

Is Idaho turning a little blue? Primary might provide clues

Population influx from liberal West Coast may change the political tides

By KEITH RIDLER
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Idaho was the nation’s fastest-growing state last year, with close to 37,000 new residents boosting its population to nearly 1.8 million. In the past decade, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the deeply conservative state has seen a population jump of more than 200,000. Studies indicate many have come from liberal-leaning California, Oregon and Washington. But are those new residents bringing blue-state politics? Or are they Republicans fleeing the coast for conservative Idaho?

An answer could emerge Tuesday when Idaho holds its presidential primaries. Democrats are using a primary for the first time after picking Sen. Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton at a caucus in 2016. President Barack Obama handily won the Democratic contest in Idaho over Clinton in 2008.

President Donald Trump is expected to have little difficulty winning the Repub-



AP Photo/Keith Ridler

Idaho’s presidential primary on Tuesday could give an indication of the political leanings of all the newcomers to the state.

lican primary or the state in the November general election. The last time Idaho voted for a Democratic presidential candidate was Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Still, officials say switching to a Democratic primary this year could significantly increase the number of participants, and play a role in the outcome.

Former vice president Joseph Biden drew more than 100 donors at an Idaho

event in August 2019. Sen. Elizabeth Warren had scheduled a visit this week-end, but ended her campaign Thursday.

“We hope that Idaho continues to grow in diversity and political affiliation, and that will strengthen our party and candidates,” said Lindsey Johnson, spokeswoman for the Idaho Democratic Party.

Jaclyn Kettler, a Boise State University politi-

cal scientist, said it appears Democrats, in general, are moving to urban areas and Republicans to more rural areas, continuing the urban-rural divide between Democrats and Republicans prevalent in states in the U.S. West.

“We’ve definitely seen some areas like Boise becoming bluer in the last few years,” she said. “More conservative voters are moving into Canyon County

and Northern Idaho.”

Yet, Democrats see the possibility of a bluish tinge appearing in Idaho following its 2.1% population increase last year. The House, for example, went from 11 to 14 Democrats in the 2018 election. Democrats flipped four urban district seats, but lost an urban district in Northern Idaho after the incumbent Democrat ran for governor.

Voter-driven ballot initiatives have also become a major focus in the state. After years of inaction by Republican lawmakers, Idaho residents in 2018 with 62% approved an initiative expanding Medicaid, a move opposed by conservative lawmakers.

In response, Republicans in the House and Senate last year tried to make the initiative process nearly impossible, so they could head off future left-leaning measures, such as raising the minimum wage and legalizing marijuana. But Republican Gov. Brad Little vetoed the legislation amid concerns a federal court could rule such restrictions unconstitutional and dictate the state’s initiative process.

Overall, though, Republicans hold all five statewide elected offices, including governor, and hold super-majorities in both the

Idaho House and Senate. Both of Idaho’s U.S. House seats and both U.S. Senate seats are also occupied by Republicans.

Democratic House Minority Leader Ilana Rubel of Boise said she’s not sure which way the “in-migration is tilting,” but she thinks it will be a wash.

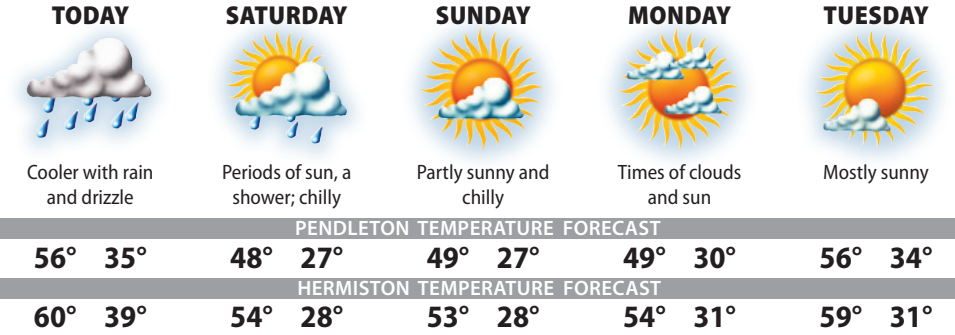
GOP Senate President Pro-Tem Brent Hill of Rexburg, meanwhile, noted that for the most part, Republicans are unconcerned about a possible change in demographics because it appears most of those moving to Idaho tend to vote Republican.

“It’s hard to know for sure, but sometimes we kid about people coming from more liberal states,” said Hill, who is wrapping up 20 years as a state senator after the Legislature adjourns this spring. “One of the reasons they came was to get away from that.”

Idaho voters can currently register or switch parties right up to the presidential primary. Legislation will prevent that from happening in future primaries, however.

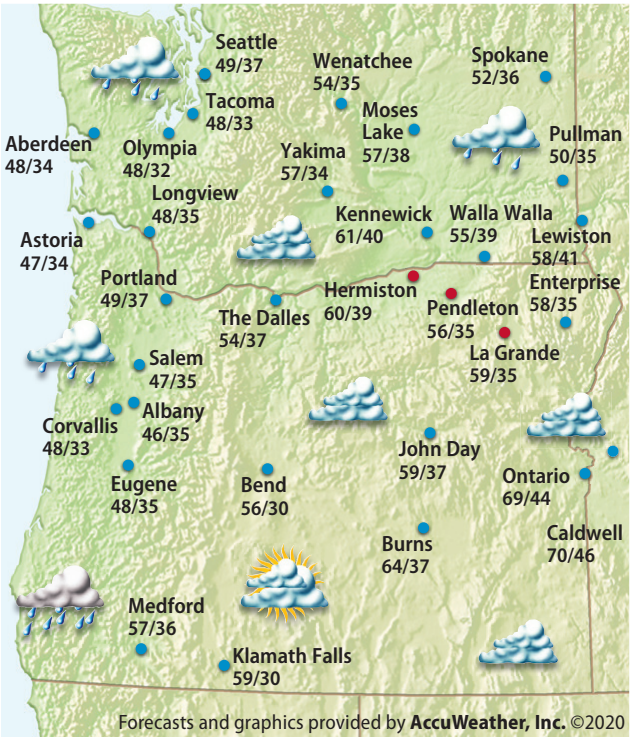
Idaho holds its state primary on May 19. This year, the primary will include a U.S. Senate seat, both U.S. House seats, and all 105 seats in the Legislature.

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

60°

31°

Normals

52°

33°

Records

74° (1972)

1° (2019)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

0.00"

Month to date

Trace

Normal month to date

0.17"

Year to date

4.06"

Last year to date

4.98"

Normal year to date

2.72"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.

HIGH

LOW

Yesterday

60°

27°

Normals

54°

32°

Records

70° (1987)

0° (2019)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

0.00"

Month to date

0.00"

Normal month to date

0.17"

Year to date

0.36"

Last year to date

3.40"

Normal year to date

2.44"

WINDS (in mph)

Today

Sat.

Boardman

WSW 6-12

WSW 7-14

Pendleton

NW 6-12

W 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today

6:24 a.m.

Sunset tonight

5:49 p.m.

Moonrise today

2:07 p.m.

Moonset today

4:52 a.m.

Full

Last

New

First

Mar 9

Mar 16

Mar 24

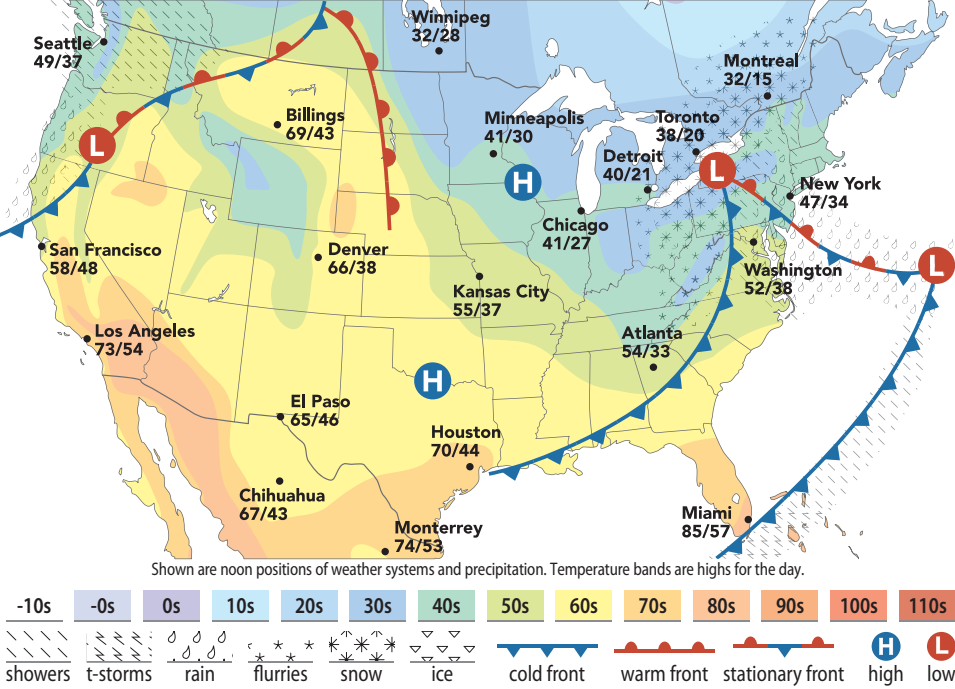
Apr 1

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 94° in West Palm Beach, Fla. Low -9° in Crested Butte, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



OSP trooper arrested for alleged domestic violence in Powell Butte

By GARRETT ANDREWS
EO Media Group

BEND — An Oregon State Police trooper is on leave following a domestic violence arrest for an alleged incident in July in Powell Butte.

Colin Tracy, 39, was arrested Wednesday in Bend and taken to the Crook County jail.

The alleged victim is a 39-year-old Bend woman known to Tracy, according to Bend Police Lt. Clint Burleigh. She reported the alleged violence to Oregon State Police, which contacted Bend Police Department on Feb. 18. During its investigation, Bend Police Department learned the alleged

domestic violence occurred in Crook County.



Tracy

On Thursday, a charging decision had yet to be made by the Crook County District Attorney Wade Whiting.

Tracy was contacted by investigators with Bend Police Department. He turned himself in Wednesday afternoon at the Bend police station at Northeast 15th Street, where he was arrested on suspicion of fourth-degree misdemeanor assault.

Though Tracy is still receiving pay while away from work, if he is charged

with a crime, he'll be placed on unpaid administrative leave, according to a statement from OSP.

Tracy was first hired as an OSP trooper in 2005, according to the state police academy. He resigned in 2012 to take a law enforcement job out of state. He was rehired by OSP as a trooper in 2017.

A high-ranking Oregon State Police official was prosecuted for domestic violence in Central Oregon in 2018 and 2019.

William Fugate, a former captain and top spokesman for the agency, was arrested for harassment of his now ex-wife. Fugate, a Redmond resident, received two days jail and other conditions at a sentencing hearing in January 2019.

BRIEFLY

CDC: Suicide was leading cause of death for young Oregonians in 2018

SALEM — In 2018, 129 Oregonians age 24 and younger died by suicide, making it the leading cause of youth deaths in the state, according to new data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Suicide continues to be a concerning problem in Oregon across all age groups, including youth, as this new data confirms,” Dana Hargunani, Oregon Health Authority’s chief medical officer, said in a statement. “We continue to prioritize work across Oregon to support young people in schools, at home and in our communities.”

With this new data, released in a report to the state legislature this week, Oregon is now ranked 11th highest in the nation for youth suicide rates. Previously, the leading causes of death for young Oregonians were unintentional injuries and drug overdoses.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown included more than \$6 million for suicide prevention in her 2019-2021 biennium budget.

This is the first time this work has been funded by the state, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

That money is being used to fund measures including Oregon’s Suicide Prevention Lifeline, creating statewide access to suicide prevention programming and

addressing higher risk groups such as LGBTQ youth and veterans.

Gov. Brown declares drought in Southern Oregon county

KLAMATH FALLS — Because of low snow pack and precipitation, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed an executive order this week declaring a drought in Klamath County.

Brown issued a drought declaration saying the extremely low water supply is causing natural and economic disaster conditions heading into spring and summer, the *Capital Press* reported.

The declaration gives state agencies the ability to expedite water management tools, such as emergency water permits, exchanges, substitutions and in-stream leases to mitigate conditions on the ground.

Snowpack is 65% of normal in the Klamath Basin as of March 4, according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Mountain snow is critical because it acts as a natural reservoir, replenishing streams and lakes during the irrigation season.

Neighboring Rogue and Umpqua basins in Southern Oregon are also lagging behind normal snowpack at 71%, while the Lake County and Goose Lake areas are at 70% of normal levels.

— Oregon Public Broadcasting and Associated Press

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