

Bear injures Sumpter man

ODFW does not have plans to trap and kill this bear

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

SUMPTER — Noah Beckner barely had time to recognize the animal as a black bear before it was swatting a claw-tipped paw at his head.

He ducked just in time. The paw, as Beckner puts it, “nicked” his face.

Beckner, 19, who lives in Sumpter, said the encounter with the bear in his front yard, late on Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 25, left him with scratches on his cheek and above one eye, among other injuries.

During a phone interview on Monday morning, Nov. 29, Beckner said the knuckle of the middle finger on his right hand, the one he used to punch the bear in the eye, was still sore.

So was his shoulder, where the bear briefly bit him.

Beckner said he was wearing multiple layers of clothing, and the bear’s teeth didn’t penetrate his skin.

‘It didn’t want to fight me’

The incident happened

about 11 p.m. on Thanksgiving, and Beckner said a relative drove him to Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City, where he was treated in the emergency department and released.

Beckner, who has lived in Sumpter for about a year and a half, said he’s convinced the bear felt cornered when it initially tried to flee and ran into a shed near his front door.

“It didn’t want to fight me — it just wanted to leave,” Beckner said. “It tried to defend itself, and once it realized it could get away it did.”

Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office in Baker City, said he interviewed Beckner about the episode.

Based on Beckner’s description, and in particular that the bear fled as soon as it no longer was confined, Ratliff said he hasn’t set up any traps in Sumpter to try to capture the bear.

Ratliff said he would have taken a different approach if it looked as though the bear had intentionally attacked Beckner.

“It’s unfortunate that it happened but the bear didn’t seek (Becker) out and attack

“IT DIDN’T WANT TO FIGHT ME — IT JUST WANTED TO LEAVE. IT TRIED TO DEFEND ITSELF, AND ONCE IT REALIZED IT COULD GET AWAY IT DID.”

— Noah Beckner, who was attacked by a black bear outside his Sumpter home on Thanksgiving night

him, and it didn’t come back,” Ratliff said. “It was trying to get away.”

Ratliff said he planned to notify the Sumpter City Council about the incident, and to remind city officials about the need to urge residents to not keep food sources, including coolers or refrigerators, as well as trash, outdoors in places easily accessible to bears.

Ratliff said he will continue to monitor the situation in Sumpter.

“My biggest concern is that this bear is going to choose not to den up,” he said.

Ratliff said Beckner described the bear as very skinny — Becker said in the phone interview he could see the animal’s ribs — which suggests the bear isn’t in condition to hibernate.

Bears not uncommon in Sumpter

The historic gold mining

town, population 200, is in the midst of a ponderosa pine forest about 27 miles west of Baker City. During the late summer and fall of 2017, a Sumpter resident shot and injured a bear on his front porch. The same bear later entered a home in Sawmill Gulch near Sumpter through an unlatched door.

That bear was one of the three ODFW employees trapped and killed during that time.

Ratliff said he’s had only a couple reports of bears in Sumpter this year.

A late-night surprise

Beckner said he’s seen bears several times in Sumpter, including near his home on Ibeex Street, up the hill and about three blocks east of Mill Street, the town’s main thoroughfare.

“Bears are constantly walking through Sumpter, every night,” he said.

But Beckner had no reason to think about bears when he walked out his front door in the last hour of Thanksgiving.

He didn’t hear anything — he was just going outside. The bear was about five to 6 feet away.

“I’ve seen a fair amount of bears, and I recognized it immediately,” Beckner said.

The bear turned and ran, but a shed just outside the front door blocked its route. Then it spun and ran toward Beckner.

“It slashed at my face, but I moved out of the way and it just nicked me,” he said.

The bear then stood on its hind legs.

Beckner, who is about 5-foot-9, said the bear was slightly taller than he is. He said he “wrestled for a little bit” with the bear, during which the bear briefly bit his shoulder.

Beckner said he then punched the bear.

He said the bear backed up slightly and, once it realized its path was not blocked by the shed, it ran down the hill.

“I never saw it again after that,” he said.

Beckner estimated the incident lasted 45 seconds or so.



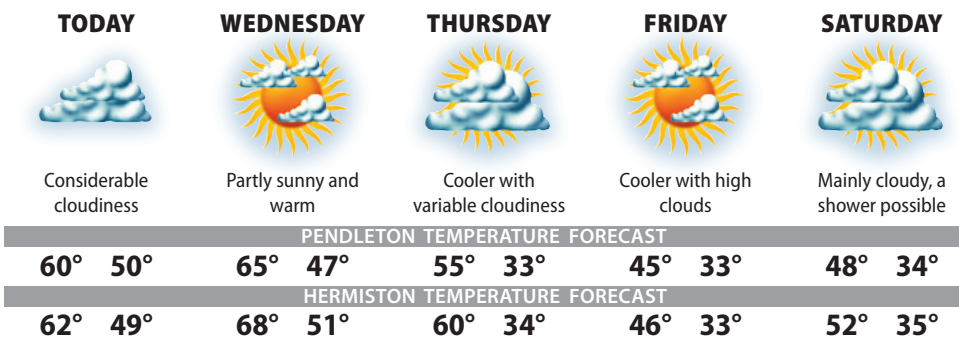
Noah Beckner/Contributed Photo
Noah Beckner suffered wounds to his face when he was attacked by a black bear outside his Sumpter home on Thanksgiving night. Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021.

Although the bear was emaciated, Beckner, who has competed in wrestling and grappled with opponents up to 250 pounds, said he’s “never felt a human so strong as that.”

He said he understands that leaving food or trash in accessible places can entice bears, and he strives to avoid such situations on his property. Beckner said he thinks he was simply unlucky, and the incident didn’t make him more fearful of bears.

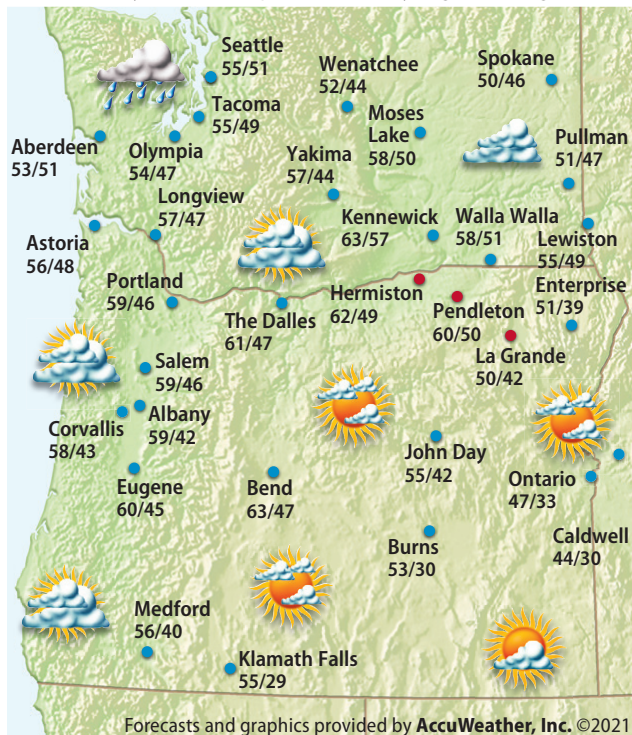
“If it had not been for the fact that it got cornered it wouldn’t have attacked me,” he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



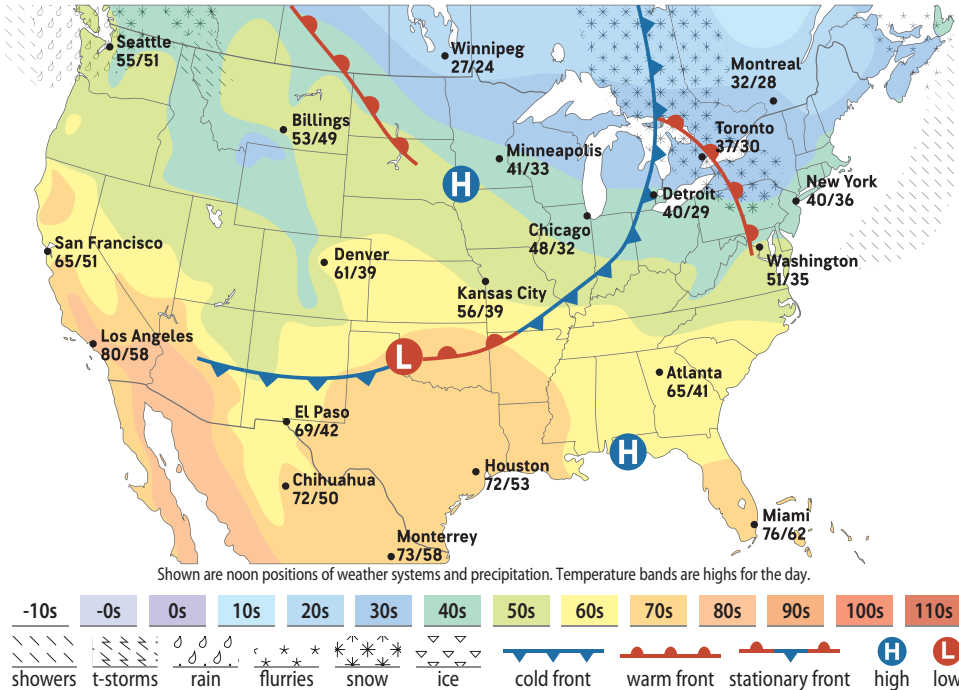
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	60°	47°		
Normals	44°	30°		
Records	72° (1892)	-13° (1896)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.11"			
Month to date	1.35"			
Normal month to date	1.36"			
Year to date	7.38"			
Last year to date	12.25"			
Normal year to date	11.68"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	64°	51°		
Normals	45°	30°		
Records	67° (1973)	8° (1985)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.01"			
Month to date	1.15"			
Normal month to date	1.02"			
Year to date	5.07"			
Last year to date	3.94"			
Normal year to date	7.49"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Wed.		
Boardman	SW 7-14	SW 6-12		
Pendleton	SW 6-12	SW 4-8		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	7:14 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	4:13 p.m.			
Moonrise today	2:26 a.m.			
Moonset today	2:18 p.m.			
	New	First	Full	Last
	Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 18	Dec 26

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 88° in Chino, Calif. Low 2° in Eagle River, Wis.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Oregon’s aging workforce trend expected to accelerate, report finds

By JULES ROGERS
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — An October report by the Oregon Employment Department found the share of aging workers age 55 and older has tripled across the state over the past three decades — while the total number of jobs grew only about 50%.

According to the report, these aging workers held slightly more than 10% of jobs in the state in 1992, but by 2019, that number increased to 24%. The report cited that the large Baby Boomer generation, now 55 and over, are more likely to continue in the labor force at that age than previous generations.

“It’s important to consider the implications for busi-

nesses’ future ability to find enough workers,” Gail Krumenauer, state employment economist and author of the report, told the Business Tribune. “We’re already in a situation, with an unemployment rate at 4.4%, that is really low by historical standards. Employers are currently having widespread difficulty finding all the workers that they’d like to hire or need to hire.”

Many of these aging workers do plan to retire within the next decade — retiring their skillsets and knowledge, as well — and business owners will need to replace them somehow.

“Even though we should see some of that current (hiring) difficulty get alleviated in the coming months, in the longer-term with more

workers hoping to retire in the coming years, that’s going to create a different but ongoing source of difficulty for them to have enough available workforce,” Krumenauer said.

The report found this aging workforce trend can be expected to accelerate in the near future. It also found the pace of retirements will quicken in industries that have higher shares of aged workers. In Oregon, the healthcare industry has the most aged workers, the report found — and rural counties have even more aged workers.

However, employers in Portland metro counties will find larger groups of young workers to recruit from when replacing retirees in general, the report said.

IN BRIEF

Turkey Trot draws a crowd

BAKER CITY — Seasonably chilly temperatures just above freezing didn’t dissuade more than 300 people from gathering in downtown Baker City on Thanksgiving morning, Thursday, Nov. 25, to raise money and food to help local residents.

And run or walk 3.1 miles before they sat down to their own holiday feasts.

The 14th-annual Turkey Trot raised more than \$5,000 and 1,600 pounds of food for the Northeast Oregon Compassion Center.

“There were at least 300 people that registered,” said Brian Vegter, who with his wife, Corrine, organizes the annual fundraiser. “It was fun to have it back in person again.”

Last year, due to the pandemic, competitors completed the course on their own schedule.

On the women’s side, winners were Kirsten Holden, Hailey Keller and Isabelle Gee.

Due to a clock problem, the runners’ times weren’t available.



Samantha O’Conner/Baker City Herald
Walkers and runners gathered on Main Street in downtown Baker City on Thursday morning, Nov. 25, 2021, for the annual Turkey Trot fundraiser for the Northeast Oregon Compassion Center.

In the men’s category, Justin Ash crossed the finish line first in a time of 17:25. He was followed by Quentin Jensen and Thaddeus Pepera.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTION

In a Page A3 story about the Pendleton Round-Up court, published Saturday, Nov. 27, the headline attributed the court to the wrong year. The Round-Up announced its 2022 court.

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.

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

In the App Store:

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 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 © 2021, EO Media Group

Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
52 weeks	\$135	42 percent
26 weeks	\$71	39 percent
13 weeks	\$37	36 percent

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

ADVERTISING

Regional Sales Director (Eastside) EO Media Group:
• Karrine Brogotti
541-963-3161 • kbrogotti@eomediagroup.com

Multimedia Consultants:
541-564-4531
• Melissa Barnes
541-966-0827 mbarnes@eastoregonina.com
• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Business Office
• Dayle Stinson
541-966-0824 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising
Classified advertising: 541-564-4538
Legal advertising: 541-966-0824
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 Rachael Plunkett at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email community@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements.
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips, email sports@eastoregonian.com.

COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Commercial Print Manager: Holly Rouska
541-617-7839 • hrouska@eomediagroup.com