



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Fans cheer during the grand entry of the 111th Pendleton Round-Up on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds.

Round-up:

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Great Pacific Wine & Coffee manager Addison Schulberg said he commiserated with Meda ahead of Round-Up week and was a little envious of his plan.

Great Pacific did keep its 403 S. Main St. restaurant open during Round-Up week, and while the restaurant did see a boost, Schulberg said the crowds were smaller than in years past. Given the risk of spreading COVID-19, Schulberg said it wasn't a complete letdown that the restaurant wasn't fully packed. Although Great Pacific ceded its Main Street seating to Main Street Cowboy vendors, the restaurant was able to maintain robust outdoor seating by placing seating along the Southeast Emigrant Avenue sidewalk

While Meda was able to avoid the stresses of enforcing the mask mandate, Schulberg said getting people to comply with it was one of GP's consistent hurdles.

"It was kind of a dark cloud on the week," he said.

He added that the restaurant distributed masks to those without face coverings, only to see some repeat customers return later in the week without a mask again. Even though business was slower compared to past Round-Ups, Schulberg said the restaurant isn't hanging its hat on it and will be working toward the next uptick in business during the holiday season.



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Rodeo fans stand and remove their hats for the singing of the national anthem Sept. 15, 2021, at the Pendleton Round-Up. Some local business owners say their business saw slow days early in the week and a turn around as the week progressed.

Restaurants aren't the only member of the Round-Up economy, which feeds a variety of permanent and transient businesses.

Kitty corner from Great Pacific, New York Clothier is a haberdashery that sells the kind of shirts that wouldn't be out of place in a rodeo audience. New York Clothier co-owner Kay Davis wrote in an email that business was slower early in the week before the second half of the week saw customer levels similar to the 2019 rodeo.

"We didn't have an expectation — the one thing the pandemic has taught us, there is no predicting," she wrote. "We are thankful the 111th Pendleton Round-Up was able to commence and our doors were open to greet our returning customers and meet new customers. That is a blessing."

Hotels seemed as busy as ever during Round-Up week. Bobbi McGee, the general manager of the Marigold Hotel, 105 S.E. Court Ave., said all of the building's rooms were

booked for the week. While the Marigold struggled with the demand for rooms during the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest as they faced a labor shortage, McGee said the hotel was better prepared for the rodeo.

Among the vendors in town just for Round-Up week, the results were mixed. Through Thursday of Round-Up week, Main Street vendors were reporting lower than average business but hoping for an uptick on the final two days of the rodeo.

House:

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"We've been had," said Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles, a lead negotiator for GOP on redistricting for the 2022 election. "I don't know if that makes me a sucker, but if it does, I'm a sucker with character."

Bonham was reacting to the decision by Kotek, to unilaterally revise a deal giving Republicans equal say on the House Redistricting Committee.

The House and Senate redistricting committees had worked since August on the much-delayed political maps. Twelve legally required hearings were held and thousands of pieces of testimony and comments were gathered. Democrats and Republicans submitted a total of eight different maps.

But with the start of the special session, all legislation and committees had to be reconstituted.

The Senate had a committee of three Democrats and two Republicans, just as before. It voted 3-2 to recommend maps drawn by Democrats for 60 House, 30 Senate and six congressional districts. The full Senate approved the maps on an 18-11 party-line vote. The maps were then shipped over to the House.

In a surprise, if not completely unforeseen collision of partisan priorities, Kotek announced she was

cleaving the redistricting committee in two.

"Separate committees are the only path the House now has to fulfill its responsibilities," Kotek said.

A committee to vote on House and Senate maps would have the previously-brokered equality of Republicans and Democrats.

However, Kotek created a new committee of two Democrats and one Republican to consider the more controversial congressional maps.

"I am confident the maps passed by the Senate meet all statutory and constitutional requirements," she said.

Kotek accurately forecast the storm of protest from Republicans, many of whom noted the speaker had already announced plans to run for governor in 2022.

"No map is perfect, and this is a very complex task," Kotek said. "Ultimately, we are bound to do our constitutional duty and the job Oregonians elected us to do.

The committees sent both plans to the floor Sept. 21.

The legislative maps were recommended on a 5-3 vote.

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, voted with Democrats, saying the plan was better than alternatives that might come up if the House



Smith

A GOP boycott could



Andrew Selsky/The Associated Press, File

The Oregon House of Representatives prepare to open an evening session June 10, 2021, in the Oregon Capitol in Salem. The House was to meet Monday, Sept. 20, for a special session on redistricting until a case of COVID-19 prompted a cancellation.

didn't have its say.

The congressional maps were approved 2-0. Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, R-Albany, the only Republican, refused to take part in the vote because of Kotek creating an automatic Democratic tilt to the panel.

With the plans now poised to be called up for final approval, Republicans are talking about one what one referred to as "the nuclear option" — refusing to attend the floor vote.

A GOP boycott could

crash and burn months of work on new districts required by the 2020 U.S. Census.

Though Democrats hold a 37-22 majority in the House, the Oregon constitution requires two-thirds of members be present to conduct any business.

No Republicans showed up for a scheduled 10 a.m. session Sept. 20. When they were also absent for the 1 p.m. session, a boycott appeared in the making.

But Drazan confirmed

the COVID-19 case was the reason for cancellation of the session and the GOP caucus would follow recommendations on quarantining. Kotek had said any member who was vaccinated did not have to quarantine.

A walkout wasn't off the table. The COVID-19 incident just paused a decision, which Drazan said she hoped would lead to a compromise.

"In the meantime, we will continue ongoing conversations with Democratic leadership on the redistricting

Water:

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"To take this new age technology and sort of marry it to our traditional roots, especially in Umatilla which has always been an agricultural community ... in reality, they actually worked out in a great symbiotic relationship," Stockdale said.

The cooling water from Amazon is piped to an irrigation canal run by the West Extension Irrigation District, which serves 10,400 acres of farmland.

The project broke ground in 2019, with roughly 7 miles of pipe that run from the data center campuses to a new headworks on the district's canal at the northeast end of the city.

From there, the water flows about 1,200 feet allowing it to mix with the district's water pumped directly from the Columbia River, diluting any excess salts and reaching a suitable pH level before it can be used for irrigation.

Stockdale said the infrastructure cost a little more than \$5 million. So far, Amazon is the only customer on the new system, though that could change with future developments.

Water deliveries began in 2020. This year, Stockdale estimated they provided enough water for farmers to grow an additional 1,000 acres of crops, all with existing water rights.

"Technically, it's the city's water in the irrigation district's canal," Stockdale said. "If a farmer wants access to additional water, they have additional water capacity available to them through this system."

The value of agriculture in arid Eastern Oregon grows exponentially with water.

Dryland wheat grown without irrigation yields roughly \$100 per acre. Adding 1 acre-foot of water increases the crop's value to \$500 per acre. At 3 acre-feet of water, and farms can earn up to \$5,000 per acre growing higher value specialty crops.

An acre-foot covers an area about the size of a football field with 1 foot of water, or about 325,851 gallons.

As more data centers come online in Umatilla in the coming years, Stockdale said the city is examining other potential uses for the water in addition to irrigation, such as repairing wetlands in the area for wildlife.

"We continue to look at ways to be good environmental stewards of our resources," Stockdale said.

A spokesperson for Amazon Web Services said the project is the first of its kind in Oregon and for the company, and the goal is to increase water reuse at its northeast Oregon data centers to 100%.

County:

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The county on Sept. 22 reported 72 new presumed and confirmed COVID-19 cases. Average daily cases have declined slightly since the peak of the delta surge last month, when the county reported more than 400 cases for seven straight weeks, smashing all previous pandemic records.

Umatilla County's total number of COVID-19 cases stands at 12,808. Approximately 1 in 6.25 Umatilla County residents have tested positive.

Since the start of the pandemic, Umatilla County residents have been infected with COVID-19 at a higher rate than any county in Oregon, according to state. Last week, according to data from Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock, 970 people received a COVID-19 vaccination.

Although the county's COVID-19 vaccinations increased for more than a month, its total remains the fifth worst in Oregon. Roughly two out of every five Umatilla County residents have been fully immunized, according to the state.

process," Drazan said in a statement. "It's in the best interest of Oregonians that we salvage an opportunity to pass fair maps."

Democrats said they were moving ahead with the maps.

Republicans were left with the "nuclear option" of a boycott. Their absence could force additional concessions from Democrats.

If no maps from the Legislature are delivered to the Oregon Supreme Court by Sept. 27, the court has ruled it will take lawmakers out of the process, as outlined in the constitution. The legislative maps would be drawn by Secretary of State Shemia Fagan.

A five-judge panel created by Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Martha Walter would decide on the six-seat congressional map.

During a traditional period of "remonstrances" each House meeting, both parties on Monday made statements accusing the other of partisan gamesmanship.

Democrats called out Republicans for using a constitutional parliamentary rule to leverage a role beyond their minority status in both chambers.

Republicans said the maneuvers were legal and had been used by Democrats in the past. They accused Kotek of reneging on an agreement, which they said would come back to hurt future negotiations, whether she is speaker or governor.