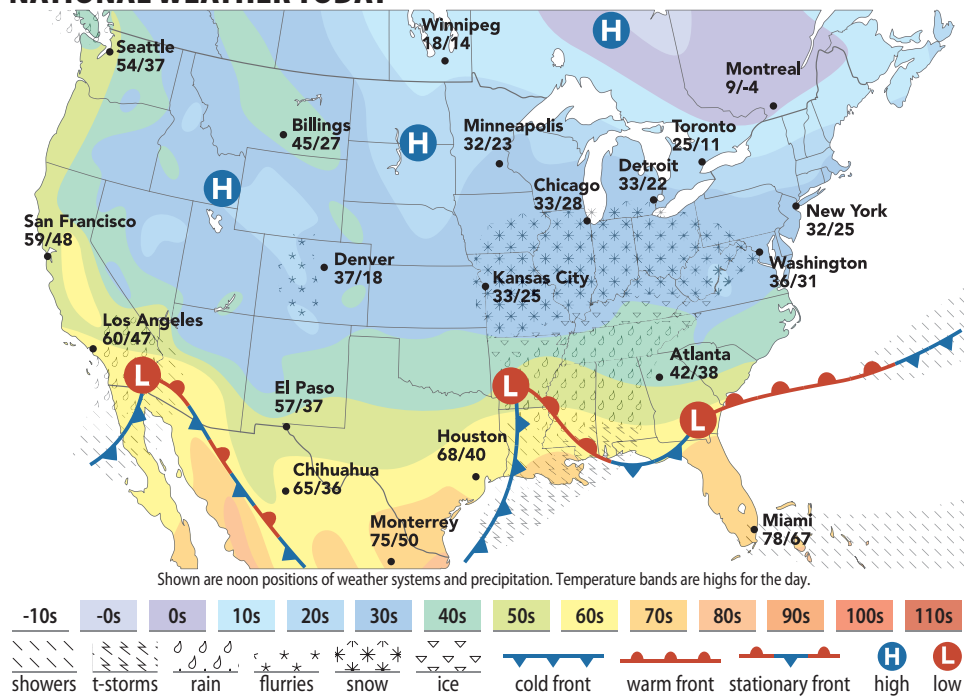
The update should be an interesting moment, Oviatt said, because "the warm temperatures and early melt-outs and prolonged dry stretches are very different from what we've seen historically."

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 82° in McAllen, Texas Low -7° in Saranac Lake, N.Y.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



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