

PacifiCorp proposes rate increase; PUC seeks public comment

By **ALEX HASENSTAB**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Utility provider PacifiCorp has proposed a 6.8% increase in its rates. In Oregon, that means Pacific Power customers could see their electric bills go up next year.

The agency responsible for overseeing utility costs in the state, the Oregon Public Utility Commission, is hosting a virtual public comment hearing Tuesday, May 24.

“Technically your utilities are a monopoly,” commission spokesperson Kandi Young said. “When you move into a home, you don’t have a choice of what electric service provider you get or what natural gas provider you get. The Public Utility Commission is that protector of the customer in ensuring that you’re getting safe, reliable service at a reasonable rate.”

The hearing is part of a nearly year-long review of the rate increase proposal. The Oregon Citizens’ Utility Board, the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers and other agencies will aid in the investigation on behalf of customers.

Citizens Utility Board President Bob Jenks said the public hearing is part of the review process. The board will take comments into consideration when it decides whether to grant the PacifiCorp request.

“This is a chance for customers to come in and weigh in on whether they think that’s justified or not,” Jenks said.

PacifiCorp, which is owned by



East Oregonian, File

PacifiCorp is proposing a 6.8% increase in its power rates. The Oregon Public Utility Commission is hosting a virtual public comment hearing on the proposal on Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

multinational conglomerate holding company Berkshire Hathaway, identified several factors driving the rate increase. These included a plan to close coal plants and transition to more renewable sources of energy, particularly the TB Flats wind energy project. PacifiCorp also pointed to increased costs associated with its vegetation management programs and expansion of its wildfire mitigation programs, as well as inflation and changes to its capital structures.

But Jenks said the utility board is not convinced all the reasons for the increase are justified.

“Raising rates on Oregonians to send more money to Berkshire, we don’t think has any justification right now, particularly in the context of this kind of big rate hike being proposed,” Jenks said.

The proposed increase would have consumers paying about \$84.4 million more. The rate increase would impact customer rates differently depending on usage and

customer type: residential, business or industrial customers. For example, a residential customer, using the average amount of energy for a single-family home currently has a bill of a little less than \$100. They would see around \$13 added to their monthly bill.

The meeting May 24 starts at 6 p.m. The investigation concludes in December when the commissioners rule on the request. New rates, if approved, are expected to go into effect on Jan. 1.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Pacific Power customers and others may participate in the public comment hearing to provide verbal comments to the Public Utility Commission and the administrative law judge presiding over this rate case.

Spanish translation services are available at no cost. For those individuals needing translation services, log into the Zoom platform and select English or Spanish on the bottom of the page. Translation services are not available for the meeting phone-in option.

When: Tuesday, May 24, 6 – 7 p.m.

Call-in: 971-247-1195; meeting ID: 823 8399 1218; passcode: 4884093995.

English and Spanish: To participate using Zoom, go to bit.ly/3LEH8S1.

English: To participate by phone, call 971-247-1195; meeting ID is 823 8399 1218; passcode is 4884093995.

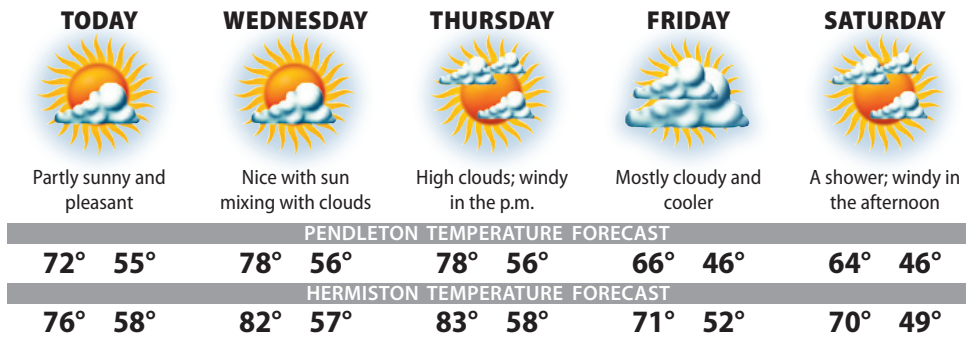
Those unable to participate during the virtual public comment hearing may submit comments through June 22 in the following ways:

Email: PUC.PublicComments@puc.oregon.gov.

Phone: 503-378-6600 or 800-522-2404 (all relay calls accepted, Spanish translation services available).

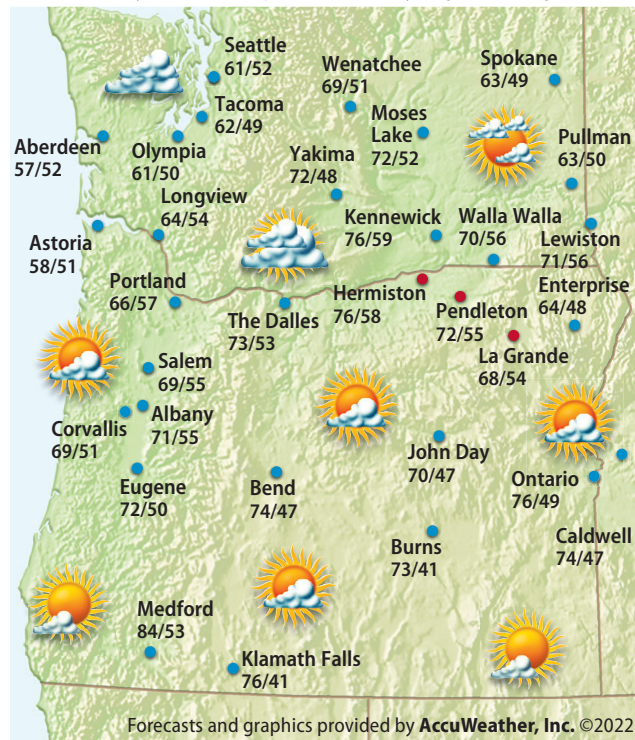
Mail: Oregon Public Utility Commission, Attn: AHD – UE 399, P.O. Box 1088, Salem, OR 97308-1088.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



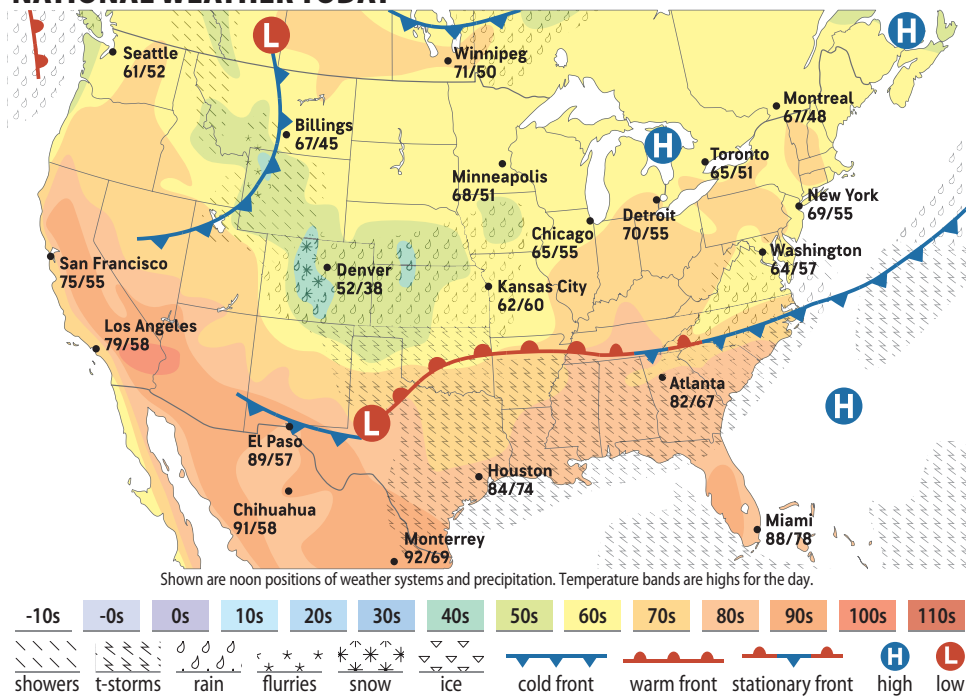
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	71°	48°
Normals	74°	48°
Records	95° (2001)	23° (1903)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	1.51"	
Normal month to date	1.06"	
Year to date	7.13"	
Last year to date	4.01"	
Normal year to date	6.40"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	78°	46°
Normals	78°	49°
Records	101° (1951)	30° (1964)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.88"	
Normal month to date	0.59"	
Year to date	4.77"	
Last year to date	2.23"	
Normal year to date	4.14"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Wed.	
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 8-16
Pendleton	W 6-12	W 7-14
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:15 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:29 p.m.	
Moonrise today	2:59 a.m.	
Moonset today	2:36 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 98° in Needles, Calif. Low 20° in Lake Yellowstone, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Bringing art back to the classroom



Elgin High School art teacher Beth Wasley, left, checks a loom on May 16, 2022, while her students — from left, Kylee Baggett, Chelsie McKay and Dakota Anderson — work on projects. The Elgin School District has not had art teachers for years, and now has two: Wasley, who teaches half time, and Amanda Welch, who teaches full time at Stella Mayfield Elementary School.

Dick Mason/The Observer

Baker City Presbyterian Church donates \$15,000 to Ukraine aid

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A fundraising effort by Baker City’s First Presbyterian Church to aid humanitarian work in Ukraine resulted in a \$15,000 donation to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

The local campaign started in late March, a little more than a month after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Jean Simpson-Geddes, a member of the local church Session, the Presbyterian governing body, said donations from members of the Baker City and La Grande congregations, along with donations from other Baker County residents, totaled \$7,500.

Baker City’s First Presbyterian Session matched that

amount, for a total donation of \$15,000, Simpson-Geddes said.

The Baker City church will be sending thank you notes to people from outside the church congregation who contributed to the campaign, she said.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been working in Ukraine and bordering countries to provide shelter, meals, medicines and hygiene products to residents affected by the war.

“We’re happy to match whatever we can,” said Jean Simpson-Geddes, a member of Session.

According to its website, pda.pcusa.org, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance focuses on these areas:

- The long term recovery

of disaster impacted communities.

- Provides training and disaster preparedness for presbyteries and synods.

- Works collaboratively with church partners and members of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) internationally, and nationally with other faith based responders.

- Connects partners locally and internationally with key organizations active in the response — United Nations, NVOAD (National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster), World Food Program, Red Cross, FEMA and others.

To learn more about the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance work in Ukraine, visit pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/.

IN BRIEF

Wallowa Lake State Park to host volunteer work party

JOSEPH — Wallowa Lake State Park rangers are seeking 50 volunteers to celebrate both State Parks Day and National Trails Day through volunteer service.

Volunteers will join park staff to improve the Nature Trail at the state park on Saturday, June 4. Work includes blocking social trails, cutting back overgrown limbs on the official trail and lining the official trail where it is hard to follow.

Volunteers will work with hand tools and move on gravel and uneven surfaces. Tools

and other equipment will be provided. Bring drinking water and gloves and wear clothes suitable for the weather conditions.

Participants must register by June 1. To sign up, go to www.store.oregonstateparks.org, click on “Tours/Events” and scroll down to choose the Wallowa Lake volunteer event.

The 100 Volunteer Projects for 100 Years series commemorates the Oregon State Parks centennial, and there are a variety of volunteer opportunities scheduled in 2022. Those who participate will contribute to the legacy of service that has sustained the state parks system for the past century.

—EO Media Group

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