

# Idaho State police find 7,000 pounds of pot on truck

By REBECCA BOONE  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Idaho State Police officials say troopers made the biggest marijuana bust in the agency's known history after a semi-truck allegedly filled with nearly 7,000 pounds of marijuana plants was stopped between Boise and Mountain Home.

ISP spokesman Tim Marsano said Tuesday the truck from Portland was stopped on Jan. 24 as part of a routine, random commercial vehicle safety inspection. The driver's bill of lading — a document that details the cargo in the

shipment — said the trailer was carrying 31 bags of hemp.

Hemp and marijuana plants look and smell very similar to one another, but hemp plants typically contain less than 0.3 percent of THC — the psychoactive chemical in marijuana — while marijuana plants generally contain anywhere from 15 percent to 40 percent THC.

The plants also have different uses: Hemp can be used to produce a variety of products including food, industrial oil, paper, flour and clothing. Marijuana plants are often grown for their THC content, and are legal in Oregon, Washing-

ton and several other states but illegal in Idaho.

The trooper detected a strong odor of marijuana during the inspection, and so opened one of the bags and performed a field test, Marsano said. The field test showed the plant to be a marijuana plant, and a subsequent team of drug-detection dogs that arrived also indicated that marijuana was present, he said.

Marsano could not say how low of a THC content will generate a positive result by the field tests or whether the dogs were trained to differentiate between marijuana or hemp, however. Still, he said

transporting anything containing THC is a chargeable offense in Idaho.

"Between the field test and the K9 indication, Idaho State Police feel strongly that the load was actually marijuana and not hemp," Marsano said. "However, we have sent a sample of the load to an independent laboratory for further analysis."

The driver, 36-year-old Dennis V. Palamarchuk of Portland, Oregon, has been charged with felony drug trafficking, Marsano said. It was not immediately known if he has obtained an attorney.

"This is the largest seizure

of marijuana by the Idaho State Police in anyone's memory," Marsano said.

In total, the plants seized from the truck weighed 6,701 pounds, he said. If the plants do test positive as marijuana, the seizure will dwarf totals seized by the ISP for each of the past five years. For instance, in 2014, the state police seized roughly 319 pounds of marijuana. Total seizures remained below 1,000 pounds for the next two years, reaching a total of 2,131 pounds in 2018, Marsano said.

Marsano said he did not know when the independent lab would complete testing on the plants.

# Umatilla National Forest 'assessing priorities' after shutdown

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Federal workers on furlough resumed their posts Monday in the wake of the record-long shutdown of the government. The U.S. Forest Service is rolling with a multi-week plan to get back on track, including at the Umatilla National Forest.

"Our top priority for this first week is assisting our employees in coming back to work and getting operations running again," according to spokesperson

Darcy Weseman with the local national forest.

The Umatilla National Forest has 148 permanent employees, she said, and the majority were on furlough during the 35-day day partial government shutdown.

"As we resume operations this week we are assessing the status of our projects and programs, using that information to adjust work priorities for the remainder of the year," Weseman said, "connecting with partners and commu-

nity leaders, reconnecting with the public, and resuming operations in a safe and coordinated way."

U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen issued a message to employees reflecting on the shutdown and unveiling the strategy for getting back to work.

"These past five weeks have been like nothing we've experienced before," Christiansen said. "It has been a trying time for our personal and professional lives, our families, and our livelihood. Further, the

shutdown and ensuing narrow focus on only a few aspects of our mission went against the core values of our agency. It will take some time to regroup in our lives and work."

The first step on that path for work, she stated, is following a "Resuming Operations Checklist and Guide."

The three-page checklist covers technical aspects, such as resetting passwords and temporary procedures for accessing computer systems. Employees also found out the shutdown led to the

cancellation of time off.

"We will send instructions in the coming days detailing how and when to begin submitting your requests for restoration," according to the checklist.

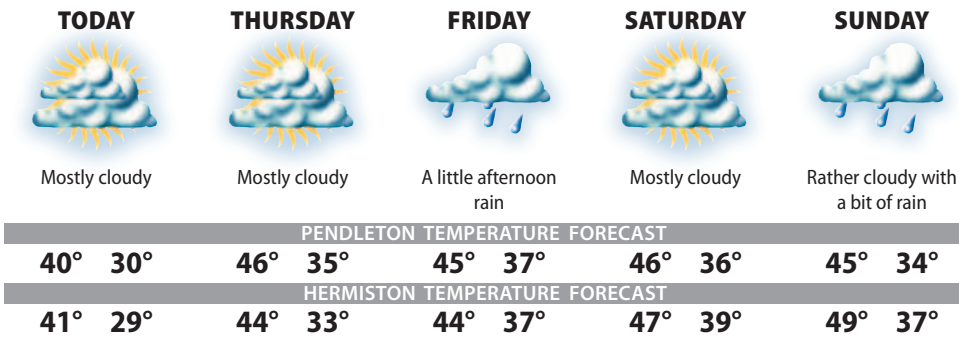
The 14-page start-up guide covers general instructions for resuming work, including for managing national forests and grasslands. Those sites are to resume issuing permits for outfitters, recreation and more "as soon as practicable," along with reopening applicable recreation

sites. And timber sale and stewardship contracts "can resume operations within contract requirements."

Christiansen also told employees she will host all-employee calls this week. The focus shifts in weeks two and three to "resetting programs of work."

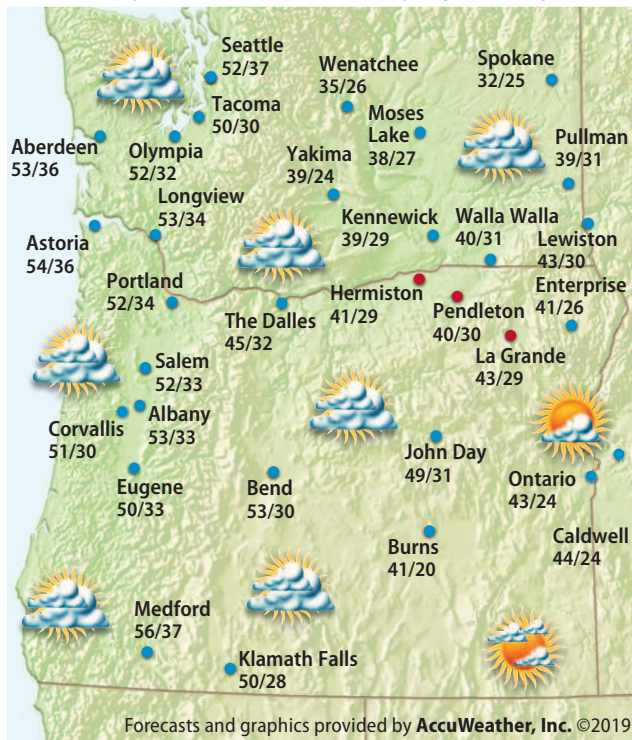
"If we take this one day, hour and minute at a time," Christiansen said, "I am confident we will work together and reset so we can soon continue our strong tradition of caring for the land and serving people."

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



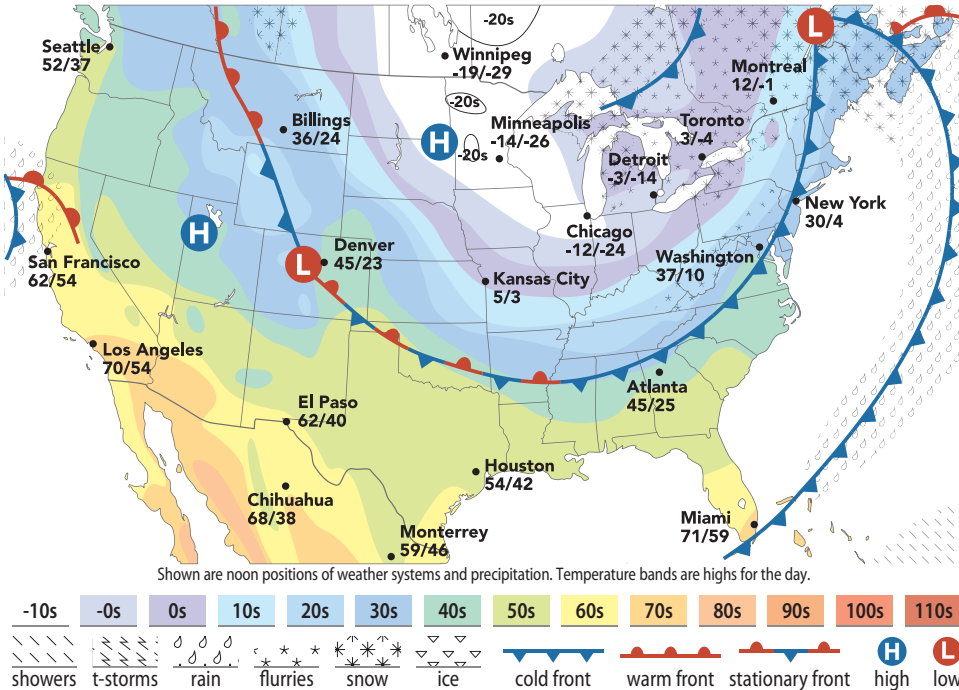
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	32°	30°	
Normals	43°	28°	
Records	65° (2018)	-17° (1950)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	2.07"		
Normal month to date	1.31"		
Year to date	2.07"		
Last year to date	1.59"		
Normal year to date	1.31"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	37°	33°	
Normals	44°	29°	
Records	61° (2004)	-23° (1957)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	1.53"		
Normal month to date	1.20"		
Year to date	1.53"		
Last year to date	1.10"		
Normal year to date	1.20"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Thu.	Fri.	
Boardman	NE 4-8	ENE 3-6	
Pendleton	N 4-8	NE 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:19 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:58 p.m.		
Moonrise today	3:17 a.m.		
Moonset today	12:52 p.m.		
New First Full Last			
Feb 4	Feb 12	Feb 19	Feb 26

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 78° in Yuma, Ariz. Low -31° in Bottineau, N.D.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# Ranchers whose case sparked standoff get grazing rights back

PORTLAND (AP) — Two ranchers who were convicted in 2012 of intentionally setting fires on public land in Oregon have had their grazing rights restored.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, in one of his last actions before resigning, ordered the renewal of a 10-year grazing permit for Hammond Ranches Inc., run by Dwight Hammond Jr. and his son Steven Hammond. The decision was dated Jan. 2, but it wasn't sent out until this week.

Zinke ordered the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to renew the grazing permit through 2024.

Last year President Donald Trump pardoned the Hammonds, whose case had prompted the armed occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in 2016, led by two sons of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy.

In February 2014, the federal government had



Les Zaitz/The Oregonian, File  
In this Jan. 2, 2016, file photo, rancher Dwight Hammond Jr. greets protesters outside his home in Burns.

rejected the Hammonds' renewal application, citing their criminal convictions for setting fire to public land.

"I find the pardons constitute unique and important changed circumstances since the BLM made its decision," Zinke wrote in the decision.

The Hammonds had been convicted in 2012 of arson on land where they

had grazing rights for their cattle. They were ordered back to prison in early 2016 to serve out five-year sentences in a case that incited right-wing militias and inspired the 41-day armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, which abuts the Hammond family ranch.

But on July 10, 2018, Trump pardoned the father and son.

# Oregon Health Authority says \$42M in overpayments recovered

SALEM (AP) — Oregon Health Authority officials said Tuesday they have recovered about \$42 million the agency overpaid to organizations that coordinate Medicaid benefits for as many as 1 million Oregon residents.

Officials repaid the money owed to the federal government, Health Authority spokesman Robb Cowie said, the Salem Statesman Journal reported Tuesday.

This comes after a Senate Republican from the city

of Keizer revealed a proposal Monday for the state to demand the money back. State Sen. Kim Thatcher's proposal would require the Health Authority to recover all overpayments to coordinated care organizations within 60 days of the bill's passage.

Thatcher's spokesman, Jonathan Lockwood, said Tuesday they want more answers from OHA regarding when and whether the bills were paid back before deciding whether to proceed

with Thatcher's legislative concept.

The issue dates back to late 2017, when an Oregon Secretary of State audit found the Health Authority could have avoided spending an estimated \$76 million on patients who were members of coordinated care organizations but may have been ineligible for coverage under the Oregon Health Plan, also known as the state's Medicaid program. The estimate included about \$17 million in state money.

**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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