

Oregon will accept ballots mailed by Election Day under new bill

Supporters say HB 3291 will create less confusion about when ballots can be mailed

By DIRK VANDERHART
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Beginning next year, Oregon voters will be able to drop their ballot in the mail on Election Day without worrying it will be rejected, under a bill that has passed the state Legislature.

House Bill 3291 cleared the state Senate on a razor-thin 16-13 margin Thursday, June 24, with one reluctant Democrat allowing the bill to pass despite his misgivings. The bill passed the House of Representatives last month.

If signed by Gov. Kate Brown, HB 3291 would ensure ballots are accepted as long as they're postmarked on or before Election Day, and reach elections officials within a week of the election. Under current law, ballots are only counted if they have been received by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

The bill also would allow county clerks to begin counting ballots when they're received, rather than waiting until a week before an elec-



Boxes of ballots await counting at the Umatilla County Elections office in Pendleton on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020. Oregon voters starting in 2021 will be able to drop their ballots in the mail on Election Day and still have their votes count.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

tion. It would also change some dates related to elections.

Lawmakers have repeatedly considered changing Oregon's pioneering vote-by-mail system to account for postmarks — a move that California, Washington and other states have taken. But

the Legislature has balked at the move in the past, including in 2001, when many Democrats opposed the bill.

This year, the concept's support came almost solely from Democrats, who say that the practice will eliminate confusion about when a ballot can be safely mailed

and still count.

The bill "will provide more access to voting by mail, while also protecting the integrity of our elections system," Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner, D-Lake Oswego, said on the Senate floor.

But Senate Republicans

disagreed, insisting again and again that the bill would provide a "highway for fraud." Much of that concern centered on a provision in the new bill that would allow mailed ballots to be counted if an error in the postal system meant a postmark is missing or not legible.

Republicans in both chambers have argued that provision could lead to gaming the system. But Democrats have countered that ballots require a voter's signature, which would double as an attestation, under penalty of perjury, that it was mailed on or before Election Day.

Republicans also worried about the provision allowing ballots to be counted earlier, saying that would allow early returns to leak.

"This bill has problems," said Senate Minority Leader Fred Girod, R-Lyons, who unsuccessfully pushed a modified version on the floor. "It needed to be fixed."

One key lawmaker nearly agreed. During a roll call vote, state Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, did not initially answer when his name was called. He voted yes, it appeared, when it became clear that his vote would be necessary for the bill to pass.

"I reluctantly voted for this today," Beyer said after the vote. "My concern is, in close races ... that delaying the returns for a week or two afterward will undermine faith in the system. I hope I'm wrong."

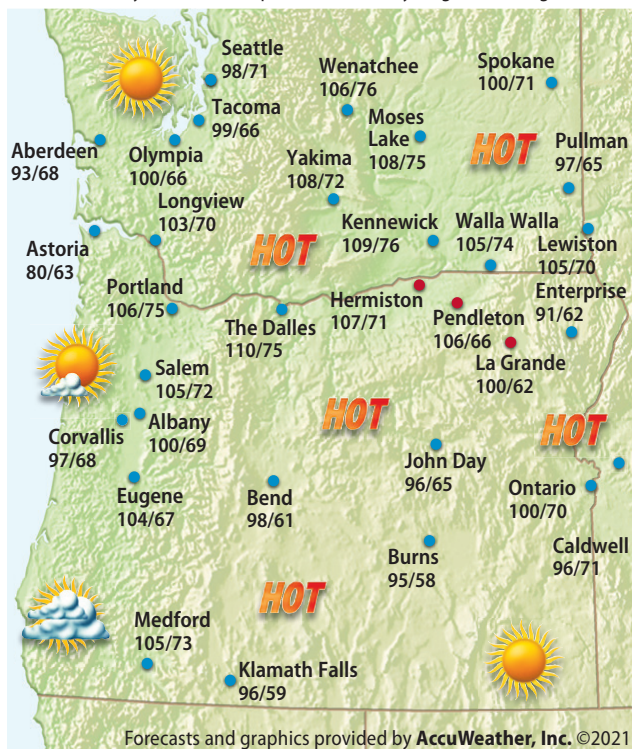
The governor's office did not answer an inquiry about whether Brown would sign the bill.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
HOT	HOT	HOT	HOT	HOT
Very hot	Record-breaking temperatures	Record-breaking temperatures	Record-breaking temperatures	Record-tying temperatures
106° 66°	110° 72°	111° 77°	111° 77°	108° 70°
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
107° 71°	110° 72°	114° 74°	114° 76°	111° 72°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				

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	92°	67°
Normals	82°	54°
Records	105° (1925)	35° (1904)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"

Month to date	0.28"
Normal month to date	0.99"
Year to date	4.31"
Last year to date	8.55"
Normal year to date	7.50"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	97°	70°
Normals	83°	55°
Records	105° (1992)	40° (1966)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"

Month to date	0.23"
Normal month to date	0.52"
Year to date	1.93"
Last year to date	1.61"
Normal year to date	5.63"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	NE 6-12	ENE 6-12
Pendleton	NNE 4-8	ENE 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:07 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:49 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:06 p.m.
Moonset today	6:58 a.m.

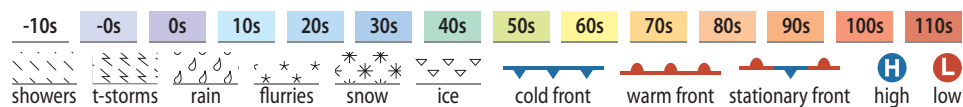
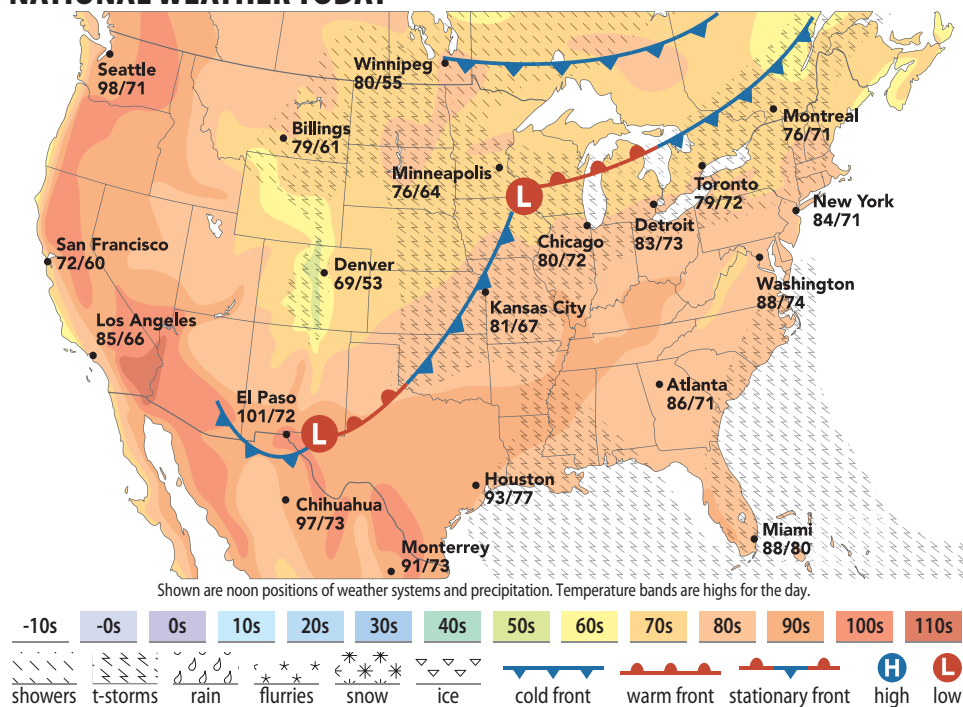


NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 109° in Thermal, Calif. Low 33° in Gothic, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Your chances of winning Oregon's vaccination jackpot? 1 in 2.2M

By AIMEE GREEN
The Oregonian

SALEM — What are the odds of winning Oregon's \$1 million vaccination lottery drawing on Monday, June 28? With roughly 2.2 million adults vaccinated in Oregon so far, it's one in 2.2 million.

In other words, you have a better chance of getting struck by lightning — 1 in 500,000 in any given year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The prizes — \$1 million, three dozen \$10,000 awards, five \$100,000 college scholarships and a smattering of cash prizes in a limited number of counties — are only available to Oregonians who've received at least one shot of COVID-19 vaccine by 11:59 p.m. June 27.

Winners are expected to be announced in the first week of July.

The odds get a lot more interesting when it comes to the state's \$10,000 prizes.

Oregon will award \$10,000 to one person for each of its 36 counties — regardless of the county's population. That means up until recently the odds of pocketing \$10,000 were the best in Oregon's smallest county — Wheeler, population 1,440 — where one lucky person out of about



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Pendleton High School student Scott Train, right, watches as Specialist Stephanie Gonzalez, of the Oregon National Guard, administers a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine during a vaccination clinic for high school students at Wildhorse Resort & Casino on March 17, 2021.

600 vaccinated adults will take home the prize.

In recent days, however, 11 other Oregon counties have added to the prizes offered to their residents, using millions of dollars of federal coronavirus money allocated by the vaccination rollout. Now the chances of pocketing some significant cash are best in Gilliam County, population 1,990, where 11 of approximately 676 vaccinated adults will win \$10,000 each.

"I'd say your odds of winning \$10,000 are excellent," said Patrick Johnson, a spokesperson for the Oregon Lottery, which is assisting the governor's office and the

Oregon Health Authority in randomly drawing winners.

But the odds look considerably less impressive in Oregon's largest county — Multnomah — where county officials aren't supplementing the state's prizes with more awards. More than 470,000 adults in the county have received at least one dose of vaccine. You guessed it: That puts residents' chances of taking home the cash at about 1 in 470,000.

The odds are approximate because state officials don't publish the precise county-by-county numbers of residents 18 and older who've been inoculated.

IN BRIEF

Company linked to LDS church high bidder for Easterday ranch

KENNEWICK — Farmland Reserve Inc., the real estate company of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, submitted the high bid of \$209 million for the Easterday ranch properties in Eastern Washington, topping a company linked to Bill Gates.

The winning bid, which must be approved by a judge, was reported Monday, June 21, to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for Eastern Washington.

Gates' company, Delaware-based 100C LLC, bid \$208 million, according to court records.

Farmland Reserve plans to acquire Easterday properties in Benton County, Washing-

ton, commonly known as Goose Gap Farm, River Farm, Cox Farm and Farm Manager House.

Cody Easterday and his wife and mother declared bankruptcy in February as he faced charges of defrauding Tyson Foods and another company of \$244 million by billing the companies for nonexistent cattle.

Easterday, 49, pleaded guilty March 31 to one count of wire fraud. He faces up to 20 years in prison. He is scheduled to be sentenced Aug. 4 in the U.S. District Court for Eastern Washington.

Easterday's grandfather founded the ranch and farm in 1959.

The auction was conducted June 17 via video conference and was limited to five qualified bidders.

—EO Media Group

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