

No 'da' — Oregon nixes sales of Russian-made vodkas

By ALEX WITTEW
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — The Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission banned the sale of Russian vodkas in all Oregon liquor stores on Monday, Feb. 28, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine last month.

Independent operators of liquor stores were directed to take Russian vodkas off their shelves, aligning Oregon with other states that have acted to ban the sale of Russian made products as a part of economic sanctions against Russian operated businesses, according to a press release from the OLCC.

In Oregon, the OLCC effectively owns the supply of alcohol in the state, serving as a state-run monopoly for the industry.

"The state controls all the liquor that is in the store," said Liberty O'Dell, manager at La Grande Liquor and Smoke Shoppe. "In fact, they are still the owners of the liquor. We're beholden as agents of the state to follow their guidance. We don't take steps ahead of the OLCC when they make guidance like that. It's similar to a library in that we don't actually own the product. The liquor is owned by the state."

Customers in and out of the liquor store commented



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Empty space Tuesday, March 1, 2022, marks where Russian Standard once stood on the shelf at La Grande Liquor & Smoke Shoppe, La Grande. The Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission moved to ban the sale of all Russian vodkas after the Russian military invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

in passing about the banning of Russian vodka from store shelves. La Grande Liquor, however, only had two bottles of Russian-made vodka — Russian Standard Vodka — and O'Dell said it was "an item that doesn't sell very well in the first place."

Customers were under-

standing, according to O'Dell.

"I think everybody understands why we're doing it," he said. "The questions we've been getting is 'what's Ukrainian vodka — and how do I get some?' So my next order, that's what I'll be doing, is ordering some Ukrainian vodka."

Eastern Oregon produces several vodkas, including Glacier 45 vodka distilled in Baker City and 276 Vodka produced by Oregon Grain Growers Distillery, Pendleton. Both are quality vodkas, according to O'Dell.

Across the state, about 5,000 bottles of Russian-

made liquor were for sale in 281 liquor stores, according to the OLCC. Those vodkas have since been removed from store shelves. Oregon liquor stores also are prohibited from fulfilling any customer "special order" requests for Russian manufactured liquor. Vodkas with Russian

sounding names such as Smirnoff and Stolichnaya that are produced outside of Russia and aren't subject to the ban, according to the OLCC press release. Stoli Group, the distillery that makes Stolichnaya in Latvia, offered up a statement on its website that said "Stoli Group has had a long history of fighting oppression from the Russian regime," and condemned the Russian military actions in Ukraine. Stoli is produced in Latvia, while Smirnoff is produced in Illinois.

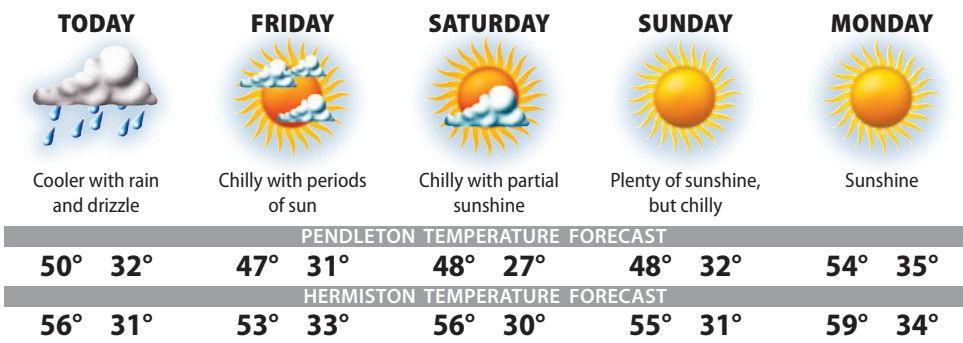
The move to ban Russian vodkas can be seen as largely symbolic as very few Russian vodkas are imported to the United States. A small number of bars have gone viral online for pouring out Stoli brand vodkas, despite the vodka being produced in Latvia, a NATO member country.

A list of the vodka brands that have been pulled from the shelves can be found on the OLCC website.

But even if the OLCC didn't outright ban the sale of Russian vodka, O'Dell said it would be something he personally would have liked to see pulled from store shelves.

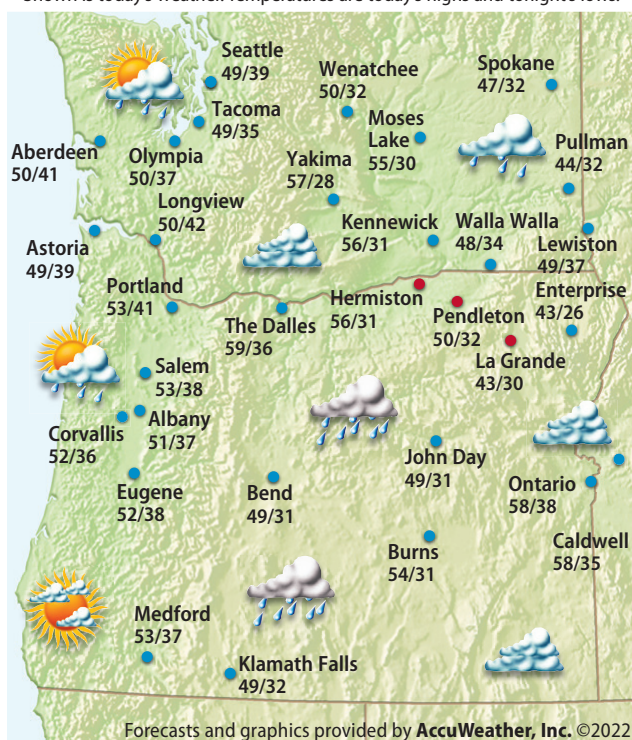
"I would be advocating to do it," O'Dell said. "Me, the person, would be advocating to do it."

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

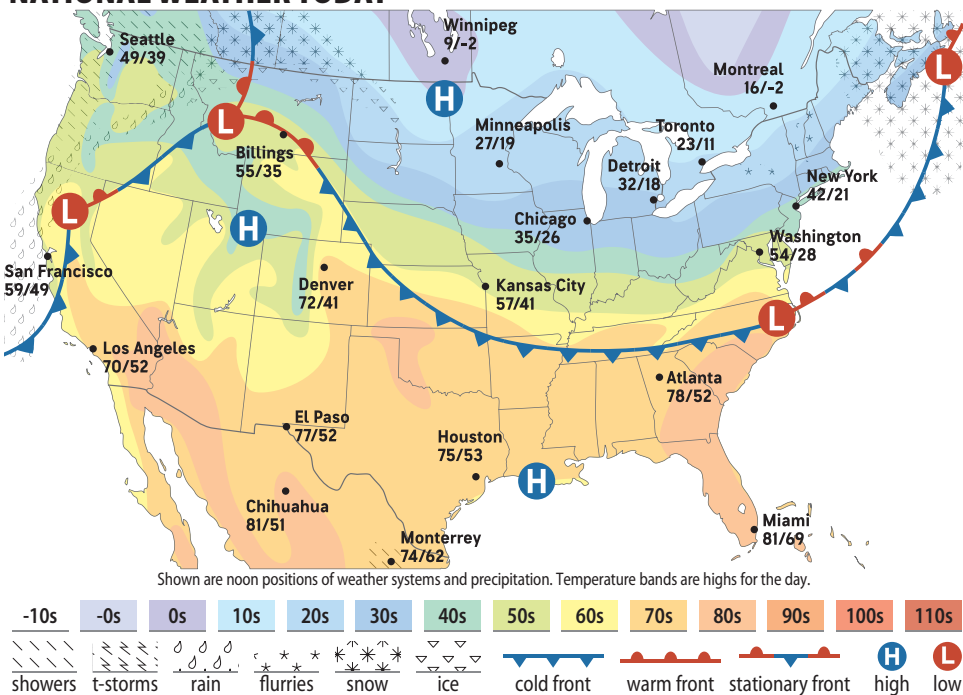
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	52°	46°
Normals	52°	32°
Records	69° (1931)	2° (1896)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
Month to date	0.11"	
Normal month to date	0.08"	
Year to date	2.55"	
Last year to date	3.02"	
Normal year to date	2.77"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	55°	48°
Normals	55°	31°
Records	73° (1936)	10° (1993)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
Month to date	0.06"	
Normal month to date	0.09"	
Year to date	1.15"	
Last year to date	1.61"	
Normal year to date	2.05"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Fri.	
Boardman	W 4-8 NNE 4-8	
Pendleton	WSW 7-14 NNW 6-12	
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:30 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	5:45 p.m.	
Moonrise today	7:23 a.m.	
Moonset today	7:06 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 90° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low -6° in Kremmling, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Teen presents on dating violence

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — A Joseph Charter School eighth grader recently headed up an assembly to share with her fellow students concerns about dating violence among teens.

"I'm spreading awareness about teen dating violence," said Harley Wanner before the assembly Feb. 22. "I'm doing this assembly; I'm doing an FCCLA meeting."

It's part of her project as a member of the school's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America chapter.

FCCLA is a nonprofit national career and technical student organization for youths in family and consumer sciences education in public and private schools in grades six through 12. There are about 30 students in JCS's chapter, Wanner said. A dozen of them joined her in putting on the assembly.

"I'll go to present this project at state and hopefully

at nationals if I make it," Wanner said. "I can present my project at state and help people in the community in any way I can."

She said her fellow FCCLA members do a variety of projects with the same goal as hers — of advancing in the competition to state and nationals. She said they do projects such as teacher appreciation, raise money for cancer victims and their families and one girl is making a dress of recycled materials.

Lisa Collier, the JCS adviser for the FCCLA chapter, said Wanner also brought in representatives from Safe Harbors, a nonprofit group that provides crisis intervention and advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking, as well as community education and outreach, according to the group's website. Katherine Marrone and Marika Straw from Safe Harbors put on a slide show and talked to

the youths who attended.

"She wanted to work with Safe Harbors," Collier said of Harley. "February is dating violence awareness month."

Harley, who is just 13, said that kids today are dating younger than in even recent generations.

"Nowadays, kids as young as 12 will date," she said. "But any relationship can be toxic."

She also said that the age gap between dating partners doesn't make much of a difference.

"It's all the same," she said. "The age gap doesn't matter."

But it comes down to recognizing and avoiding toxic or abusive relationships.

"You watch for signs of abuse and toxic relationships," Harley said. "If they're mentally manipulating you, that's a sign of a toxic relationship. An abusive relationship is when you're physically harming your partner. There are so many other things."

IN BRIEF

Two La Grande residents have plea hearing dates in mail theft case

LA GRANDE — Two La Grande residents facing dozens of charges each of mail theft have a court date to enter a plea.

The state in Union County Circuit Court on Monday, Feb. 28, arraigned George Kelly, 26, and Gracee Shelley, 22, on 79 counts of mail theft and two counts of identity theft. The court set Kelly's plea hearing date for 1:15 p.m. March 15 and Shelley's plea hearing for 11 a.m. April 26.

La Grande police on Feb. 20 arrested the pair after an investigation into reports of mail theft and booked them into the Union County Jail. The court set Kelly's bail at \$73,000 and

Shelley's at \$50,000.

Shelley is now out on bail, but Kelly remains behind bars

Union County deputy district attorney Ryan Rodighiero said Kelly received an earlier plea hearing date because he is still in jail.

La Grande police said that all of the stolen mail — taken from 54 addresses — has been located and returned. One count of mail theft was charged for each victim who had at least one piece of mail stolen.

La Grande attorneys Jim Schaeffer is representing Shelley and Jared Boyd is representing Kelly. Neither were available for comment March 1.

Mail theft is a federal crime, meaning the federal government could choose to prosecute the case.

— 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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