

May is Wildfire Awareness Month

SALEM—In observance of Wildfire Awareness Month and in response to an earlier than normal Red Flag Warning issued by the National Weather Service in April, the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) is reminding Oregonians to get ready for the 2021 wildfire season and potential power outages.

"If the Labor Day Fires in 2020 taught us anything, it's to be ready for future wildfire events, regardless of where you live in Oregon," said Letha Tawney, PUC Commissioner. "The PUC

and other state agencies are providing information early to help Oregonians avoid being caught by surprise by wildfires that may require evacuations, utilities to implement public safety power shut-offs, or cause widespread power outages."

Prepare for Wildfires Before They Happen

- Register to receive alerts from official sources. Download the FEMA app and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. Also, sign up for emergency notifications with your local city and/or county, as well as outage alerts from your electric utility service provider.
- Develop an emergency plan and make sure everyone in your household knows and understands what to do in the event of an evacuation.
- Create a circle of safety around your home, which is a fuel-free defensible space that can help reduce fire danger. Visit Keep Oregon

Green for more information.

Prepare for a Potential Power Outage

Wildfires can cause power outages, or electric utilities may elect to implement a public safety power shut-off (PSPS). This is a safety measure designed to help protect people and communities in high fire-risk areas by proactively shutting off electricity during extreme and dangerous weather conditions that might result in wildfires. If a PSPS becomes necessary for electric utilities to implement, the service providers will contact their customers directly. Below are links to access the outage and PSPS information online for the investor-owned utilities regulated by the PUC:

- Portland General Electric
- Pacific Power
- Idaho Power

Oregonians are encouraged to do the following to prepare for a potential power outage before the 2021 wildfire season:

- Be two weeks ready –

Gather food, medical supplies, batteries, pet supplies, among other things, needed by family members during an outage or evacuation for up to two weeks. Learn more about what supplies to consider.

- For individuals with a medical condition that requires power, please contact your service provider in advance of an outage to register a Medical Certificate. This certification provides added benefits and helps the utility ensure they meet your needs in the event of an outage. Also, consider a backup generator or alternative location for power needs.
- Keep cell phones fully charged in anticipation of an outage. Consider a car-charger for cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Make sure your utility service provider has current contact information for notifications by updating your account online.

During a Power Outage

- Contact your electric utility service provider to in-

Oregonians reminded to be ready for 2021 wildfire season

form them of an outage. Below is the contact information for the investor-owned utilities regulated by the PUC. If uncertain which utility serves your area, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/energy-oregon/pages/find-your-utility.aspx>.

- Portland General Electric – 800-544-1795
- Pacific Power – 877-508-5088
- Idaho Power – 800-488-6151

- Avoid downed power lines at all costs.
- Stay clear of utility crews working to restore service in your community.
- Use flashlights or battery operated lanterns for emergency lighting. Do not use candles or other potential fire hazards.
- Turn off lights and unplug electric appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer to help avoid a surge to the system when service is restored. After turning off all the lights, turn one light on to know when power has been restored.
- Use generators safely – Do not run the generator

inside the home or garage or anywhere near a window or vent, as these spaces can capture deadly levels of carbon monoxide. Learn more about proper use of a generator to avoid hazardous conditions.

- Check on elderly neighbors or individuals with special needs who might need additional assistance.

Natural Gas Tips

- If required to evacuate, no need to shut off natural gas.
 - If natural gas appliances do not operate properly once electricity is restored, call your natural gas service provider.
 - If natural gas service is shut off, do not turn on yourself. Call your natural gas service provider to restore service.
 - If you smell natural gas, evacuate immediately and call 911
- For additional information on fire prevention and preparedness, visit: www.oregon.gov/puc/safety/Pages/Power-Outage-Prep.aspx.

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 Corner of 10th & Maple
 541-997-3533

UPDATE from page 1A

- Indoor Recreation and Fitness Establishments: maximum 10 percent occupancy or 50 people total, whichever is larger
 - Indoor Entertainment Establishments: maximum 10 percent occupancy or 50 people total, whichever is larger
 - Retail Stores: maximum 50 percent occupancy
 - Faith Institutions & Funeral Homes: indoor maximum 25 percent occupancy or 150 people total, whichever is smaller; outdoor maximum 200 people
- The governor was able to move the whole state out of

extreme risk due to stabilizing hospitalization levels under guidance from OHA.

"Thank you, Oregon. It's because of the smart choices you have made — wearing masks, avoiding large gatherings and getting vaccinated — that COVID-19 infections have not continued to spike," Brown said. "Your actions have saved lives. Please keep it up and follow health and safety precautions when you are out in public so that we can continue to protect one another."

On Tuesday, Brown predicted that the rate that Oregonians are getting vaccinated would prevent a fu-

ture designation of extreme risk.

"The sooner we can get a significant majority of Oregonians vaccinated, the sooner we can get back to our regular lives," she said.

The governor encouraged people to reach out to their health care providers if they have concerns or questions about the vaccines, which have been proven to be safe and effective.

In addition, vaccines are becoming more widely available through vaccination clinics and pharmacies. All COVID-19 vaccinations are free and no insurance is required. In Florence, the next

mass vaccination clinic will be held on Friday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St. People can schedule an appointment at www.lanecounty.org/vax-clinics. Appointments are recommended, but walk-ins will be welcome.

Prime and Boost doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be available for people.

This event is conducted by Lane County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, through Lane County Government, Lane County Health & Human Services and the City of Florence.

"It's because so many Oregonians continue to

get vaccinated that we are able to lift our extreme risk health and safety restrictions across Oregon today. It's because of vaccines that so many Oregonians will be able to hug mom again this year. So please, stay safe, and support a local small business this weekend," Brown said.

People can learn more about the virus, and how to get vaccinated, at:

- <https://coronavirus.oregon.gov/Pages/living-with-covid-19.aspx>
- <https://all4oregon.org/>
- <https://lanecounty.org/coronavirus>
- <https://lanecounty.org/vaxclinics>

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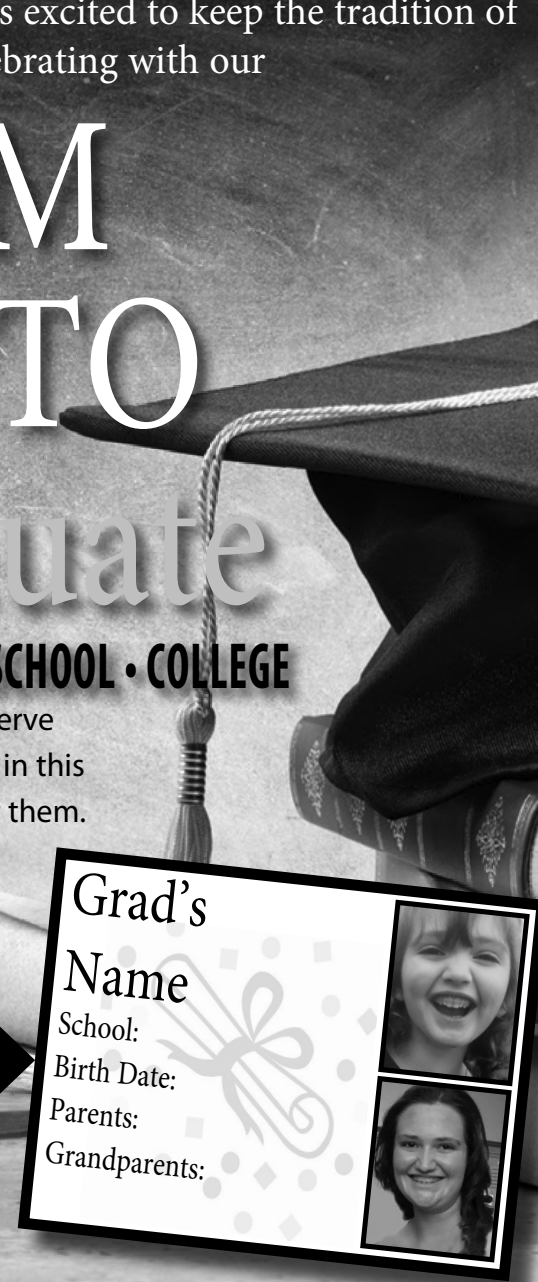
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