

Together again: FFA state convention returns in person

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

REDMOND — Watching the opening session of the 2022 Oregon FFA State Convention, Hayden Bush could feel tears welling in his eyes.

“I’m an emotional person,” said Bush, an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Tillamook High School. “There is something about being in that session hall and feeling that excitement that you can’t get virtually.”

More than 2,500 Oregon FFA members and guests gathered starting Thursday, March 17 for the first in-person convention since the start of the pandemic, bringing a rush of energy and unbridled enthusiasm to the Deschutes Fair & Expo Center in Redmond. The convention culminated March 21 in the election of state officers.

For Codie-Lee Haner, a freshman at Sherman County High School in Moro, it was her first live convention experience. She likened it to a rock concert, particularly in the main session hall where members crowded around the stage to dance with their friends.

“So far, I’ve made a lot of friends along the way,” Haner said. “I’m not good at making friends, but I’ve opened up to a lot of people here.”

It is precisely that element of togetherness that FFA members and advisors say can’t be duplicated online.

Two years ago, Oregon FFA members were preparing for the annual state convention when the



From left, Corrina Smith and Dakota Anderson, sophomores, Elgin FFA, and Gary Walls, senior, Lone FFA, pose for a photo during the 2022 Oregon FFA State Convention in Redmond, which ran Thursday through Saturday, March 17-20, 2022.

George Plaven/Capital Press

first coronavirus restrictions were announced. All public gatherings were banned to prevent the spread of the virus, forcing the cancellation of the convention a week before it was scheduled to begin.

Oregon FFA leaders moved quickly to pivot to a virtual convention in 2020, then again in 2021. While not ideal, the format still

allowed members to compete in events, attend workshops and elect new officers.

Kendall Castrow, a senior at Redmond High School, said she is excited to be coming out of the pandemic and reuniting with her fellow FFA members from across the state.

“I feel like there’s been a lot of

built-up energy,” Castrow said. “Everybody gets to kind of release that energy and just be themselves.”

Bush, the Tillamook FFA advisor, said this year was his 15th state convention as both a teacher and student. It was at here, Bush said, that he met his best friend and the future best man at his wedding. It was also here that he decided he

wanted to become an agriculture teacher in his hometown.

“The kids learn stuff here they can take home,” Bush said. “Perhaps most importantly, they learn who they are.”

Gary Walls, a senior from Lone, met the morning of March 19 with Corrina Smith and Dakota Anderson, both sophomores from Elgin. Walls, who joined FFA in seventh grade, had just earned his State Degree, the highest award a state FFA association can bestow on its members.

The friends said they remember feeling disappointed when the state convention was canceled in 2020. Now it was time to celebrate.

“You can feel all the positivity and great emotions in-person,” Walls said.

“I’m really a people person,” Anderson added. “I like to meet new people.”

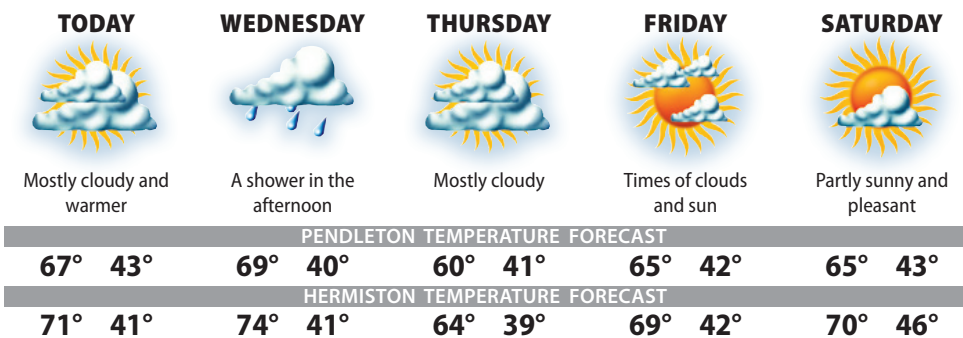
Phil Ward, Oregon FFA CEO, said this year they eclipsed 14,000 total members statewide — the most in the state organization’s history.

For the majority of these students, Ward said this was their first in-person state convention. “They’re seeing it for the first time with fresh eyes,” he said. “It’s been fun to watch.”

Though Ward said he is proud of Oregon FFA for how it has responded to the pandemic, there is simply no substitute for being together in person.

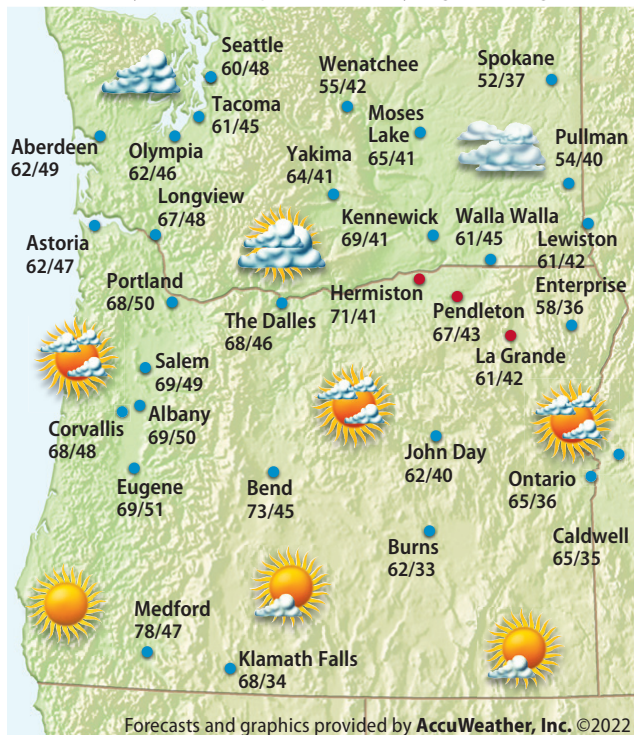
“It just reminds me of what FFA is all about,” he said. “This is an organization that builds potential in young people.”

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	50°	39°
Normals	57°	36°
Records	78° (1915)	19° (1913)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"
Month to date	1.14"
Normal month to date	0.90"
Year to date	3.58"
Last year to date	3.22"
Normal year to date	3.59"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	53°	42°
Normals	61°	35°
Records	78° (1934)	20° (1944)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.06"
Month to date	0.88"
Normal month to date	0.52"
Year to date	1.94"
Last year to date	1.69"
Normal year to date	2.52"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Wed.
Boardman NNE 4-8	SW 7-14
Pendleton WNW 4-8	W 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:55 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:10 p.m.
Moonrise today	none
Moonset today	9:10 a.m.

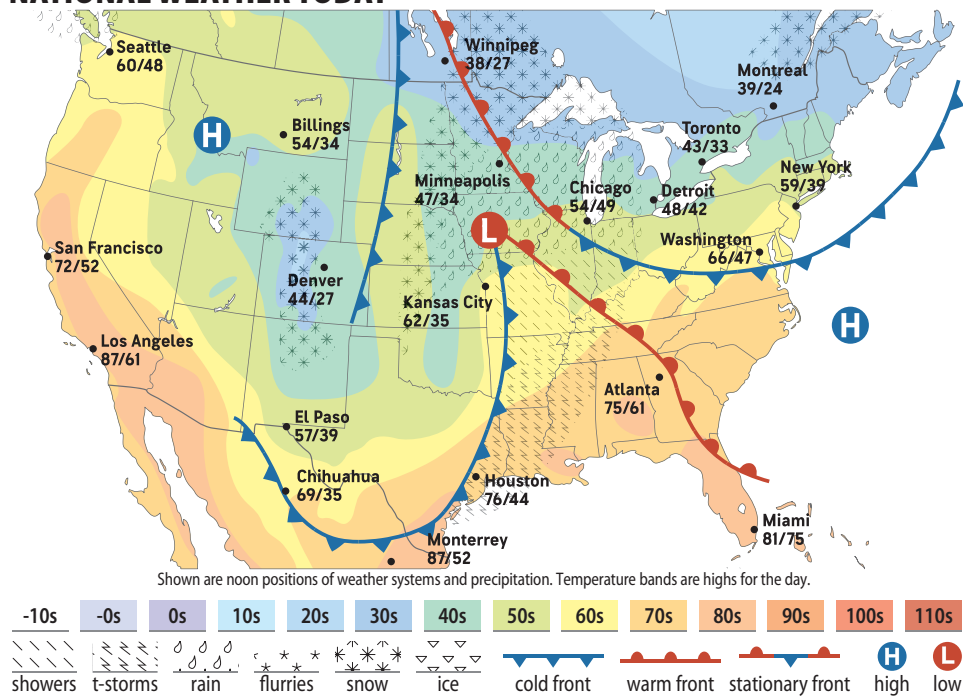
Last New First Full
Mar 24 Mar 31 Apr 8 Apr 16

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 97° in Cotulla, Texas Low -4° in Driggs, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Wolves kill working dog near Halfway

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

HALFWAY — A wolf or wolves from the Cornucopia pack inflicted fatal injuries on a working dog on a cattle ranch near Halfway last week.

And a state wildlife biologist who monitors wolves in Baker County said wolves from the Cornucopia and Keating packs — a total of at least 15 animals — have been making some unusual movements during the past month or so.

“It makes it harder to predict what’s going to happen, and it makes it harder on producers,” said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Baker City office.

Six wolves — three from each pack — are fitted with GPS tracking collars, but Ratliff said recently two of those collars, one from each pack, ceased working.

The collars don’t allow anything approaching real-time information about the wolves’ location, Ratliff said, and uploading data

from the collars to satellites uses a considerable amount of the collar’s battery power, so if they reported the location frequently the collars wouldn’t last long.

The collars typically report their location once a day although sometimes more often — the time varies to give a wider range of data — which is usually enough to allow Ratliff to spot trends and, when necessary, to alert ranchers that wolves have been frequenting a specific area.

That’s been the case recently in the north end of the Eagle Valley, north of Richland, Ratliff said.

Ranchers have frequently been hazing wolves in that area. Ratliff said he has hazed wolves there as well.

So far there have been no reports of wolves attacking livestock in that area, he said on Thursday, March 17.

The fatal attack on the working dog, a 40-pound heeler, happened across the divide in the south end of Pine Valley, near Pine Town Lane.

The dog’s owner found the animal by its kennel the

morning of March 15, Ratliff said.

The dog died later, after being treated by a veterinarian, and Ratliff said the owner, after burying the animal, called ODFW.

Ratliff said the dog was disintegrated and, after examining its wounds on March 16, he confirmed it had been attacked by a wolf or wolves.

He said it’s not certain where the attack happened, but he doesn’t think the dog, given the severity of its injuries, could have traveled very far after the attack.

According to the ODFW depredation report, the dog had “premortem bite punctures to the head and throat with associated muscle tissue trauma. Bruising of the hide and muscle trauma were found on the back, hips, and groin. The location and size of the tooth marks are consistent with wolf attack injuries on dogs.”

According to the report, radio collar data from a yearling male wolf from the Cornucopia pack placed the wolf a half-mile from the ranch where the dog lived, at 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. on March 15.

IN BRIEF

Enterprise may have to return ARPA funds

ENTERPRISE — The city of Enterprise may have to give back some of the federal American Rescue Plan Act funds coming its way, according to a press release from the city.

The city resolved at its Feb. 14 meeting to distribute the \$443,000 it has received under the American Rescue Plan Act distributed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, City Administrator Lacey McQuead on March 14 announced the possibility that some of the funds may have to be returned. City attorney Wyatt Baum agreed that losing the funds is a possibility, so McQuead said none of the funds will be spent until the expected second round of funding is

received. She said the next round is expected in July or August and is to total \$221,795.

She said after the meeting there was a notice sent out regarding a “claw-back plan,” that would have rescinded recently allocated funds.

“However, it doesn’t sound like Oregon is a part of the rescinding funds discussion, as it was not on the list of 30 states this could impact,” McQuead said in an email.

Fire Chief Paul Karvoski said there is a concern over rising prices and the list of funding requests he had previously made likely will go up.

After a discussion, the council agreed the ARPA Committee will review recommendations made, make adjustments and revisit the issue at the next council meeting.

—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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