

Washington, Oregon hemp industries continue to grow

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

SALEM — The number of licensed hemp farmers in Washington has more than doubled since May, according to the state Department of Agriculture.

As of Tuesday the department had issued licenses to 87 growers, compared with 35 in late May. The state has issued another 18 licenses to processors. Many farmers have combination licenses to grow and process hemp.

The department is reviewing about 30 more applications and expects to eventually issue approximately 150 hemp-related licenses this year, spokesman Chris McGann said.

Washington's hemp industry is still small compared to several states, including Oregon. The growth, however, firms up a once-shaky program. Washington's hemp crop last year was 140 acres cultivated by the Colville tribe in northeast Washington.

This year, farmers have registered to plant 6,700 acres, not counting greenhouses. Several large Eastern Washington farms have obtained hemp licenses.

McGann said the department anticipates the hemp



Hemp Northwest Photo

Hemp grows in Washington. The number of licensed hemp farmers in Washington has more than doubled since May, according to the state Department of Agriculture.

program will become self-supporting. Lawmakers this spring sent the department \$212,000 to avoid massive increases in license fees paid by farmers.

"We don't expect to have to go back to the Legislature," McGann said. "All expectations are, yes, it will be sustainable."

The 2018 Farm Bill took hemp off the federally controlled substance list. The federal government still requires states to license and inspect hemp farms.

Oregon has added 300 licensed hemp farmers in the past seven weeks and now has 1,642, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Farmers have

registered to plant 53,573, almost a fivefold increase over last year when the state licensed 584 growers.

The USDA is expected to propose national hemp regulations in the fall. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said after touring a Kentucky hemp farm July 2 that the crop's connection with marijuana has not

been entirely severed yet.

"I think what I heard was a lot of opportunity, but a lot of challenges needing a federal framework to help guide the progress of this crop," he said. "We heard about financial transaction issues where this crop is conflated with its illegal cousin in many states."

Industrial Hemp Asso-

ciation of Washington lobbyist Bonny Jo Peterson said the state's first full-fledged hemp season has been marked by "mishaps and hiccups" as farms try to find the right seeds and equipment.

"I think too many farmers went too big, too quick," she said. "There's going to be a lot of trial and expense and unfortunately a lot of lost crop."

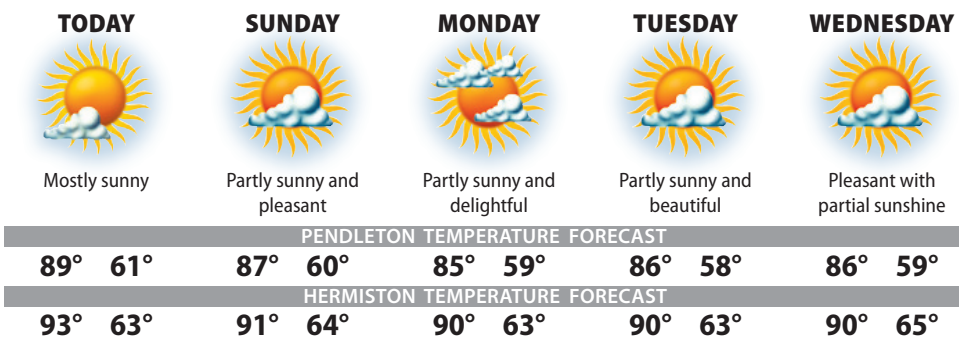
"If you're not ready to go now, wait until next year. Learn from other people's experiences."

Peterson said farmers who plan carefully will be in better position to survive if the CBD oil boom busts. CBD oil is marketed for a wide variety of ailments. The Food and Drug Administration is examining claims about the extract's benefits.

Washington collects an annual \$450 application fee from hemp farmers, plus \$300 for a one-year license. Farmers must pay another \$200 for each additional field, plus testing fees.

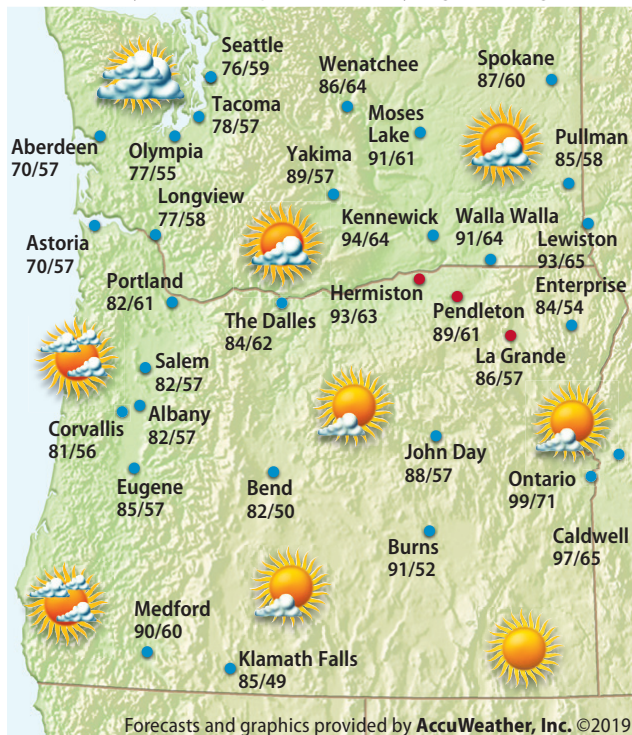
The Washington Department of Revenue has said it will tax hemp like any other agricultural product. Hemp growers are eligible for tax breaks available to other farmers, according to the department.

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	87°	60°
Normals	88°	58°
Records	109° (2002)	42° (1911)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.02"
Normal month to date	0.12"
Year to date	9.59"
Last year to date	6.49"
Normal year to date	7.69"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	89°	63°
Normals	88°	58°
Records	109° (2002)	44° (1950)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.09"
Year to date	4.55"
Last year to date	5.10"
Normal year to date	5.79"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 7-14
Pendleton	W 7-14	W 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:18 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:43 p.m.
Moonrise today	6:09 p.m.
Moonset today	2:45 a.m.

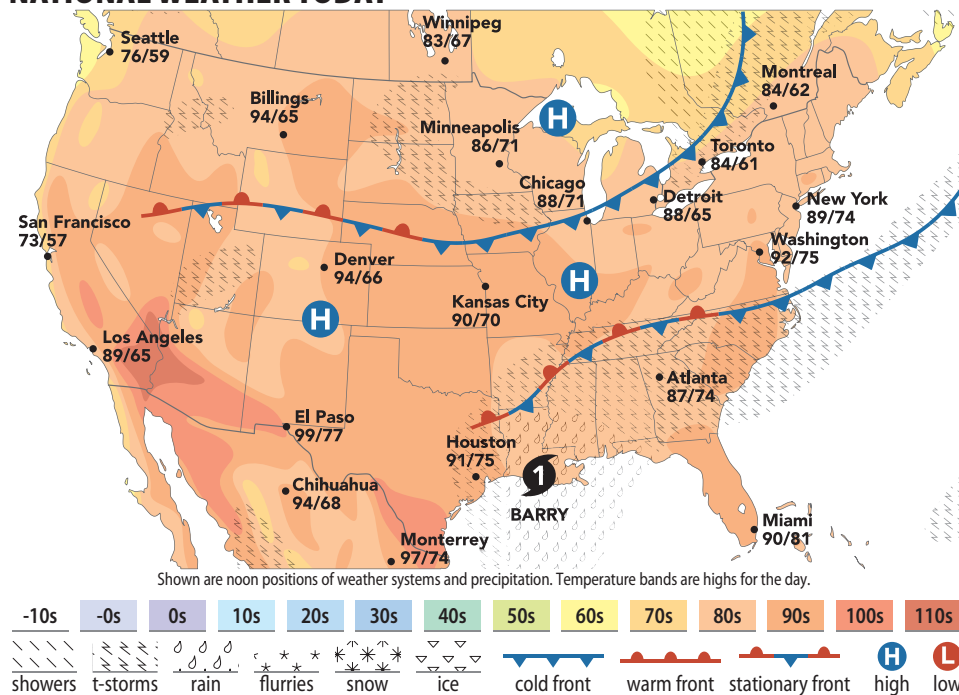
Full Last New First
July 16 July 24 July 31 Aug 7

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 116° in Thermal, Calif. Low 34° in Gothic, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Washington State Patrol builds up fleet of 111 drones

By comparison, Oregon State Police has three drones

By TOM BANSE
Oregon Public Broadcasting

OLYMPIA, Wash. — In the span of just a few years, the Washington State Patrol has built up a fleet of more than 100 drones. At last check, the Oregon State Police had three. The Washington patrol says its small quadcopters are used for crash investigations, not for surveillance. WSP Detective Sgt. Clint Thomas said roughly 100 state troopers and detectives across Washington are now trained to fly camera-equipped drones — also known as UAVs, unmanned aerial vehicles. Thomas said the patrol has acquired 111 drones made by DJI, some of which are higher-end consumer models. Others are a more robust commercial enterprise model. The state may upgrade and further expand its fleet with a fresh infusion of cash recently approved by the state Legislature.

Thomas said his agency limits the use of the remotely piloted eyes in the sky to pretty much one job: documenting serious crashes and fatality scenes.

"We're making a big difference in the time that we take to document that scene and get the roadway clear," Thomas said in an interview

in Tacoma Tuesday. "It's a little more work on the back end in the office putting it together through the software, but you're saving a lot of time out on the roadway. That was the driving force — to save time on the free-ways, getting those cleared up to get traffic moving again."

Thomas said a compact two-car collision scene can be mapped in 10 minutes with a drone compared to a half-hour to an hour using traditional methods, such as with a tape measure, chalk marks or laser scanner.

Many local police departments and the Oregon State Police deploy drones for a wider range of purposes, including observation of armed, barricaded suspects, and search and rescue. Thomas explained the Washington State Patrol is deliberately taking a more limited approach to "get off on a good foot."

Thomas said any uses besides collision and crime scene mapping, such as possible deployments to assist with wildfire monitoring this summer, will require the personal approval of the chief of the state patrol.

"We're not allowed to take video or use it for surveillance," Thomas said, elaborating on the agency's written policies. "We're very strict in how we run our program. Essentially, we're just taking baby steps."

Viewed another way, the Washington State Patrol drone fleet appears to be

one of the largest, if not the biggest by far, owned by a state or local government anywhere in the country. A study on public safety drones published last year by the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College identified the Polk County Sheriff's Department in Florida as having the greatest number at the time of its survey. That sheriff's department operated 20 drones.

Privacy watchdogs, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, are closely monitoring the rapidly increasing numbers of law enforcement drones. The Washington State Patrol said it consulted with the ACLU state chapter as it developed its limited-use drone policy.

ACLU of Washington technology and liberty director Shankar Narayan has been critical of some city police departments for not having clear enough guidelines to prevent warrantless flyovers or lacking restrictions on data sharing.

In an interview with public radio Tuesday, Narayan said greater transparency is needed around surveillance technology. He said he is worried about "mission creep" since drones have the capability to collect a lot of information.

"Even if the Washington State Patrol has the best policy in the world, an average person has no recourse in order to enforce it," Narayan said.

B2H CLARIFICATION: The A1 story "Stop B2H Coalition remains charged up to defeat massive power line project" from July 6, 2019, misstated the Boardman to Hemingway power line would cross Cowboy Ridge in Union County. The power line project will run near the elk calving site, and coalition members remain concerned the power line project would disrupt elk habitat.

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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