

Elgin resident running for Congress

Jeff Smith seeking the Republican nomination for 2nd Congressional District

By DICK MASON
EO Media Group

ELGIN — Jeff Smith, an Elgin computer programmer running for Congress, believes his campaign is moving in the right direction.

“The response I am receiving is very good. I am very encouraged,” Smith said Sunday.

Smith is running for the Republican nomination for the 2nd Congressional District, which covers Eastern, Central and a portion of Southern Oregon. The candidate, who has lived in Elgin almost all his life, is a graduate of Elgin High School and has a degree in manufacturing, engineering and technology from the Oregon Institute of Technology.

Smith, who grew up on a cattle ranch outside Elgin, said in Congress he would be a strong advocate for the natural resource industries, including timber and agriculture.

Oregon’s timber industry is a particular concern. Smith

said timber companies decades ago could harvest about 4 billion board feet of wood from the Walla-Walla-Whitman and Umatilla national forests, but today the limit is 50-60 million board feet annually on these same lands. This has led to mill closures in Union and Walla-Walla counties and throughout the state. He said in the 1980s Union and Walla counties had 10 mills but today three remain, all in Union County.

He attributed much of the decline in timber harvests and the mill closures to the listing of the northern spotted owl in 1990 as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. The listing meant cutting back on timber harvest on federal land to protect spotted owl habitat. Smith said as the 2nd District representative he would work to end the federal Endangered Species Act. He wrote on his website, www.sendjefftocongress.com, the ESA is no longer needed because many states have their own version of it.

Smith also said he would work to boost academic achievement in Ore-

WHO’S RUNNING

The following is a list of candidates who have announced a run to replace Rep. Greg Walden as Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District representative:

Democratic primary candidates

John Holm
Jack Howard
Alex Spenser

Isabella Tibbetts

Republican primary candidates

Jason Atkinson
Cliff Bentz
Knute Buehler
David Campbell
Kenneth Medenbach
Mark Roberts
Jeff Smith

Source: Oregon Secretary of State

gon schools, noting Oregon has poor graduation rates and lower student scores on achievement tests compared to other states. He said he wants the state to place more of a focus on vocational education.

Many schools focus on getting students to college, he said, but that’s a bad idea for 50-60% of students unless they have significant scholarships, because most students emerge from college with large student loan debts. He said a college graduate earning \$25,000 a year with a \$35,000 loan debt often is not in a good financial situation.

“For many it just does not pencil out,” he said.

Rather than focusing on higher education at more expensive traditional colleges, Smith said Oregon schools should develop more vocation education programs to help students develop the

skills they need to land jobs as machinists, electricians, linemen and in construction. He said jobs in these fields offer living-wage jobs and the training will not leave students over their heads in debt.

Smith also is concerned about the future of Medicare, which he said will become insolvent in seven years without action. He said soaring health care costs are endangering the program.

“They are rising at twice the rate of inflation and three times the rate of wage growth,” Smith said.

He blamed the death of medical schools for the shortage of health care providers and cited Oregon as an example. He said Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, graduates 150 doctors a year, not enough to allow the state to maintain a sufficient level of phy-

sicians for its population of almost 4.2 million. He said he would like to see changes at the federal level in policies and funding that would allow more universities to offer medical degrees and more health care provider training overall. He said medical organizations and their lobbyists are preventing the expansion of medical education programs.

“This is the root cause of rising health care costs,” Smith said. “The system is rigged.”

Smith is among eight candidates running to succeed incumbent Greg Walden, R-Hood River, who announced in October he will not seek re-election. Walden has served in Congress since 1999. Smith spoke highly of Walden’s work in Congress.

“Greg Walden has done a good job of looking out for

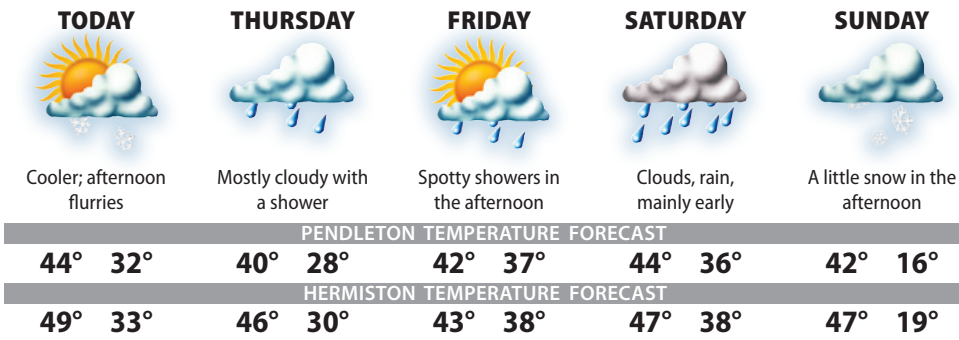
the people of Eastern Oregon,” the Elgin candidate said.

This is Smith’s second run for public office. He ran in the Republican primary for Oregon governor in 2018, placing fifth in a 10-candidate field. Knute Buehler, a physician from Bend, won the nomination but lost to incumbent Kate Brown in the general election. Buehler also is running in the Republican primary to succeed Walden.

Joining Buehler and Smith in this year’s GOP primary field are state Sen. Cliff Bentz of Ontario; Mark Roberts of Medford, a former Independent Party member who ran for a congressional seat in 2018; and Kenneth Medenbach of Klamath County, who was part of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation in 2016; Jason Atkinson, a former state senator who served 14 years; and David Campbell.

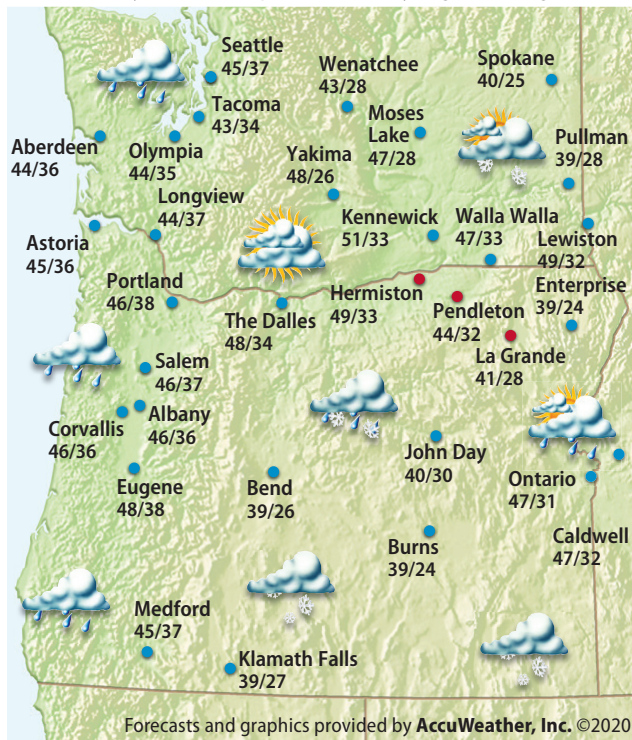
Four Democratic candidates are running for their party’s nomination: Jack Howard, a La Grande attorney and former Union County commissioner; Medford resident John Holm; and community organizer Isabella Tibbetts of Jackson County; and Alex Spenser, of Klamath Falls.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



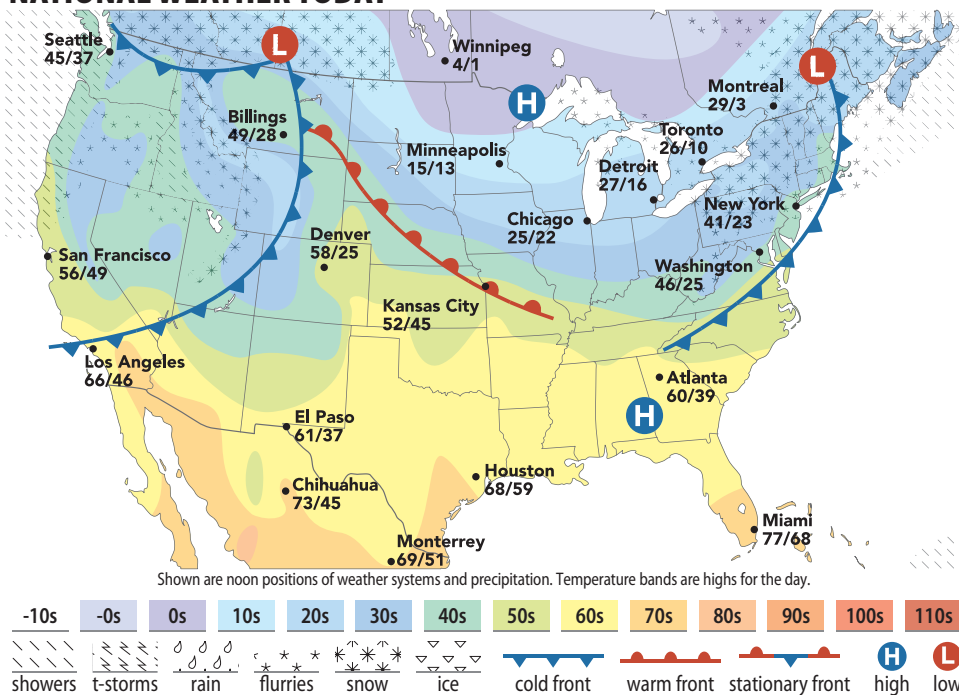
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	47°
Normals	40°	26°
Records	68° (1902)	-7° (1937)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.15"	
Normal month to date	0.40"	
Year to date	0.15"	
Last year to date	0.04"	
Normal year to date	0.40"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	49°
Normals	40°	28°
Records	65° (1945)	-13° (1937)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	Trace	
Normal month to date	0.28"	
Year to date	Trace	
Last year to date	0.01"	
Normal year to date	0.28"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Thu.	
Boardman	WSW 10-20	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	WSW 8-16	W 7-14
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:35 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	4:28 p.m.	
Moonrise today	2:42 p.m.	
Moonset today	5:32 a.m.	
Full	Last	New
Jan 10	Jan 17	Jan 24
		Feb 1

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 81° in Ramona, Calif. Low -15° in Gunnison, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Macy’s closing Walla Walla store

Cincinnati-based company will begin a clearance sale this month

By VICKI HILLHOUSE
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — Macy’s will pull up the anchor on downtown Walla Walla’s retail core when it closes its store in the historic Liberty Theater.

The Cincinnati-based company will begin a clearance sale this month that is expected to run about eight to 12 weeks. A closure date was not specified.

Employees were reportedly notified Monday. A company media relations director confirmed the closure.

“The decision to close a store is always a difficult one, but Macy’s is proud to have served the Walla Walla community over the past 76 years,” the announcement said, referring to the store’s long history before its acquisition by Macy’s.

The statement is a boilerplate message released by Macy’s on behalf of its

store closures, including an announcement last fall for its landmark downtown Seattle spot and Monday for stores all over the country. It is tailored to each community to represent how long the company has operated there and to encourage shoppers to redirect their business to the nearest Macy’s store.

In this case, that’s the store at Columbia Center in Kennewick, Washington, where Walla Walla officials say local sales taxes leak to outshopping an hour away.

Development of shopping options at retail strip Walla Walla Town Center appears to have recovered some of that leakage. But whether it also hurt stores, such as Macy’s, enough to lead to the decision is not clear, Walla Walla City Manager Nabil Shawa said.

In 2017, the community lost an estimated \$183 million in sales tax leakage, according to data from the Port of Walla Walla. That money is what’s calculated as spent outside of the community on retail goods — everything from motor vehicles to furniture, clothing to books.

In 2018, came the opening

of Walla Walla Town Center’s first store in April. It was followed throughout the year with the introduction of seven more national big box retailers in the community.

For the first time in history, Walla Walla exceeded \$1 billion in retail sales in 2018, according to Walla Walla Trends data. The 10.4% spike in taxable retail sales for Walla Walla between 2017 and 2018 was the largest increase since 2004-05 and outpaced the state’s annual growth rate of 9.6%.

Macy’s, meanwhile, has been closing stores since 2016. That year, the company announced its plan to close 100 stores across the country as part of a downsizing strategy against the rising tide of online competition.

Initially, the company focused on locations where leases were ending.

But in the case of the Walla Walla store, Macy’s owns the property at 54 E. Main St., adding another layer of uncertainty about what may be the future for downtown retail.

“This is absolutely not good news and not what we wanted to hear,” Shawa said.

BRIEFLY

Warrenton facing fire department safety violations

WARRENTON — The city of Warrenton faces nearly \$11,000 in fines from the state for safety violations at the Warrenton Fire Department.

The Daily Astorian reported the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration initiated an investigation after anonymous complaints.

It fined the city \$7,500 for not ensuring a proper respiratory protection program, \$2,100 for not ensuring employees wore the right protective equipment, \$420 for improper training, \$420 for not maintaining a safety committee, \$180 for a lack of equipment inspections and \$180 for not keeping a hazard communication program.

Fire Chief Tim Demers resigned amid the investigation.

The findings come shortly after the city hired former deputy fire chief and volunteer Brian Alsbury to replace Demers.

Investigators found the city struggles to provide the proper number of trained firefighters or maintained equipment for responding to structure fires, and confusion over when to use lights and sirens during responses. The investigation also found a lack of clarity in the city’s standard operating procedures.

Investigators called on the city to create new guidelines and solve the deficiencies by Jan. 23. City Manager Linda Engbretson said in an email that the city has requested an extension on the deadline as it updates internal operating procedures.

—EO Media Group and 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.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255
or go online to EastOregonian.com
and click on ‘Subscribe’

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.
Postmaster: send address changes to
East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.
Copyright © 2020, EO Media Group

Subscriber services:

For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 1-800-522-0255 ext. 1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$13/month	60 percent
52 weeks	\$173.67	41 percent
26 weeks	\$91.86	38 percent
13 weeks	\$47.77	36 percent

*EZ Pay = one-year rate with a monthly credit or debit card/check charge

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday through Saturday

Circulation Dept.
800-781-3214

ADVERTISING

Regional Publisher and Revenue Director:

• Christopher Rush
541-278-2669 • crush@eomediagroup.com

Advertising Manager:

• Angela Treadwell
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com

Multimedia Consultants:

• Lora Jenkins
541-276-2214 • ljenkins@eastoregonian.com

• Jeanne Jewett
541-564-4531 • jjewett@eastoregonian.com

• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Business Office Coordinator

• Dayle Stinson
541-278-2670 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising

1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

NEWS

• To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Tammy Malgesini at 541-564-4539 or Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips: 541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

Business Office Manager:
541-966-0824

COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Production Manager: Mike Jensen
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com