

Atkinson makes campaign stop in La Grande

Former state legislator running for Rep. Greg Walden’s District 2 congressional seat

By DICK MASON
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Former state legislator Jason Atkinson of Central Point has never voted for a tax increase and he has no plans to start if voters send him to Congress later this year.

The 2nd Congressional District candidate said he has been committed to holding the line on taxes throughout his 14-year stint in the Oregon Legislature.

“I am the only candidate in this race (who has served in elective office) who has never voted for a tax or fee increase,” Atkinson said Wednesday morning during a campaign stop at Cook Memorial Library, La Grande.

Atkinson was on a swing through Eastern Oregon, which included stops in Hermiston and Pendleton. He is one of eight Republicans seeking the nomination in the May 19 primary. Five Democrats are vying to earn the crown



Jason Atkinson, right, one of the Republicans seeking to represent Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District, talks Wednesday morning with Matt Goodwin of La Grande during a campaign stop at Cook Memorial Library in La Grande.

from their party. He said as a congressman he would maintain his strong position against tax increases.

“I would continue to be like this as a congressman,” he said. “Congress needs more quality people. It does not need more money.”

Based on the most recent

Federal Election Commission campaign finance data, Atkinson has raised about \$96,000. Fellow Republicans Jimmy Crumacker of Bend has raised almost \$594,000 including \$200,000 he loaned his campaign, while Knute Buehler, also of Bend, has amassed nearly \$386,000,

none of it in a loan.

Atkinson noted he attempted to get Oregon’s death tax and capital gains taxes repealed or reduced while serving in the Legislature. Atkinson, who was in the state House from 1999-2001 and the state Senate from 2001-13, said he faced enormous pressure

to vote for gas tax increases but always resisted. He was ready for the firestorms that followed.

“You are only as popular as the day before you announce (your candidacy),” Atkinson said.

The congressional candidate said he is a fiscal conservative and not opposing tax increases would be inconsistent with this philosophy. Atkinson said he also has strong conservative stances on abortion and the Second Amendment.

“I am 100 percent pro life and have an A+ rating from the NRA (National Rifle Association). These are easy topics for me, my mind is made up,” he said.

He is seeking to succeed Rep. Greg Walden, the Republican from Hood River who is not running for re-election after serving for two decades. Atkinson credits Walden with having an exemplary constituent service record and said he will try to emulate it.

“Eighty percent of the job is constituent service,” Atkinson said.

He said it is critical to reach out to constituents because those who contact their Congressman often do so as a last resort.

“If someone calls with

a problem, it is because their lawyer and their pastor could not fix it,” Atkinson said.

The candidate said he would pull out all the stops to help constituents.

“I would manipulate things at the federal level to get stuff done,” Atkinson said.

While Atkinson lives in Central Point, he said he has strong ties to Northeast Oregon because he has spent much time here fly-fishing on the Grande Ronde River and hunting.

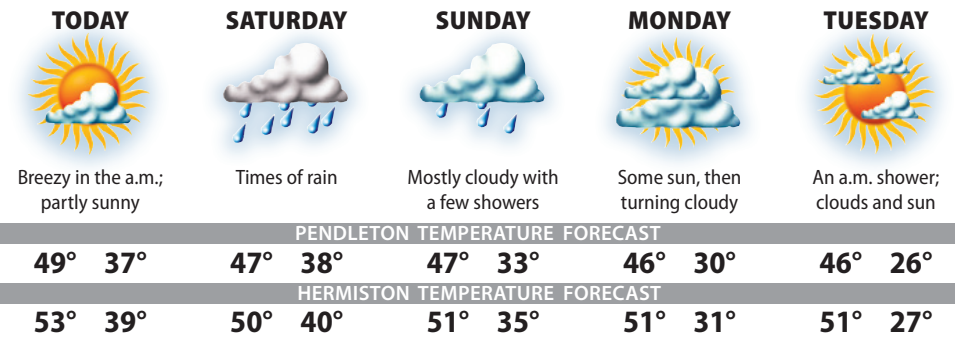
“I’ve spent more time on the Grande Ronde than I should have,” Atkinson said with a smile.

Atkinson, who has a number of friends in Union and Wallowa counties, said he has long been interested in Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, partly because its administration building is almost identical to the one at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, which he lives near.

The candidate said it would mean very much for him to carry Union and Wallowa counties in the upcoming election because of his ties to the region.

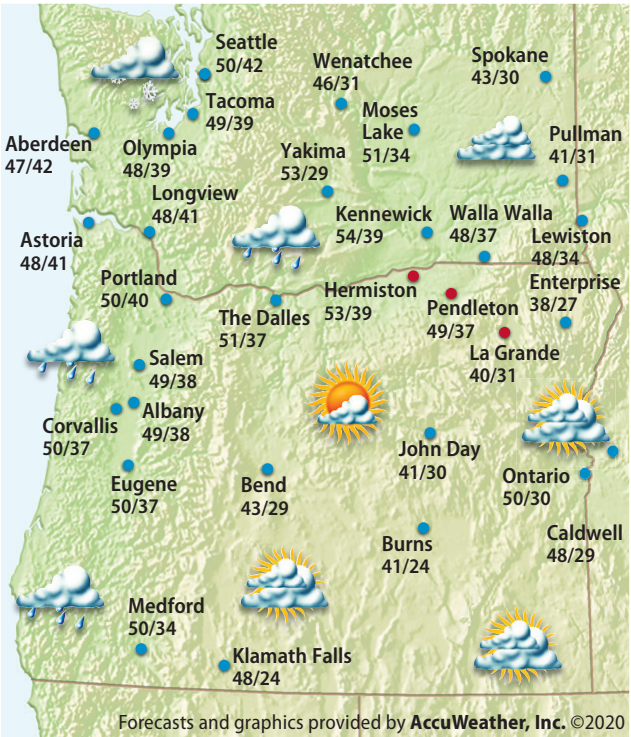
“It will be a point of pride for me. I will be here (campaigning) a lot,” Atkinson said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



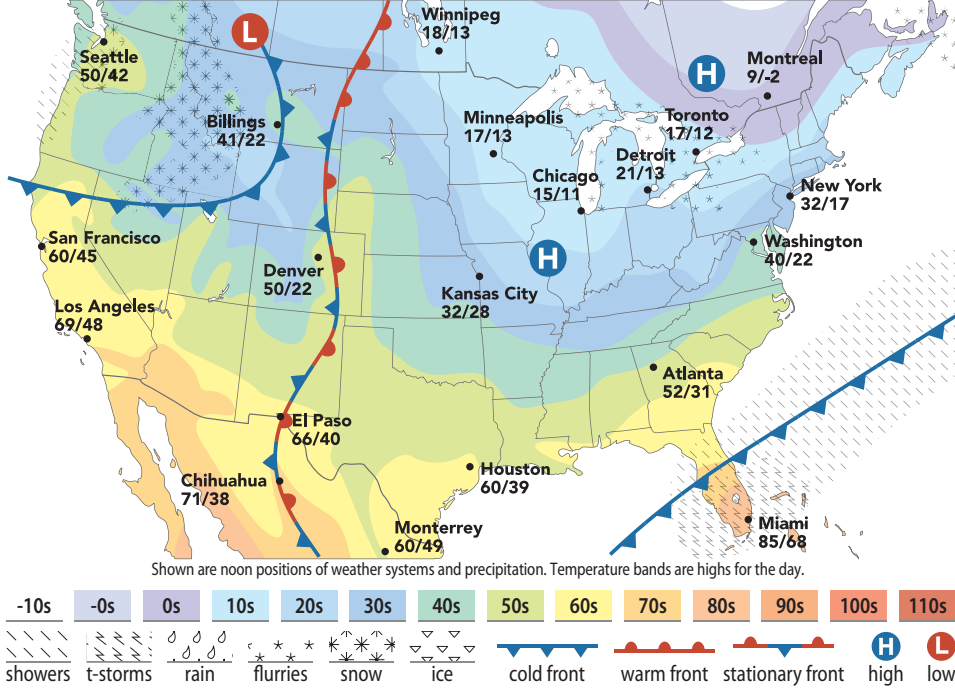
ALMANAC

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 90° in Titusville, Fla. Low -39° in Kabetogama, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Bridge work among projects for Union and Wallowa counties

By DICK MASON
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — A Wallowa County bridge built the same year the first television drama was broadcast is due for replacement because of declining ratings.

The Oregon Department of Transportation plans to remove Bear Creek Bridge, less than a quarter mile west of Wallowa on Highway 82, after building a new \$15.2 million bridge in its place, according to Ken Patterson, ODOT's manager for Eastern Oregon.

The state transportation agency calls for the construction of the new bridge in the 2021-24 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The Oregon Transportation Commission in late January released a draft of the plan, which

mandates ODOT's capital improvement program.

The bridge was built in 1930, the same year as the broadcast of the world's first television drama. The condition of the Bear Creek span is declining, according to the transportation department's rating system.

The new bridge will use improved technology and materials, so it will have fewer support columns in the stream below, Patterson said, making it easier for maintenance crews to keep debris from building up underneath. The new bridge also will be wider and will be built next to the old one, allowing traffic to cross during construction. The project would start in 2021.

ODOT's program also calls for work to improve the safety of the steep Morgan Lake Road just southwest of La Grande. The

work would widen portions of the unpaved roadway and install additional guardrails, Patterson said.

The department will determine where to make the improvements using crash data. The project would cost about \$1.28 million and begin in 2023.

Replacing the decking of the two bridges at the North Powder interchange also is on the list of proposed projects. The last replacement of the decking was about 20 years ago.

“They are pitted and rutted,” Patterson said.

Another project in Union County would install better piping in culverts along Interstate 84 from Hilgard Junction State Park to Ontario. The enhanced piping would help keep water from running over the top of the freeway, Patterson said.

BRIEFLY

OSHA fines companies after 2 killed at Oregon festival

HAPPY VALLEY — The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration has fined two companies for safety violations that led to the deaths of two workers at a Portland area music festival.

OSHA issued \$31,000 in fines to Pickathon LLC and GuildWorks LLC after two workers died at the Pickathon Music Festival in August in a lift accident, *The Oregonian*/OregonLive reported.

Brandon Blackmore and Brad Swet

were up in a boom lift taking down an installation when the lift, which was on an incline, tilted and fell, killing them. The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office said that they were wearing safety equipment and were roped to the boom lift.

OSHA said two alarm devices on the boom lift had been disabled. Each company was fined \$12,500 for disabling the alarms.

OSHA also fined GuildWorks \$6,000 for not following instructions provided by the boom lift manufacturer.

— Associated Press

CORRECTIONS: In the Page A1 story “Pitching in,” published Thursday, Feb. 13, the photo caption misspelled the name of Jacob Barthel.

In the Page A6 story “Climate coalition highlights Pendleton’s sustainable services,” published Thursday, Feb. 13, the story misstated the date of the meeting. The meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 18

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.

Follow us on Facebook!

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 rstuthers@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