

Merkley focuses on Oregon, postpones decision on 2020 bid

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — Sen. Jeff Merkley, one of the most vocal critics of President Donald Trump's immigration policies, seemed content to meet with constituents in Oregon and did not say if he'll run for president in 2020.

Merkley has been postponing a decision on a White House bid for some time. Last year, he said he'd decide soon after the November midterm election. Now, he says he'll decide before the end of this first quarter.

Nine Democrats have declared their intentions to run — the most recent was Sen. Kamala Harris from California.

"One every day," Merkley said with a grin during an interview Monday before he hosted a town hall in a community college in Salem, Oregon's capital city.

Deciding whether to run is a gamble as Merkley faces an ever-expanding field of Democrats and would have to abandon the option of being elected to the Senate for a third term — unless the Oregon Legis-



Zoe Selsky via AP
U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley listens to Gwen Carr with the Oregon Black Pioneers during a town hall at Chemeketa Community College in Salem Tuesday.

lature changes the law.

Merkley gained some name recognition nationally last June, when he tried to enter a federal facility in Texas where immigrant children were being held. An aide videotaped the scene as he was refused entry and police were called. The video quickly gained over 1 million views in a day, and was repeated in newscasts across the country.

At a town hall Monday, Merkley — wearing jeans, cowboy boots and a work shirt — described his

efforts to stop the internment of immigrant children, including through his introduction of the "No Internment Camps Act."

The Oregon Democrat said it was "spooky" that in this era, legislation in America would have internment camps in its title.

Merkley, the son of a millwright, was first elected to the Senate in 2008 and handily won re-election six years later.

Asked if he might prefer to be in the Senate if Democrats gain control in 2020, Merkley said: "Well I tell you, I've been in the majority, and I've been in the minority, and the majorities are better."

He said senators have a huge ability to influence the direction of policy, even if they're not the chair of a committee or subcommittee. Merkley is a member of the appropriations committee; the environment and public works committee; the foreign relations committee and the budget committee.

Merkley, to support Democratic candidates for other offices in key states, has hired field staff in states such as Iowa and New Hampshire.

Oregon bottle redemption rate reaches 90 percent

BEND (AP) — The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, which oversees the state's bottle deposit program, says about 90 percent of the containers covered by the plan were returned and redeemed in 2018.

That's a jump of around 35 percent over where the figure stood just two years ago.

The *Bulletin* reports Oregonians recycled around 2 billion containers last year, the most ever under the program.

Joel Schoening, community relations manager for the cooperative, attributed the uptick primarily to two recent efforts to revamp the state's bottle redemption program: dramatically expanding the types of containers included in the program and raising the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents in April 2017.

"That dime did what it was supposed to," Schoening said.

Additionally, the cooperative announced the number of BottleDrop accounts increased by 50 percent last year, with about 300,000 households now enrolled in the program.

In part because of this increase in participation, Schoening said the coop-



AP Photo/Kristena Hansen, File
Portland resident Sarah Marshall turns in empty water bottles and soda cans in September 2017 at a BottleDrop redemption center in Portland.

erative is looking at adding more BottleDrop redemption centers across the state.

"What we're seeing is that people are driving farther to return their bottles than they are to buy them," Schoening said.

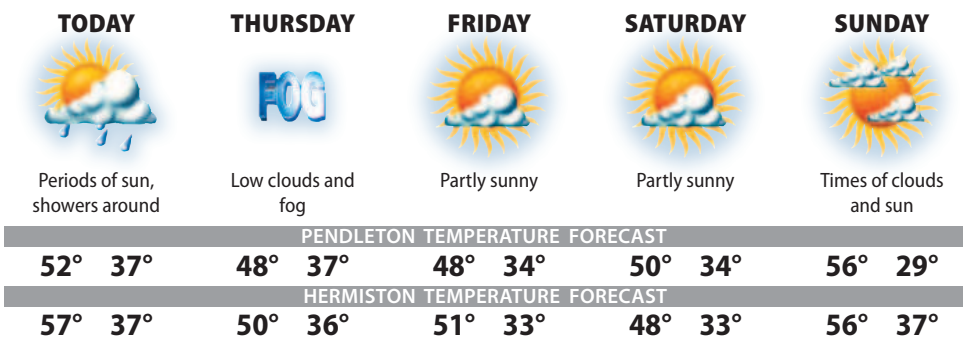
When the Oregon bottle bill passed in 1971, it added a 5-cent deposit to the sale of every bottle and can of beer, soda and similar beverages sold in Oregon, which could be redeemed by returning the bottle.

In 2016, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission announced the deposit would be increased to 10 cents, after redemption rates fell below

the levels set by the Legislature. The change occurred in April 2017, and the redemption rate spiked from 59 percent to 82 percent for the rest of the year.

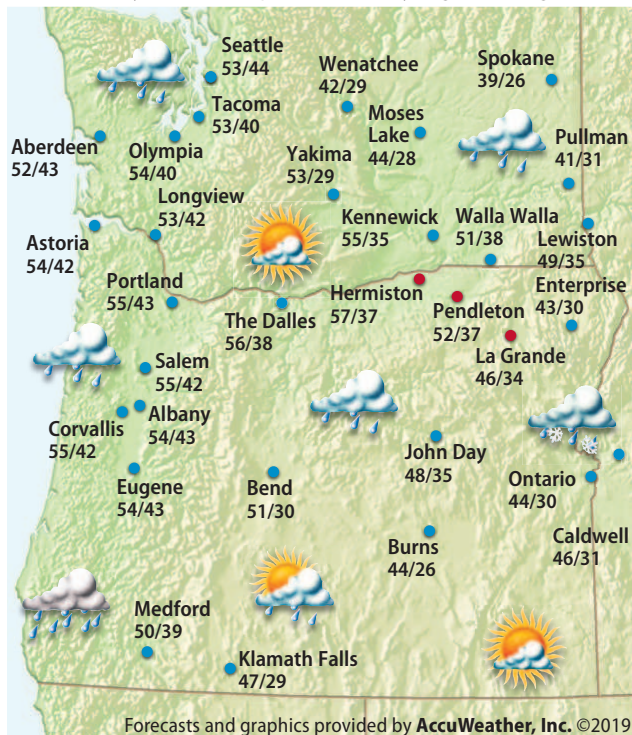
Another major change occurred at the beginning of last year, when the state expanded its list of acceptable containers to include energy drinks, juice, coffee, tea and other beverages. Schoening said the raw totals of redeemed containers predictably spiked after the change, but he said the redemption rate increased despite the volume of new recyclables, a sign that more Oregonians bought into the program.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



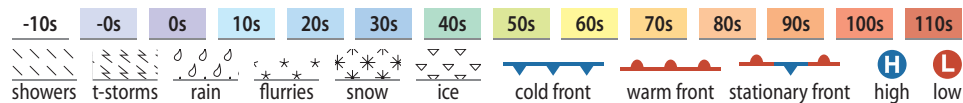
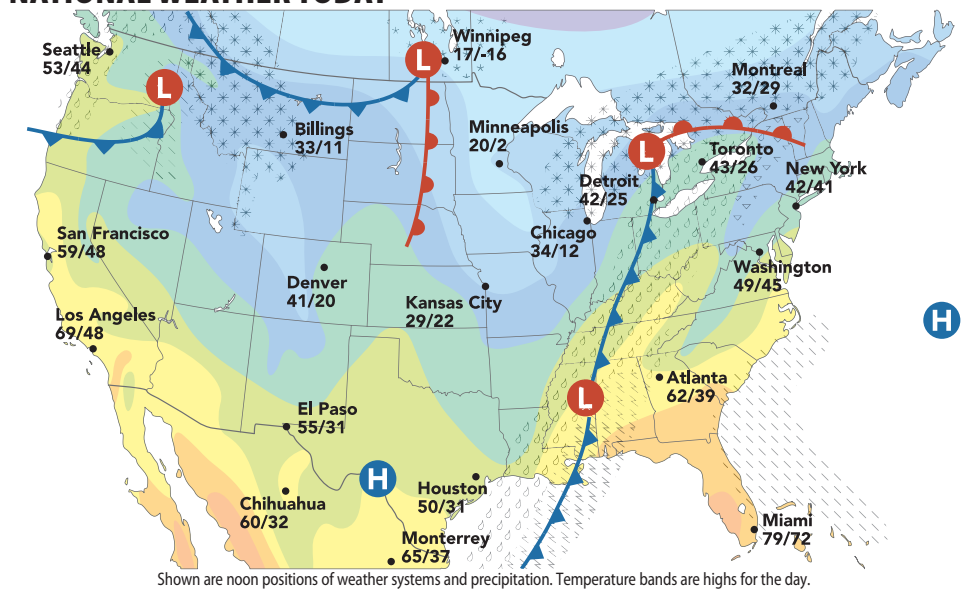
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	43°	32°	
Normals	42°	28°	
Records	67° (1897)	-26° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace		
Month to date	1.45"		
Normal month to date	1.07"		
Year to date	1.45"		
Last year to date	1.15"		
Normal year to date	1.07"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	46°	33°	
Normals	43°	29°	
Records	64° (1968)	-33° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.02"		
Month to date	1.16"		
Normal month to date	0.92"		
Year to date	1.16"		
Last year to date	0.79"		
Normal year to date	0.92"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Thu.		
Boardman	WSW 10-20	W 3-6	
Pendleton	WSW 10-20	SW 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:26 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:48 p.m.		
Moonrise today	8:18 p.m.		
Moonset today	9:19 a.m.		
Last	New	First	Full
Jan 27	Feb 4	Feb 12	Feb 19

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 86° in McAllen, Texas Low -30° in Watertown, N.Y.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Jackson County rancher uses inflatable dancer to shoo wolves

MEDFORD (AP) — A rancher in Jackson County who has had gray wolves eat his livestock is now using a lime-green inflatable dancing man to keep the predators at bay.

Ted Birdseye began using the contraption Saturday in his pasture after the pack killed another calf in the same field where the wolves have already eaten five calves and one guard dog, *The Mail Tribune* reported Tuesday.

The device is the same as those commonly seen a used car lots and is powered by a generator that blows air into the balloon so it jumps and wiggles in the air.

"He's all lit up and dancing around in the field," Birdseye told the newspaper. "He's lime green. It looks like an alien at night."

Birdseye said he doesn't know whether the flailing dancer will be a long-term deterrent to the pack preying on his cattle in the remote field, but the first two nights proved successful.

"Last night was the best sleep I've had since September with these animals," Birdseye said. "A solid eight hours of sleep. There was no howling or barking going on."

"We don't know if the deterrence was a factor or if

it's a coincidence," he said.

The air dancer is one of two that arrived Saturday, the day after the latest attack, Birdseye said. They were sent by the Defenders of Wildlife conservation group, but only one generator came with them, so he could deploy only one, he said.

At around 1 a.m. Friday, Birdseye was awakened by wolf howls and his dogs barking, so he went out on his four-wheeler to investigate. Birdseye said he apparently scared the wolves away, but he found a wounded 4-month-old, 180-pound calf on the ground.

The calf had about 8 feet of intestine protruding from its anus, so Birdseye used a pistol to euthanize the animal, he said.

The dead calf was investigated later that day by a biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife whose report states the calf showed clear signs of predator attack, with the size, number and location of the wounds similar to wolf attacks on calves.

Friday's attack marked the 10th confirmed livestock or dog kill attributed to the Rogue Pack since late September in the pack's known area of activity in western Jackson and

eastern Klamath counties, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"People need to realize these wolves are majestic creatures, but they're killers," Birdseye said. "It's getting pretty frustrating."

Of the 10 predation cases involving the Rogue Pack since late September, five were on Birdseye's ranch in the Boundary Butte area, and one was in the Rancheria area, according to ODFW. Four were in late September and early October in the Wood River Valley near Klamath Falls.

Birdseye also lost a guard dog to the wolves last fall.

Birdseye said he has about 90 calves in the field where the killings have occurred. In the past, he's used guard dogs, electric fences installed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lights, bright flags and noisemakers to scare off the offending pack. He turned to the inflatable dancers after hearing about some success with them in Eastern Oregon.

Birdseye said OR-7 has been near his ranch almost annually since the wolf settled in eastern Jackson County after his famous migration from Eastern Oregon in search of a mate.

BRIEFLY

Medical examiner: Oregon family slain with ax, knives

PORTLAND (AP) — The Oregon State Medical Examiner says the weapons used to kill four people Saturday at their Oregon home were an ax and knives.

The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office said Tuesday that sharp-force trauma was the cause of death for 9-month-old Olivia Gago, 31-year-old Shaina Sweitzer and 64-year-old Pamela Bremer.

The medical examiner said 66-year-old Jerry Bremer died of a combination of blunt-force trauma and sharp-force trauma.

The sheriff's office says Mark Gago killed his parents, his girlfriend and their daughter Saturday night before deputies fatally shot him as he attacked an 8-year-old girl who was Sweitzer's daughter.

The sheriff's office says deputies shot Gago before he could kill the girl.

A roommate was also hurt. The incident remains under investigation.

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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