

Focus on security, counting votes in 2020

Money, voting security and a new way to count votes are in the mix

By GARY A. WARNER
Bend Bulletin

SALEM — Money, security and a new way of voting are part of the growing drumbeat of news surrounding the 2020 election. The number of candidates who have created campaign finance committees has jumped to 79 as of Tuesday. Candidates can't officially file for office until Sept. 12, but fundraising political action committees can open their coffers earlier.

Some of the election buzz this past week in the Oregon Capitol:

Flourishing fundraising

Fundraising for the 2020 election is starting to pick up, according to statistics tracking contributions to lawmakers in Congress and the Legislature.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, whose district includes Umatilla and Morrow counties, has raised \$858,755 in the current federal election cycle, which runs through 2020, accord-



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is a vocal champion of Oregon's vote-by-mail system, which he would like to see expanded to the entire country.

EO Media Group file photo

ing to the political finance watchdog group Center for Responsive Politics.

Walden has \$1.7 million cash on hand, which includes money rolled over from the last election cycle. His top contributor, through individual contributions and affiliated political action committees, is Philadelphia-based Comcast Corp. The telecommunications

conglomerate has given Walden a total of \$31,200 as of June 30.

Campaign contributions to state lawmakers are compiled by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office.

Election security dry run

Information technology and election officials from all 36 Oregon counties recently

gathered in La Grande for a four-hour election cybersecurity exercise sponsored by the Elections Division of the Oregon Secretary of State's Office. The event was in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. All Oregon counties belong to the Elections Infrastruc-

ture Information Sharing and Analysis Center, which shares threat information between federal, state and local governments.

Troubleshooting during the exercise included password strength and recognizing "phishing" attempts. Secretary of State Bev Clarno has said Oregon's vote-by-mail system makes the state's elections more secure because there are only 36 county election offices where ballots are gathered instead of having to secure thousands of voting booths across the state. Each location has a secured room for ballots that is under constant video surveillance. The tallying system that determines vote totals statewide is not connected to the internet, making hacking extremely difficult to impossible. There are paper backups for all documents.

Election facts vs. rumors

Clarno said Tuesday she expects the biggest election problem in 2020 to be the same one as the last presidential election in 2016 — unsubstantiated rumors being passed off as facts.

"Just because you read something on social media or online doesn't mean it's true," Clarno said.

Elections Director Steve Trout said Tuesday that one popular myth is that non-citizens are being allowed to register to vote.

"That is simply not true," Trout said. "Only those who have provided proof of citizenship when they go to DMV are automatically registered to vote."

Trout said "Oregon continues to be a leader in secure elections."

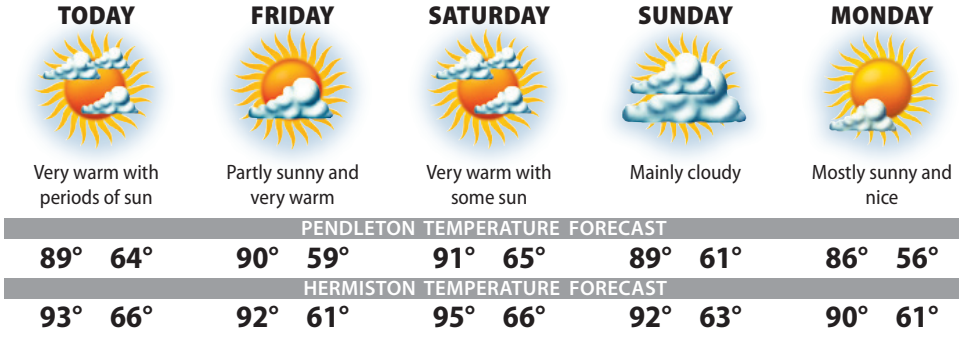
Wyden still worried

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is a vocal champion of Oregon's vote-by-mail system, which he would like to see expanded to the entire country.

Wyden said Friday that the election systems across the 50 states have weak points that adversaries — particularly Russian hackers — will exploit. The time left to shore up defenses before the November 2020 election is running out, he said.

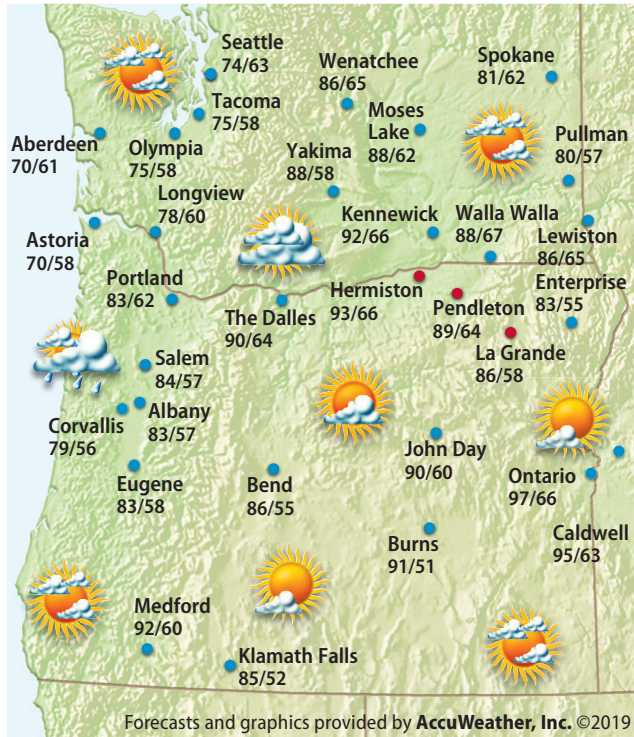
"We would not ask a local sheriff to go to war against the missiles, tanks and planes of the Russian army," Wyden said. "We shouldn't ask a county election IT employee to fight a war against the full capabilities and vast resources of Russia's cyber army. That approach failed in 2016, and it will fail again."

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

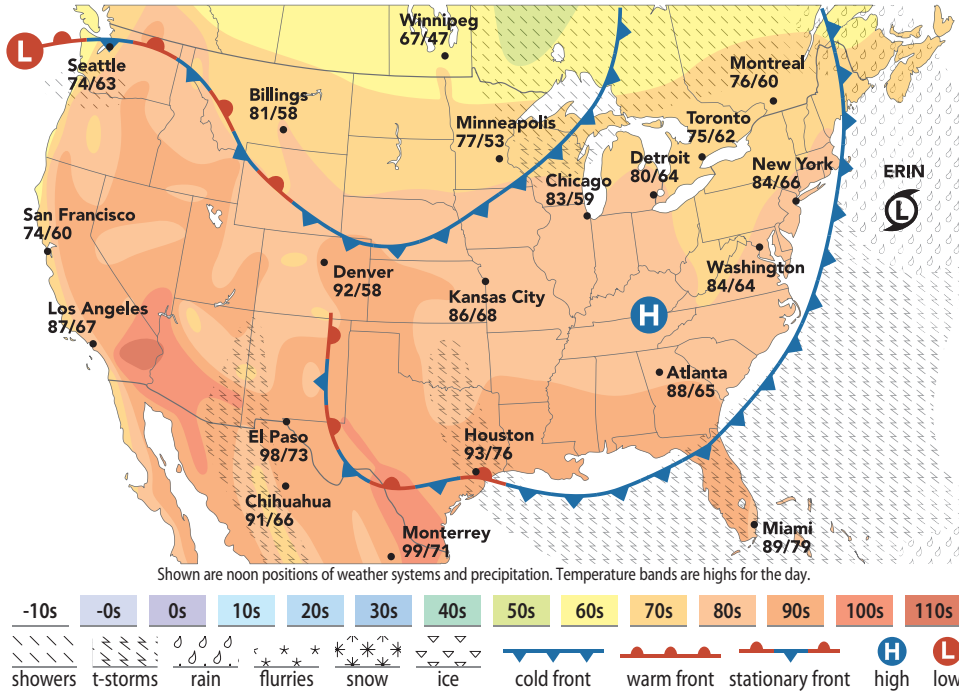
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	93°	56°
Normals	84°	55°
Records	105° (1972)	37° (1909)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.12"	
Normal month to date	0.38"	
Year to date	9.73"	
Last year to date	6.52"	
Normal year to date	8.33"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	93°	52°
Normals	85°	54°
Records	101° (1986)	40° (1964)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.05"	
Normal month to date	0.18"	
Year to date	4.61"	
Last year to date	5.15"	
Normal year to date	6.10"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Fri.
Boardman	SW 7-14	SW 8-16
Pendleton	W 7-14	WNW 6-12
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:12 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:39 p.m.	
Moonrise today	4:55 a.m.	
Moonset today	7:42 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 111° in Needles, Calif. Low 24° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



State department refuses issuance of passport to U.S.-born Oregonian

By REBECCA ELLIS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — The U.S. Department of State is blocking an Oregon woman born in the United States from receiving a passport, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday by the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon.

Maria Soto, 48, was born in Los Angeles, but was sent to Mexico to live with her grandparents when she was only a few months old, according to the federal filing. She returned to the U.S. at age 18, settling in Klamath Falls.

Last winter, Soto applied for a passport with the State Department. She'd made a first attempt more than two decades earlier, but was denied after the department asked for additional documents and she failed to

send them in.

For her second attempt, Soto came armed with birth certificates from both the hospital and the government, a Social Security card and a driver's license, according to Leland Baxter-Neal, staff attorney with the ACLU of Oregon.

But she was once again denied. This time, according to the suit, it was on the grounds that she displayed "insufficient evidence of citizenship."

Baxter-Neal says, while this is the first time he's seen an Oregonian born in the U.S. denied a passport, he believes these incidents are increasing nationwide.

"Across the country, there are lots of examples and anecdotal reports of an increase in denials of passports for individuals who are from immigrant families or immigrant commu-

nities," he says.

He points to reporting from the *Washington Post* last fall, which found that, under the Trump administration, "hundreds, and possibly thousands, of Hispanics along the border" had been accused of faking their birth certificates and subsequently denied passports.

Baxter-Neal said he believes Soto's denial is "in line with what we see from the Trump administration treating individuals like our client Maria differently based on their heritage."

In response to the *Washington Post's* reporting, the State Department insisted no changes had been made to the adjudication of passport applications under the administration. A spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

BRIEFLY

Person dies in small plane crash near Oregon airport

EUGENE — At least one person is dead after a small plane crashed in the trees near a small airfield off of Highway 126.

KMTR-TV reported the Lane County Sheriff's Office says they got the call at around 7 p.m. Tuesday. The crash happened near the McKenzie Bridge State Airport.

Authorities couldn't immediately confirm how many people were aboard the plane, but confirmed at least one fatality.

No search and rescue teams were deployed, and the investigation is contained to the crash site. The plane is on the east side of the airport's runway.

The crash started a small fire that burned half an acre before being contained.

The U.S. Forest Service was on-site overnight to contain the fire.

FAA investigators were en route to the scene Wednesday morning.

2 teens arrested in homophobic vandalism case

SALEM — Two teenagers in Salem have been arrested on suspicion of spraying homophobic graffiti on the house, car and driveway of another teen and throwing a rock into the window of his family home.

The Salem Police Department said Wednesday that the teens were arrested Aug. 20 and have been charged in juvenile court with a bias crime.

Police say the graffiti was directed at the teen living in the home.

A neighboring car was also damaged in the July 27 incident.

Due to their age, authorities are withholding the defendants' names.

— Associated Press

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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