

Bi-Mart to sell pharmacy business to Walgreens

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Bi-Mart announced Thursday, Sept. 30, that Walgreens will acquire Bi-Mart's pharmacy business, including "pharmacy patient prescription files and related pharmacy inventory of 56 Bi-Mart pharmacies located across Oregon, Idaho and Washington."

"This decision, while difficult, is strategically important as we move to strengthen our solid financial position and expand our plans for future growth in the Northwest," Rich Truett, Bi-Mart president and CEO, said.

Current Bi-Mart pharmacy staff members will be offered an opportunity to join Walgreens.

"We look forward to welcoming Bi-Mart patients to Walgreens pharmacy services, as well as providing employment opportunities to Bi-Mart pharmacy associates in available positions throughout our stores where they can continue to meet the needs of their patients," Walgreens regional Vice President Rob Ewing said.

Don Leber, vice president of marketing and advertising for Bi-Mart, said the transition has been discussed for quite some time.

"It's been worked on for



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

A customer waits outside the pharmacy window Thursday, Sept. 30, 2021, at the Pendleton Bi-Mart. The cooperative that same day announced Walgreens will acquire Bi-Mart's pharmacy business, including pharmacy patient prescription files and related pharmacy inventory of 56 Bi-Mart pharmacies across Oregon, Idaho and Washington.

several months," he said. "We started this process two to four years ago with other locations when we transferred (the pharmacies of) 20 stores to see if we could make them more profitable."

Most prescription information will be transferred to nearby stores, according to a press release from the two companies. In areas that do not have a Walgreens nearby, however, Walgreens will operate already-existing pharmacies in Bi-Mart locations under the Walgreens brand.

It's not yet known if that will be the case in

four Northeastern Oregon Bi-Mart locations in Hermiston, Pendleton, La Grande or Baker City. The Walgreens locations nearest to Northeastern Oregon are in Tri-Cities, Washington, or Ontario.

A list of which Bi-Mart locations would house a Walgreens pharmacy was not available, according to Phil Caruso with Walgreens media relations, noting the deal is subject to customary closing conditions.

Caruso did say that once the transfer is complete, new patients will have access to "all the benefits of Walgreens," including health

screenings, immunizations, omni-channel support that includes access to pharmacists, and "adherence-boosting programs" through a mobile device such as daily pill reminders and refill by scan. A list of which Bi-Mart locations

Patients who are having their prescriptions transferred will be notified by mail, and "both companies will work together to help ensure a smooth transition for pharmacy patients," the release stated.

The file transfer should be complete by January 2022.

Portland firefighters to get bulletproof vests as risks increase

By JAIMIE DING
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Portland firefighters soon will have access to bulletproof vests while on the job.

The decision was spurred by a "changing landscape" and more calls that increase the possibility of firefighters being involved with aggressive patients and bystanders, according to Portland Fire & Rescue spokesperson Terry Foster.

Purchasing the vests was discussed by the agency's safety committee and supported by Fire Chief Sara Boone, Foster said.

Many specifics still need to be worked out, such as when the vests will be worn, how many will be purchased and when they will be implemented.

However, the decision is fully supported by the firefighters union, said Isaac McLennan, vice president of the Portland Fire Fighters' Association.

Firefighters have been more concerned for their safety because of responders being attacked or stabbed in Oregon and other parts of the country, McLennan said.

McLennan referenced a 2018 fire in Springfield where a man started shooting at firefighters responding to a house fire. Police said authorities believed the man intentionally set the 4 a.m. blaze to ambush emergency responders.

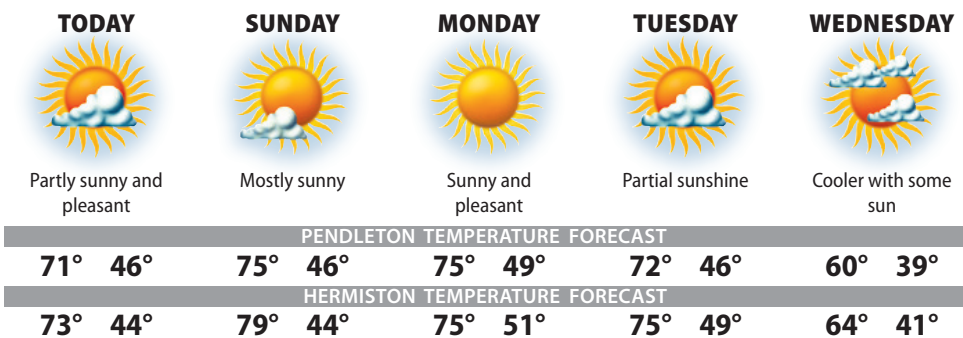
No one was seriously injured, but the attack left fire truck windshields riddled with bullet holes.

The purchase of the bulletproof vests doesn't mean firefighters will be sent into more dangerous situations, however.

A scenario for their use would be responders going in to rescue an injured person while police worked to secure an area with an active shooter, McLennan said.

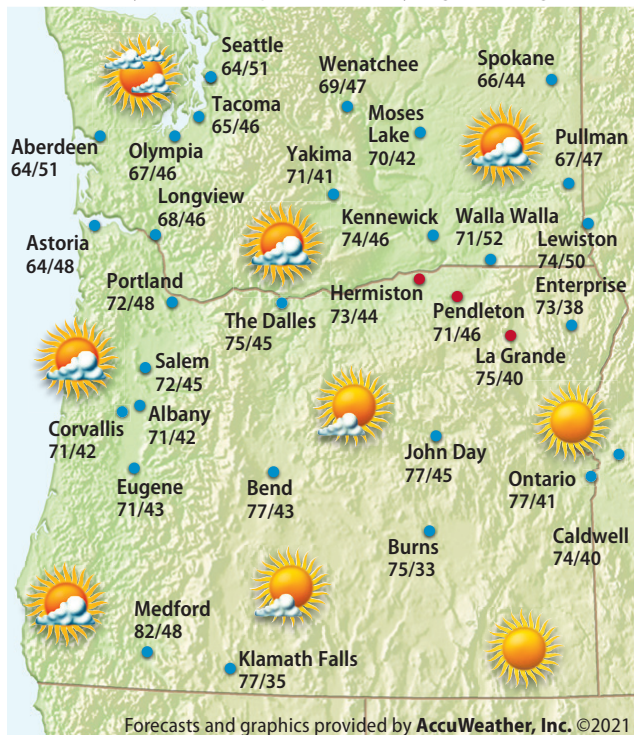
The decision to provide the bulletproof vests comes during a year of record-breaking violence in Portland. The Portland Police Bureau reported 837 shootings through August, with the largest year-over-year increase in the north precinct, where 383 shootings were reported by Aug. 31 — a more than 100% increase from the same period in 2020.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



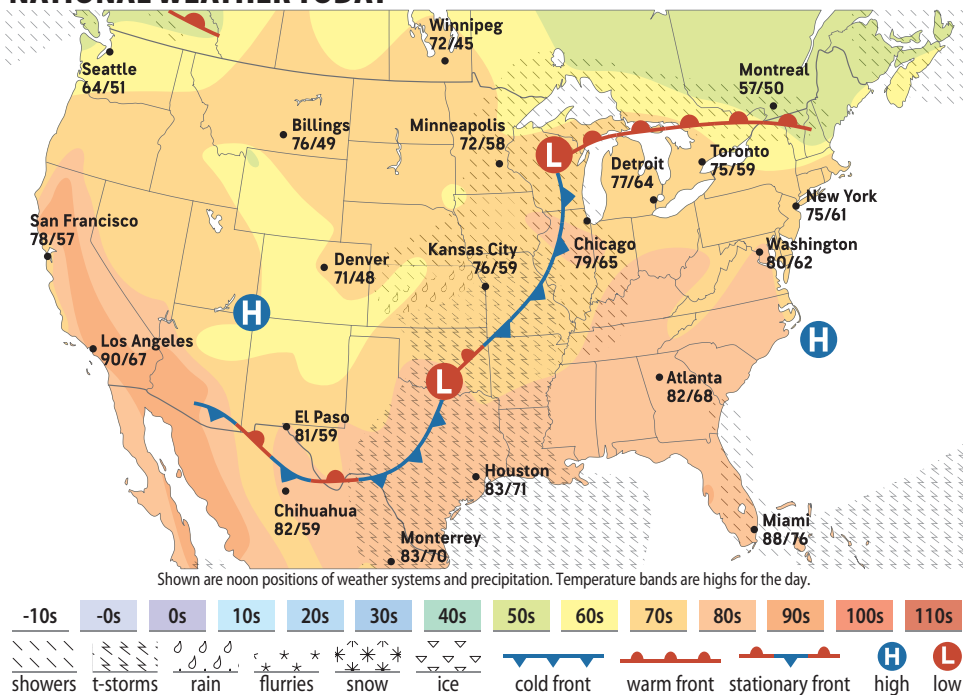
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	67°	49°
Normals	72°	46°
Records	93° (1931)	29° (1900)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
Month to date	Trace	
Normal month to date	0.03"	
Year to date	5.00"	
Last year to date	8.82"	
Normal year to date	9.24"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	70°	50°
Normals	75°	43°
Records	87° (1970)	25° (1950)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
Month to date	0.00"	
Normal month to date	0.02"	
Year to date	2.67"	
Last year to date	1.73"	
Normal year to date	5.69"	
WINDS (in mph)	Today	Sun.
Boardman	SW 3-6	SW 3-6
Pendleton	WNW 4-8	WNW 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:55 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	6:33 p.m.	
Moonrise today	2:04 a.m.	
Moonset today	5:21 p.m.	
New	First	Full
Oct 6	Oct 12	Oct 20
Oct 28		

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 97° in Oceanside, Calif. Low 13° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Oregon reports 79 schools with active COVID-19 outbreaks

By ELIZABETH MILLER
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — The numbers are likely an undercount or behind current case information.

According to Oregon Health Authority's weekly report, there are nearly 80 schools with active outbreaks in schools across the state.

That's 31 more schools than OHA listed the week before — an increase of about 65%.

Multiple schools are reporting multiple outbreaks. For example, North Bend Senior High School in Coos County has reported three active school outbreaks, adding up to a total of 26 cases between the outbreaks. In the Sept. 22 report, there was one outbreak listed with a total of 9 cases.

Outbreaks are defined as having two or more cases identified "where there is evidence of transmission" at a school.

North Bend Superintendent Kevin Bogatin said in his district, outbreaks have been related to athletics and extracurricular activities.

"We cannot confirm any kind of spread that we can link to the classroom," Bogatin said. "We have had outbreaks related to athlet-

ics and connected to specific teams."

Even cases at the elementary level connect to athletics, Bogatin said.

Games have had to be postponed due to all the cases and quarantines, though North Bend High did finally get a chance to play its local rival, Marshfield in football Sept. 25. North Bend lost the game.

Bogatin said staff has been "fairly healthy," which has helped schools stay open, even though many students are out of school.

But school has been in session there for less than a month, and Bogatin said COVID-19 has put a strain on operations. Staffing shortages are everywhere — from classified staff and sports officials to food delivery drivers.

Eight other schools are listed as having multiple outbreaks. Three of those schools have at least one resolved outbreak, but the other six have multiple active outbreaks. The schools are spread out across the state, from the Portland area to southern Oregon, but there are multiple schools with multiple outbreaks in Jackson and Coos counties.

These numbers are likely undercounts or out of date, due to lags between reporting

and local public health authorities.

The most recent onset listed in the report is Sept. 17, almost two weeks ago.

For example, according to OHA's report, Benson Polytechnic High School in Portland has only had one student test positive for COVID-19 in the last 28 days. According to PPS' own dashboard, 12 students and one staff member have been "isolated" in the last 28 days. "Isolation" includes individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are "presumed" to have COVID-19. PPS does not report positive cases in its dashboard.

Some of the report reflects individual quarantines or whole school closures. Coquille Junior Senior High reports eight individual student cases and two outbreaks totaling 11 cases. The school is closed for in-person learning until Oct. 11.

Local district information is likely the most reliable, though districts aren't required to publish COVID-19 case information.

Though imperfect, OHA's weekly report provides the only statewide information on COVID-19 in schools.

IN BRIEF

One man injured in Spring Creek crash

LA GRANDE — One man was seriously injured in an early morning vehicle crash Tuesday, Sept. 28, on Interstate 84, about 12 miles west of La Grande near the Spring Creek exit.

Abraham Ortiz, 37, Heber City, Utah, was eastbound on I-84 when his 2000 Audi collided with a parked semitrailer shortly after 3:30 a.m. Crews from the La Grande Rural and the La Grande fire departments had to free Ortiz from his vehicle. The extri-

cation process was an involved one.

"The roof of the car had to be torn off," said Sgt. Grant Jackson of Oregon State Police.

There were no other occupants in the Audi, police said.

Ortiz suffered life-threatening injuries, and an ambulance took him to Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande, Jackson said.

Matthew Ellenberger, 49, Meridian, Idaho, told police he was sleeping in his vehicle at the time of the crash. He was not injured. No passengers were in the truck driver's vehicle.

— EO Media Group

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.

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