

Oregon to help amid federal government shutdown

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM — With the federal government shutdown in its second month, officials in Oregon are looking to help beleaguered federal employees, possibly with millions of dollars in assistance, authorities said Wednesday.

Almost 10,000 federal employees in the state are not getting paid because of the shutdown, huge swaths of federal lands are unattended, creating wildfire hazards. Also, food stamps for 320,000 Oregonians are at risk if the shutdown persists past Febru-



This Jan. 15, 2019, file photo, shows a notice saying training by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on workplace harassment has been canceled in the Oregon state Capitol in Salem.

ary, said Lisa Taylor, spokeswoman for state Senate Presi-

dent Peter Courtney. He is drafting a bill to

allow federal employees who are working but not being paid to receive unemployment benefits, Taylor said. That's in defiance of the U.S. Labor Department, which says federal employees who are on the job without pay cannot collect unemployment. Only those not working during the shutdown can receive benefits.

"I'm absolutely disgusted at what is happening at the federal level," said House Speaker Tina Kotek. She said she's open to the state helping federal employees without access to unemployment.

The move comes as states are starting to fill gaps as the

longest-ever federal government shutdown drags on. Among those working without pay are federal prison guards, air traffic controllers, TSA agents and U.S. Coast Guard personnel.

Private citizens also are helping. In Astoria, home to a Coast Guard unit that has continued search and rescue missions, more than 1,300 federal employees and their families lined up at a Masonic Lodge last weekend for donated food, toiletries and other necessities, *The Daily Astorian* newspaper reported.

Courtney's bill will have an emergency clause and

be retroactive, with a draft expected by the end of the week.

"We cannot simply say it's the federal government's job, not our problem," Courtney said in a statement. The cost to the state is expected to be millions of dollars.

"This isn't going to be a cheap and easy fix," Taylor said.

U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley said Monday that if Oregon provides aid, he'll seek reimbursement from the federal government. "If we have a bill to reopen government, we can put a reimbursement clause in there," he said.

Amazon testing delivery by self-driving robots

By JOSEPH PISANI
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — Amazon is bringing delivery robots to the streets of a Seattle suburb.

The online shopping giant says it started to test self-driving robots in Snohomish County, Washington, on Wednesday that can bring Amazon packages to shoppers' doorsteps.

The robots are light blue, about the size of a Labrador, have six wheels and the Amazon smile logo stamped on its side, according to Amazon photos. Six

of them will be roaming the sidewalks and streets of the neighborhood.

Amazon says a worker will accompany the robots at first, but it didn't provide additional details of how the service would work. The company did not respond to questions about the test.

Several companies have been testing similar delivery robots on college campuses that deliver fast food or snacks to students.

Amazon says its robot, which it is calling Scout, can navigate around pets and pedestrians.



This undated file photo provided by Amazon shows a self-driving delivery robot that Amazon is calling Scout.

Jackson County asks state to deny gas pipeline permit

MEDFORD (AP) — Jackson County commissioners are asking the state to block a proposed natural gas pipeline that would ferry gas over 229 miles of Southern Oregon to an export terminal near Coos Bay.

The Oregon Department of State Lands is considering whether to grant the project a key permit and is taking public comment until Feb. 3. There is broad opposition to the pipeline in Klamath, Jackson, Douglas and Coos counties, *The Mail Tribune* reported Wednesday.

Pembina Pipeline Corporation, a Canadian company, wants to use the pipeline to export North American natural gas to Asian markets. But county commissioners have long been opposed to the project because of the possibility that eminent domain could be used against property owners unwilling to have the pipeline cross their land.

"All indications are that the benefits to Jackson County will be extremely minimal, while the costs to

our wetlands and water bodies is high," the letter says.

Pembina says the project would create 1,400 jobs during the pipeline's construction and 1,000 jobs while the export terminal is being built.

More than 200 people would have permanent jobs once construction is done, mainly at the export facility, it says.

The project would generate \$60 million annually in tax revenue for the Southern Oregon counties, according to Pembina.

In their letter, Jackson County officials said there is no guarantee that Pembina would cover the costs of restoration if the pipeline is damaged or fails.

They point to the example of PG&E. The power utility announced it will go through Chapter 11 bankruptcy after its equipment was implicated in 2017 and 2018 wildfires that burned 24,600 structures and killed more than 100 people in California.

The letter says Pembina

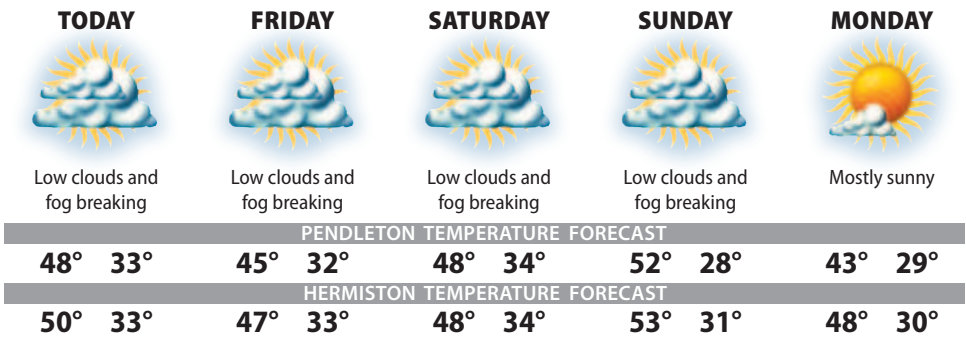
wants to use water from reservoirs, a lake and an irrigation canal in Jackson County to fill the pipeline and test its strength.

"These water sources are important for irrigation, fire suppression and livestock watering," the letter says. "Considering the drought conditions of the last several years, and extreme fire conflagrations in Oregon and this region of the country, removing water from these sources is detrimental to our ranching community and a life-safety issue when reducing water supply available for wildland fire suppression."

The pipeline would cross 87 waterways and wetlands in the county, including the Rogue River, and cross beneath the Rogue River north of Shady Cove.

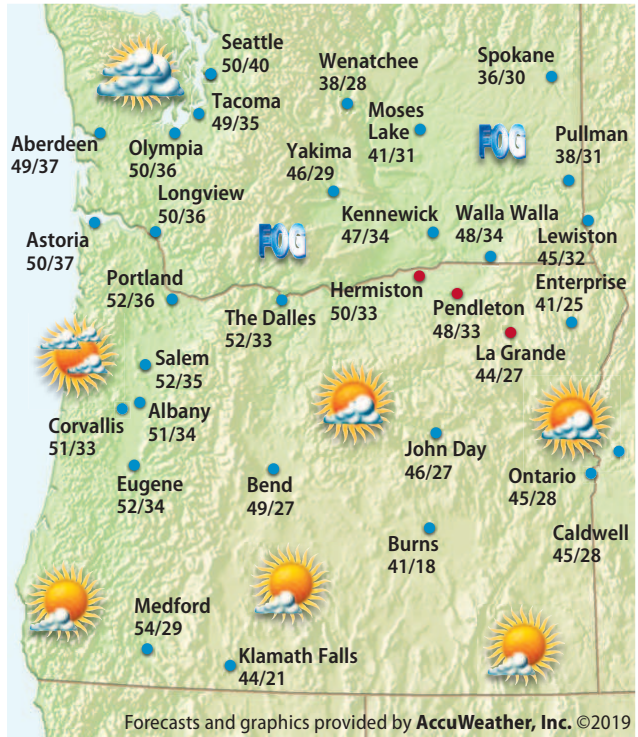
County officials say in the letter the crossing is too close to homeowners, who would be subjected to construction and drilling noise and other effects. They also worry about the leakage of drilling fluid into the river.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



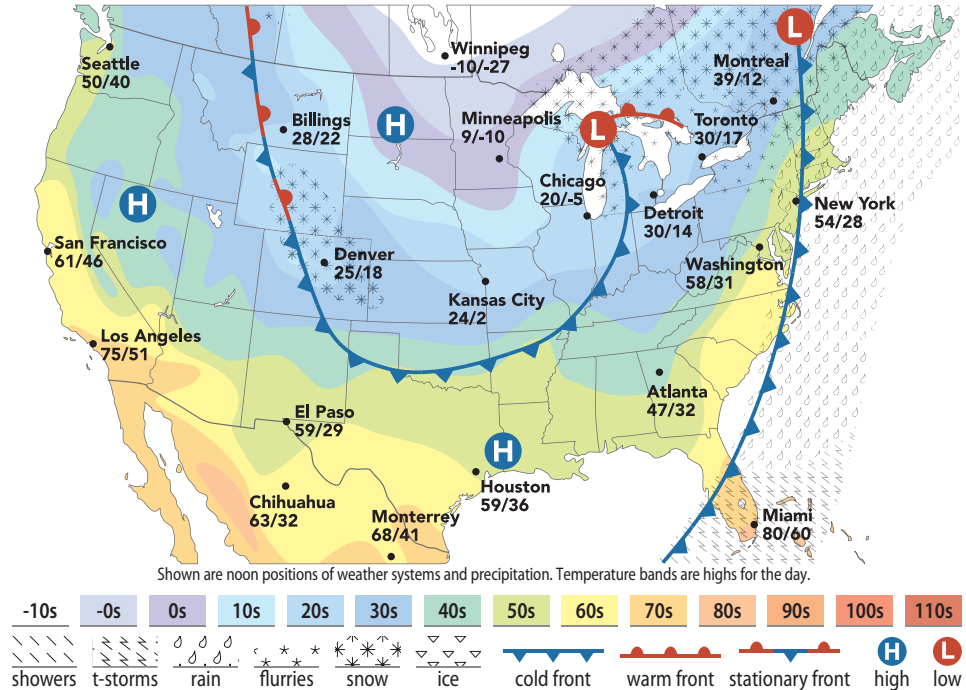
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	52°	43°	
Normals	42°	28°	
Records	63° (1935)	-20° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.62"		
Month to date	2.07"		
Normal month to date	1.11"		
Year to date	2.07"		
Last year to date	1.35"		
Normal year to date	1.11"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	56°	42°	
Normals	43°	29°	
Records	60° (1947)	-26° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.37"		
Month to date	1.53"		
Normal month to date	0.96"		
Year to date	1.53"		
Last year to date	0.81"		
Normal year to date	0.96"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Fri.		
Boardman	WSW 3-6	NNW 4-8	
Pendleton	SW 6-12	W 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:26 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:49 p.m.		
Moonrise today	9:34 p.m.		
Moonset today	9:51 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 82° in Punta Gorda, Fla. Low -24° in Alamosa, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



BRIEFLY

Parent company of The Bulletin files for bankruptcy

BEND (AP) — Western Communications, the parent company of *The Bulletin*, has filed for bankruptcy.

The Bulletin says court filings made Tuesday show the company owes more than \$10 million to more than 1,000 creditors and has assets of \$10 million to \$50 million.

Its largest unsecured creditor is newsprint supplier Page Cooperative Inc. of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, which is owed about \$946,000.

Western Communications previously filed for Chapter 11 protection in 2011 following a three-year dispute with the Bank of America, the company's largest creditor at the time.

The company emerged from Chapter 11 protection in April 2012.

Western Communications is also the parent company of *The Baker City Herald* and four other Oregon publications, as well as two California newspapers.

Eugene, Lane County plan would bring homeless off streets

EUGENE (AP) — Elected leaders for Eugene and Lane County are supporting an ambitious, expensive push aimed at lowering to zero the number of homeless people camping along local streets and in parks.

The Register-Guard reports that the series of 10 recommendations by Technical Assistance Collaborative, a Boston-based consultant, includes construction of a 75-bed low-barrier homeless shelter and hundreds of additional units of supportive housing.

It also calls for the expansion or improvement of existing programs spread across numerous public agencies and nonprofit providers to better help homeless people secure housing and keep them in it.

The Eugene City Council voted Tuesday to have City Manager Jon Ruiz work with Lane County Administrator Steve Mokroski to develop a plan by May 1 to implement the consultant's recommendations.

The plan would require a large infusion of public money, likely running into the tens of millions of dollars, that elected leaders would have to identify to pay for both construction and annual operating costs.

Woman sues Home Depot for \$1.5M after termination

BEND (AP) — A Bend Paralympic athlete is suing Home Depot for \$1.5 million, claiming the company did not consider her disability when it fired her in 2017.

The Bulletin reports in a complaint filed Tuesday in Deschutes County Circuit Court, Barbara Buchan claims that after suffering a concussion in a fall at work, management fired her for keeping \$11 worth of presentation materials in her vehicle overnight.

Buchan suffers from a traumatic brain injury sustained in 1982 when she was competing for a spot on the U.S. Cycling Team. Buchan later achieved success as a Paralympic athlete before she started work at the Bend Home Depot in 2006.

She's seeking damages for lost wages for claims including retaliating on a worker's comp claim and disability discrimination.

The Atlanta-based corporation has yet to be served with complaint and a spokesperson declined to comment.

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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