



Staff photo by E.J. Harris, File
Traffic drives south on Highway 97 near the Cow Canyon Rest Area east of Shaniko on Oct. 20, 2018.

Study: ODOT already taking some safety measures

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65 or higher, which went up by 13.4 points.

In comparison, none of the control group highway segments had an increase in speeders above 2 percent, and there was virtually no increase in the number of cars traveling 85 miles per hour or higher.

Crashes were up on raised speed limit highways across-the-board, and in most cases, those increases were larger than the control segments.

Crashes that caused serious injury or deaths rose by 36 percent on 70 mile per hour roads, but that number also went up by 37 percent on control segment highways.

The real contrast was on 65 mile per hour zones, which saw a 67 percent increase compared with the 21-point increase seen on the control roads.

Despite the disparity in crashes between speed limit-increased roads and the control segments, traffic volume was only 10 percent higher in the speedier zones.

“These preliminary findings of the analysis are consistent with other related research and analysis that have found increased crash frequency and severity with increased speed limits,” the study states.

Studying ODOT data and Oregon State Police press releases, a November *East Oregonian* analysis found that fatalities from traffic crashes rose 10 percent in the 26 months after the speed limit increase as opposed to a 3.5 percent decline in traffic deaths statewide.

Barreto hadn’t read Portland State’s analysis and didn’t want to comment, but he previously defended it after the *EO*’s analysis, saying he wanted to see how many crashes were attributed to drunk or distracted driving.

Given the variety of factors that could lead to a crash, Monsere said it’s difficult to determine cause of crash on a wide scale.

“You can think of a crash as having a random nature to it,” he said.

But he also reiterated that there’s a significant collection of research that shows that traffic collisions go up when speeds do.

Monsere said there’s other limitations to his analysis.

Ideally, the study would be able to look at three years of data after the speed limit increases went into effect instead of just one.

And since most of the well-traveled highways in Eastern Oregon already had their speed limits raised, he

had to look at other parts of the state for control segments.

“They’re not ideal matches,” he said.

Monsere said he’d like to do a follow-up study not only with more crash data, but with more accurate speed readings as well.

While automatic traffic records are sparsely located on Eastern Oregon’s two-lane highways, Monsere said the next analysis would use new software that uses numerous GPS data points to more accurately measure speed and differentiate between car and semitruck.

In the meantime, ODOT is already taking some safety measures after PSU’s analysis.

Troy Costales, the ODOT Transportation and Employee Safety Division administrator, told the Oregon Transportation Commission at a Jan. 17 meeting that ODOT planned to continue to direct resources toward speed enforcement and could also install new signs and other infrastructure to prevent offroad and head-on crashes on two-lane roads.

In a Friday interview, Costales said the transportation commission is also starting a long-term discussion on establishing a process to change speed limits outside legislative acts.

Pot: City manager remains cautious

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Oregon’s surplus of marijuana is another factor. Any surplus is going to drive down prices, Corbett said, and when marijuana prices drop, so do the tax revenues. Still, he said, he would not be surprised if every city in the state is reevaluating the value of cannabis.

“It just makes sense as cities struggle to meet the increase in PERS,” he said.

Paying into the Pub-

lic Employee Retirement System remains a major concern statewide, from the Legislature to counties to school districts. And in Pendleton, Corbett said, talk of putting that \$300,000 to use means improving roads. However the city uses the money, he said no doubt the marijuana tax benefits Pendleton from a purely financial standpoint.

The Oregon Department of Revenue started collecting local marijuana taxes in

February 2017. Since then, according to the department’s Revenue Research Section, it has received more than \$23 million in local taxes, and the monthly revenue from cities and counties topped \$1 million every month for the past 12 months.

Pendleton’s city manager said that’s impressive, but he will remain cautious on what to expect from marijuana revenue until the market proves its sustainability.

Discord and controversy in Davos even with Trump absent

By JAMEY KEATEN AND PAN PYLAS
Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — While domestic woes sidelined major figures like U.S. President Donald Trump, this year’s gathering of the global elites in the Swiss ski resort of Davos showcased divisions on pressing issues like trade and the environment.

In the end, a spunky 16-year-old Swedish climate activist all but stole the show.

The World Economic Forum, which wrapped up Friday, was characterized by discord over momentous issues like Brexit and world trade. Many of the leaders closest to those questions — from Trump to Britain’s Theresa May and China’s Xi Jinping — did not show up as they had in past years.

Environmentalists, meanwhile, howled about alleged hypocrisy after reports that a record number of flights by carbon-spewing private jets would ferry rich corporate bigwigs to talk at the event this year — including about global warming.

As the adults deliberated, Greta Thunberg, an environmentalist teenager, sounded the alarm.

“I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day,” said the student, who got a waiver from school to travel 32 hours from her home in Sweden — by train, to keep her carbon footprint down.

Since founder Klaus Schwab first gathered European business executives back in 1971, the World Economic Forum has defended globalization as a force for good that improves lives and boosts prosperity.

Now, advocates of closer



AP Photo/Markus Schreiber

The congress center where the World Economic Forum takes place is covered with snow on this year’s last day of the forum’s annual meeting, in Davos, Switzerland, Friday.

economic and cultural ties are on the defensive. Trump’s “America First” sloganeering, the Brexit-style self-interest, populist politics and the rise of “strongman” leaders in countries from the Philippines to Brazil have shaken confidence in the international rules and organizations set up since World War II.

The conference center in Davos still bustled with business executives, presidents and prime ministers, heads of non-governmental organizations, scientists, and artists. They met privately or sat on publicly broadcast discussions about world issues: Poverty, climate change, the rise of machines, diseases like Alzheimer’s and cancer, and trade disputes among them.

Organizers of the event trumpeted some achievements and commitments made in Davos.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Japan will push for global data governance when it hosts the Group of 20 leading industrialized and developing nations this year. Leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia held talks toward end-

ing the long-standing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Britain’s health secretary unveiled a five-year plan to tackle the global threat of antimicrobial resistance.

“If it didn’t exist, someone would have had to create it, because we cannot solve the most pressing global challenges without a unique partnership between governments, business and civil society,” WEF President Borge Brende said Friday of the gathering.

Still, the WEF has struggled to shake off the impression that it hosts champagne-swilling executives more interested in their bottom line and power-hungry politicians more interested in polishing their global image than in the state of the world.

Brazil’s new president, Jair Bolsonaro, pledged to work “in harmony with the world” to cut carbon emissions. The nationalist leader has faced international concerns that his country could allow far more aggressive deforestation in the oxygen-rich Amazon. But he provided no details and was asked no probing questions by the WEF organizers about his policies.

Shutdown: ‘Those benefits have to last’

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continue operating normally through February, and that most products up through that point have already been purchased.

But the press release said if the shutdown lasts beyond February, it’s unclear what will happen with food deliveries, as well as with ordering food for the following school year, which is usually done in February.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is another program that local families have seen affected by the shutdown. The federal program gives low-income families some supplemental funds to purchase food.

Belit Burke, the pro-

gram designer for DHS’ self sufficiency program, said it’s still too early to tell what the real impact of the shutdown will be. Oregon beneficiaries received their SNAP money for February a few weeks early to help with the lapse in funding. But they won’t receive more benefits in February, even though the shutdown is temporarily over.

“Those benefits have to last,” she said.

She said the amount that each family receives varies, but the average case-load receives \$209 per month.

“It’s meant to be a supplement, but it ends up being many people’s whole budget, so they live pretty lean,” Burke said.

Other nutrition pro-

grams, like the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, are expected to be covered through February, as well.

The SNAP program is a different funding stream than the SNAP-Ed program, said Angie Treadwell, the OSU Extension Service coordinator of SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education). Treadwell said her program has already been funded for the entire fiscal year, so they will not be affected by the shutdown any time soon. That program provides ways for families to learn how to use their available resources to eat better, including family cooking classes and food tastings at local schools.

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