

Intermodal facilities get first round of funding

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

THE DALLES — Oregon transportation officials have authorized the first round of funding for two truck-to-rail intermodal facilities intended to boost the efficient shipping of farm products.

To receive most of the remaining grant money, however, project sponsors must still prove the planned facilities in the Willamette and Treasure valleys are financially viable and have commitments from railroad companies.

“We’re not releasing the funding in bulk, we’re releasing it by project element,” said Robert Van Brockton, chairman of the Oregon Transportation Commission. “We don’t want to get ahead of ourselves, is the bottom line.”

At its Sept. 18 meeting in The Dalles, the commission voted unanimously to release \$525,000 for an onion-focused intermodal facility in Nyssa and \$376,000 for one in Millersburg aimed at shipping containers by rail to ocean ports along the Puget Sound.

That money will reimburse project sponsors for drafting preliminary project plans, writing detailed financial statements and preparing for land purchases.

“We want to be sure we have a functional facility at the end of the day,” said Erik Havig, planning section manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation, which is overseen by the commission.

In 2017, lawmakers allocated



A container truck loaded with straw pulls away from a pressing facility owned by the Boshart family in Salem. Straw is one of the agricultural exports that could benefit from an intermodal facility that switches containers from trucks to rail in the mid-Willamette Valley. The proposed Millersburg facility received a first round of funding Sept. 18 from the Oregon Transportation Commission.

\$25 million for the Willamette Valley facility and \$26 million for one in the Treasure Valley, but sponsors will need to complete additional milestones and obtain permission from the commission at least twice more before accessing all of the available cash.

While transportation officials are

“hopeful these things will be hugely successful and pencil out,” the incremental approach is intended to avoid putting all of the grant money at risk, Havig said.

If the commission decides to cut off funding for one or both of the projects at some point, the remaining money will revert back to the

Connect Oregon fund for transportation projects, Havig said.

Before the commission decided to move forward with the two intermodal projects in July, an independent economic analysis determined that both still face serious questions about being self-sustaining financially.

The Millersburg proposal came under particular scrutiny because the third-party economic consultant found that it’s unlikely to be subsidized by ocean carriers, which help make empty containers available to similar facilities in Portland at a lower cost.

However, the commission ultimately decided to let the projects proceed as long as they were able to meet additional conditions.

To win the second round of funding approvals, most likely next spring, project sponsors will likely have to submit the necessary documents to the commission, Havig said.

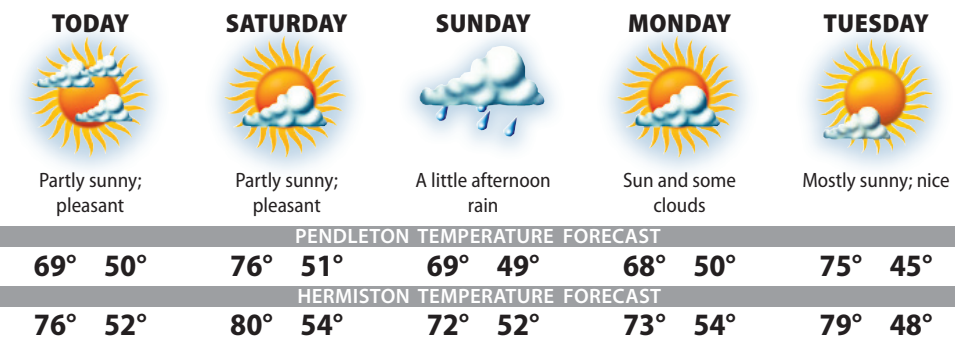
“They will need to come back to the commission with a report to demonstrate that financial viability,” Havig said.

If they succeed, the sponsors will be able to buy land, complete final designs and obtain necessary permits, he said. They are then expected to approach the commission for a third round of funding later in 2020.

Significantly, they will need to secure contracts with major railroads to serve the facilities to obtain money for building. “Before we begin construction, we want to make sure that’s locked up,” Havig said.

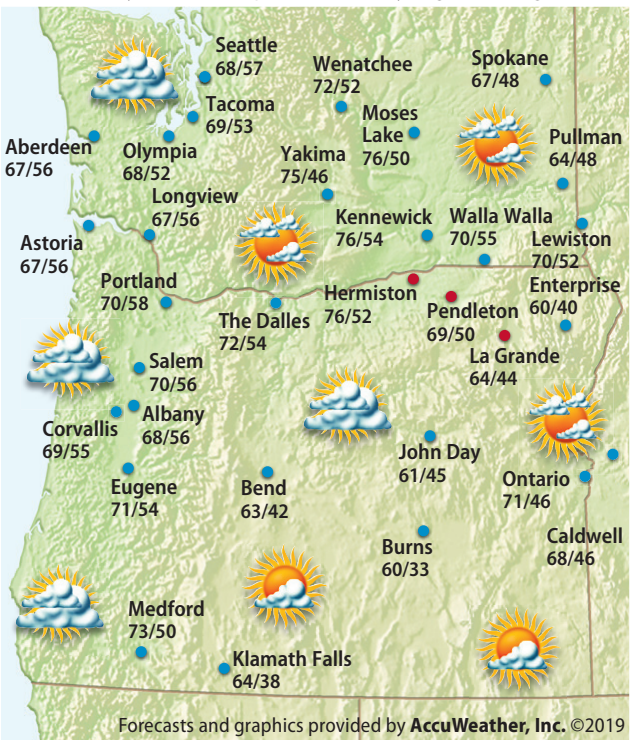
It’s possible the commissioners may be asked for additional clearances for the projects to go more than 10% over budget or receive extensions of 90 days, he said. “They just want to be sure it’s justified,” he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



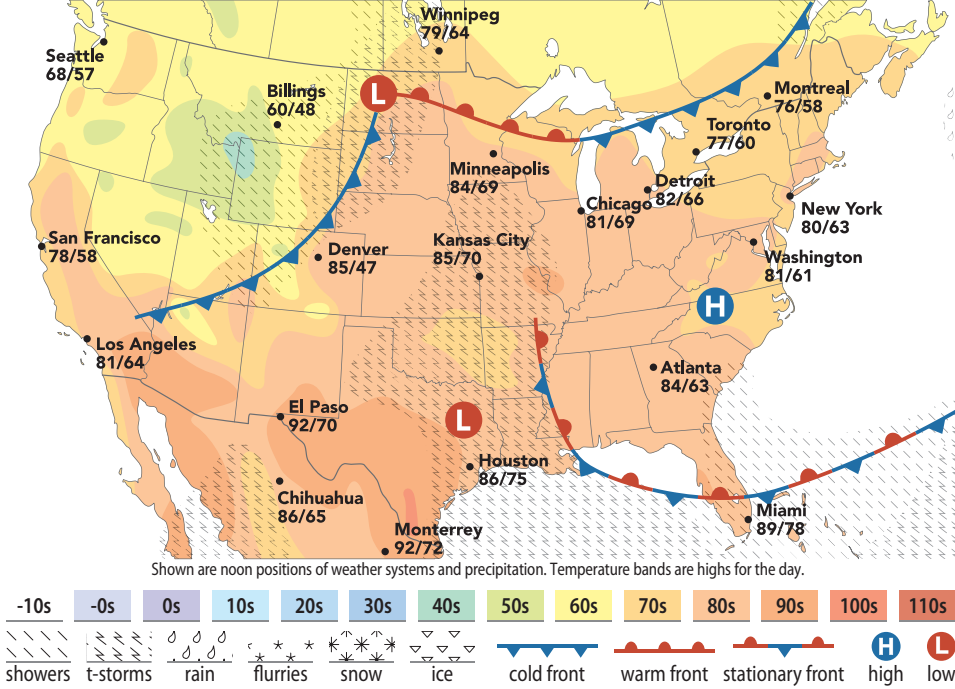
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NATIONAL EXTREMES

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High 104° in Del Rio, Texas Low 23° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



State representative hopes kidney donation will educate others

By SAM STITES
Oregon Capital Bureau

ASTORIA — When state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell of Astoria won election to the Oregon House to represent the north coast, there was a lot flying through her head.

On election night Nov. 6, she thought of the people who made her campaign a success: her friends and family, her staff, her constituents.

And she thought about her kidneys.

She realized she now had a chance in her schedule to do what she has long dreamed of — saving a life by donating one of her kidneys. Next month, that will happen.

Her fascination with organ donation began when she was 16 and she checked that box on her driver’s license that made her an anatomical donor.

“I remember thinking that was a neat idea, you know, I could donate to my sister if she ever needed a kidney, but I didn’t actively pursue the idea at that time,” Mitchell said. “I thought, if someone needs it, great. I have a spare kidney I could potentially donate to a person.”

Several years went by and she didn’t give the issue much thought until a close friend

developed kidney disease. Mitchell arranged to see if she might be a match to donate. She wasn’t.

“That experience — how anxious and concerned I was — made me realize that if I was willing to give my kidney to someone who I really cared about and the emotion around that, why wouldn’t I be willing to give my kidney to someone that I don’t know? Someone who has family and friends who are equally concerned,” she said.

That notion stuck in Mitchell’s mind, but having recently moved, being in graduate school and with a wedding on the horizon, she didn’t have the four to six weeks needed to recover from such surgery. The idea faded but lingered with Mitchell.

Fast forward to the November 2018 election. After winning her seat, Mitchell immediately thought of her kidneys and how the months-long break between the 2019 Legislature and 2020 session would afford her the recovery period after donating a kidney.

To make things even more

poetic, during the 2019 session Mitchell encountered Portland-based nonprofit Donate Life Northwest and learned about SB 796, which prohibited insurers from discriminating against those who choose to be organ donors.

She ended up championing the bill in the House, carrying it to unanimous passage.

But what could prove to be even more impactful is her outspoken support of Donate Life NW’s education efforts promoting live kidney donations.

“Rep. Mitchell has been very vocal ever since starting the process about how she wants to make this an educational opportunity to tell people she’s doing this, and you can too,” said Aimee Adelman, director of outreach and education for Donate Life.

According to Adelman, the average wait time for a patient needing a kidney is two to five years. That often means patients remain on dialysis in the meantime, and each year a patient spends on dialysis can shave approximately five years off their life expectancy.

Currently, 730 Oregonians are waiting for a kidney transplant.



Mitchell

BRIEFLY

Deputy hurt in shootout last month leaves hospital

HILLSBORO — A Washington County Sheriff’s deputy is out of the hospital a month after he and another officer were hurt in a shootout with a man near Hagg Lake.

KPTV-TV reported Corporal Jeremy Braun was released from the hospital last week but faces months of doctor visits, procedures and treatments, according to the sheriff’s office.

Authorities say Braun and another deputy, Chris Iverson, were shot Aug. 8 by

Dante Halling and returned fire.

Iverson suffered non life-threatening injuries and was released from the hospital that night.

Halling allegedly walked onto a property near Gaston, took two guns out of an outdoor safe and walked into the woods, where police searched for with dogs and a tactical team before they found him.

Halling was also shot, and remained in the hospital for weeks before he was booked into jail on 15 charges related to the shootings, including attempted murder. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

— 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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