

# Northeastern Oregon food bank sees increase in demand

By ISABELLA CROWLEY  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — More people have been relying on the regional food bank this spring in Union County, mirroring the trend seen across the state, according to the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank — a service of Community Connection — and the Oregon Food Bank.

Two types of food assistance boxes are offered by the regional food bank: fresh food boxes and traditional food boxes. Fresh food boxes — produce boxes, harvest share boxes or fresh alliance boxes — can be picked up daily or weekly depending on the location. Traditional food boxes, which include shelf-stable items, are offered only once a month.

In Union County, the average number of people accessing fresh food services increased by 28% in April and May compared to the average across January, February and March. In comparison, traditional food boxes increased by only 10% in the same time frame.

“What this tells me is that people are needing to access the food bank more frequently,” said Audrey Smith, regional food bank manager for Community Connection of Northeast Oregon.

Susannah Morgan, chief executive officer of the Oregon Food Bank, told Oregon Public Broadcasting the trend is due to two factors. First, federal benefits provided during the pandemic — stimulus checks, expanded unemployment, addi-



Isabella Crowley/The Observer

**The Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank distribution center in Island City has a good stock of shelf-stable and frozen foods Tuesday, June 28, 2022, according to the food bank's manager. More people relied on food assistance from food banks in April and May in comparison to January, February and March.**

tional money for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and more — have been ending across the county. The second factor is inflation, with rising food costs and gas prices leading more people to need assistance.

The regional food bank has seen this trend in all of the counties it supports — Baker, Grant, Union and Wallowa. Across all four coun-

ties, there has been a 23% increase in fresh food boxes and a 7% increase in traditional food boxes.

Smith said more people accessing food assistance programs in the spring is a flip from the usual trend. Typically, more people access food banks in December, January and February when utility costs are high, and the number of recipients decreases at the start of spring.

Numbers for June will be available in early July, but the trend is expected to hold, said Smith.

The regional food bank receives weekly shipments from the Oregon Food Bank, which is supplemented by fresh produce donated by local stores and farmers. Smith said that the regional food bank has a good stock of shelf-stable and frozen foods at its new food distribution center.

So far, local donation levels have not changed.

### Across Oregon

This trend also has been seen across the state.

“We are in a historic high for hunger in Oregon,” Morgan said.

The pandemic increased the number of people experiencing hunger in the state. In 2019 — prior to the pandemic — 860,000 people in Oregon and Southwestern Washington asked for food at least once during the year, according to Morgan. This number nearly doubled for 2020 — 1.7 million people — and remained high in 2021 — 1.2 million people. At the start of 2022, the number of people needing food assistance seemed to be continuing the downward trend, but recently that has turned around and the number is once more climbing.

### Impact on the Oregon Food Bank

The rising costs of food and fuel have also directly impacted the Oregon Food Bank. According to Morgan, fuel costs are up 30% and freight costs are up 16% since December. On average, the food bank is paying 12% more for food purchases to keep up with demand.

“As a concrete example, pre-pandemic a truckload of peanut butter cost about \$34,000. That same truck load today is well over \$40,000,” she said.

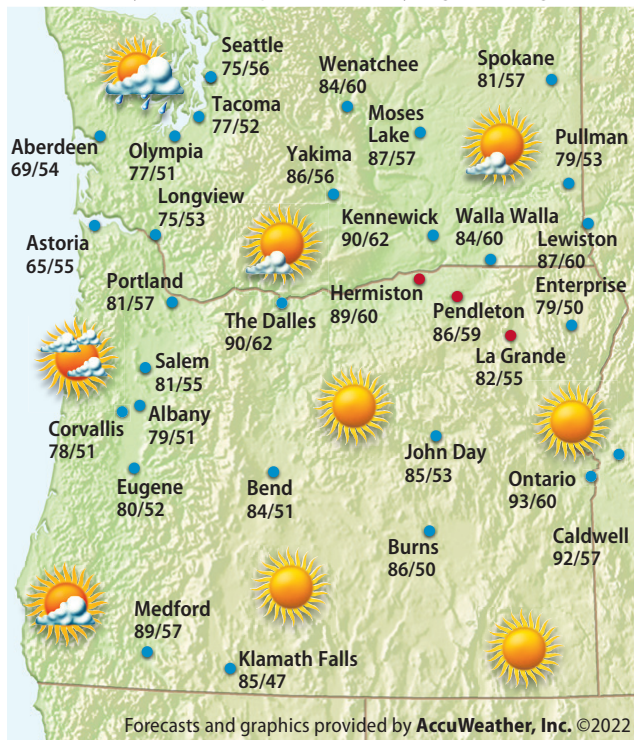
This trend has been seen throughout the nation, but so far Oregon has been able to meet the need with existing food assistance sites and supplies.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
 Mostly sunny and pleasant	 Nice with plenty of sunshine	 A t-storm late in the afternoon	 A t-storm around in the p.m.	 A t-shower in spots in the p.m.
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
86° 59°	90° 59°	88° 62°	81° 58°	77° 55°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
89° 60°	91° 62°	90° 61°	84° 57°	80° 57°

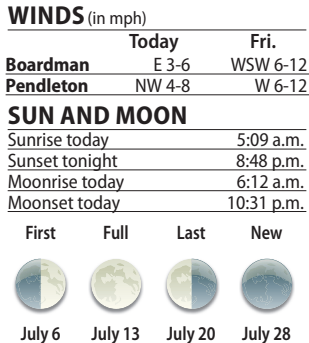
## OREGON FORECAST

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



## ALMANAC

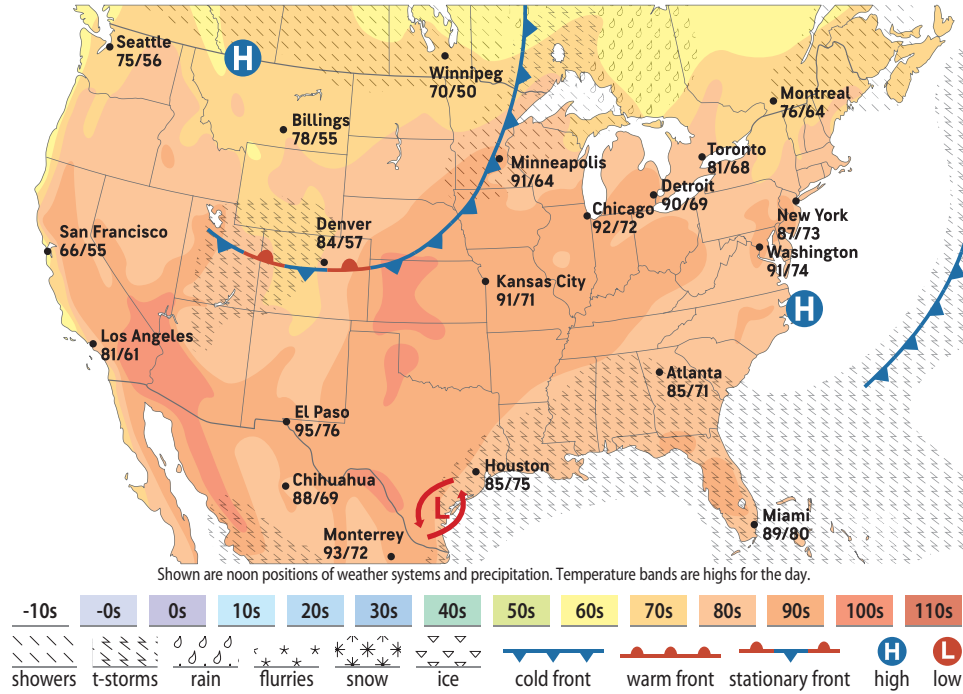
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	82°	53°
Normals	84°	55°
Records	117° (2021)	37° (1898)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	2.16"	
Normal month to date	1.09"	
Year to date	10.82"	
Last year to date	4.29"	
Normal year to date	7.93"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	85°	56°
Normals	87°	55°
Records	118° (2021)	44° (1964)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	1.66"	
Normal month to date	0.63"	
Year to date	7.45"	
Last year to date	2.46"	
Normal year to date	5.01"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Fri.
Boardman	E 3-6	WSW 6-12
Pendleton	NW 4-8	W 6-12
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:09 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:48 p.m.	
Moonrise today	6:12 a.m.	
Moonset today	10:31 p.m.	



## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 113° in El Centro, Calif. Low 26° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# Baker City business working to revive annual motorcycle rally

By IAN CRAWFORD  
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A downtown Baker City business is reviving a major summer event that seemed destined to be canceled for the third straight year.

Shameless Tees, a screen-printing store at 1921 Main St., is coordinating what it calls the Resurrection Rally 2022.

The event, planned for July 8-10, the weekend after Independence Day, is intended to bring hordes of motorcycle riders back to Baker City.

The annual Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, a tradition for almost two decades that attracted thousands of visitors to the city, was canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

In February of this year,

Mark Dukes, a partner in High Desert Harley-Davidson of Meridian, Idaho, the dealership that has organized the rally for the past few years, said the business wouldn't be putting on the rally in 2022.

Dukes said in February that the issue this year isn't so much concerns about how the pandemic would progress, but a shortage of employees at the dealership, and an Oregon Department of Transportation project to build more than 300 wheelchair-accessible curb cuts in Baker City this summer, including on Main Street.

Dukes said his goal was to bring the rally back in 2023.

But Shameless Tees wasn't content to wait another year. “Baker loves the rally,” said Brandy Bruce, who works at the store. “So we're

trying to bring it back.”

Although the Resurrection Rally has been scheduled and a website created — thebcmr.com — organizers are still seeking permission from the city to close Main Street during the weekend, as has been done with past Hells Canyon rallies.

Bruce said organizers have talked with many downtown business owners, and had “an overwhelmingly positive response” to the rally plans.

“We're trying to get through to the rest but I think we have a majority,” she said.

The website has information about camping options for riders on a ranch in Keating Valley, as well as registration packets.

Bruce also said Ison House and the Corner Brick Grill are planning concerts during the rally.

## IN BRIEF

### ODF begins fire season in Northeast Oregon District

LA GRANDE — Warming temperatures and changing fuel conditions are prompting the Oregon Department of Forestry to begin fire season on private forest lands in Northeast Oregon.

Fire season will be at 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 1, for forest and range lands protected by ODF Northeast Oregon District, according to an announcement from the department.

“We've seen a little reprieve this spring and early summer. Fire season has been announced in June for the past few years, so it's been good to have some delay this year,” Matt Howard, an ODF district forester, said.

The fire season declaration places fire prevention restrictions on landowners and

the public. Additionally, fire prevention regulations on industrial logging and forest management activities are put into place. Lands affected include private, state, county, municipal and tribal lands in Union, Baker, Wallowa and Umatilla counties along with small portions of Malheur, Morrow and Grant counties within the Northeast Oregon Forest Protection District. This area encompasses approximately 2 million acres of protected lands.

“Those spring storms have provided some much-needed moisture. However, this moisture has caused a lot of growth in our fine fuels, such as grasses, small brush and shrubs,” Howard said. “These are often our carrier fuels and are more susceptible to quickly drying and becoming ready-to-burn faster.”

— EO Media Group

**CORRECTION:** The Page A3 story “Pendleton area students become grant makers,” published Saturday, June 25, misstated a Nixyaawii Community School student's name on first reference. Her name is Keyen Singer.

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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