

Engine problem leads NASA to scrub launch of new moon rocket

BY MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A fuel leak and then an engine problem during final liftoff preparations led NASA to call off the launch of its mighty new moon rocket Monday, Aug. 30 on its debut flight with three test dummies aboard.

The next launch attempt will not take place until Friday, Sept. 2 at the earliest and could be off until next month.

The flight, when it happens, will be the first launch in NASA's Artemis project, a quest to put astronauts back on the moon for the time since the Apollo program ended 50 years ago.

As precious minutes ticked away Monday morning, NASA repeatedly stopped and started the fueling of the Space Launch System rocket with nearly 1 million gallons of super-cold hydrogen and oxygen because of a leak of highly explosive hydrogen. The leak happened in the same place that saw seepage during a dress rehearsal back in the spring.

Then, NASA ran into new trouble when it was unable to properly chill one of the rocket's four main engines, officials said. Engineers continued working to pinpoint the source of the problem after the launch postponement was announced.

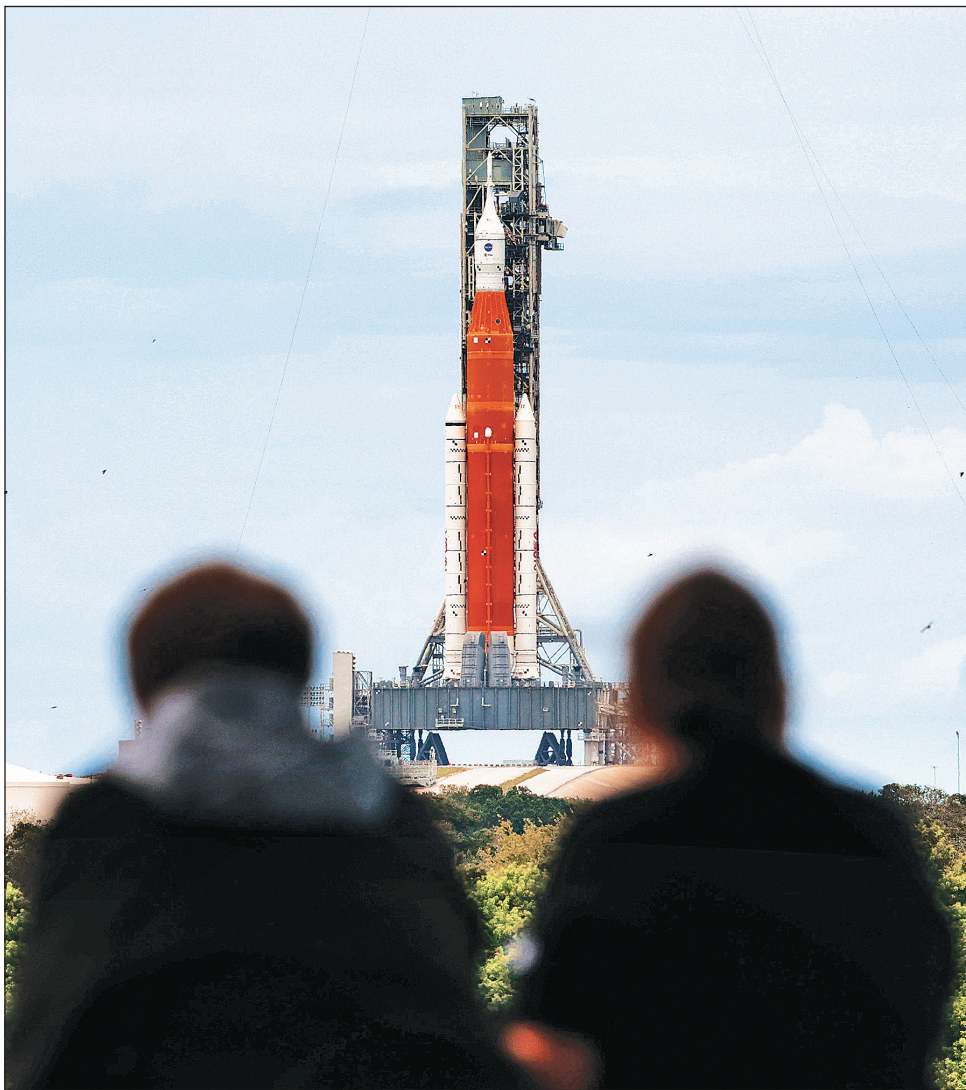
"This is a very complicated machine, a very complicated system, and all those things have to work, and you don't want to light the candle until it's ready to go," said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson.

Referring to launch delays, Nelson said: "It's just part of the space business and it's part of, particularly, a test flight."

The rocket was set to lift off on a flight to propel a crew capsule into orbit around the moon. The six-week mission was scheduled to end with the capsule returning to Earth in a splashdown in the Pacific in October.

The 322-foot (98-meter) spaceship is the most powerful rocket ever built by NASA, out-muscling even the Saturn V that the Apollo astronauts rode.

As for when NASA might



Visitors to the Launch Complex 39 Observation Gantry at Kennedy Space Center, Florida, get a good view of Artemis I, NASA's Space Launch System heavy-lift rocket carrying the Orion spacecraft, as it sits at Launch Pad 39-B on Sunday, Aug. 28, 2022. The launch of the unmanned test flight on a moon-orbit mission was scheduled for Monday, Aug. 29, but was delayed due to fuel leaks and an engine problem.

Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel-TNS

make another liftoff attempt, launch commentator Derrol Nail said engineers were still analyzing the engine problem and "we must wait to see what shakes out from their test data."

No astronauts were inside the rocket's Orion capsule. Instead, the test dummies, fitted with sensors to measure vibration, cosmic radiation and other conditions, were strapped in for the shakedown flight, meant to stress-test the spacecraft and push it to its limits in ways that would never be attempted with humans aboard.

Even though no one was on board, thousands of people jammed the coast to see the rocket soar. Vice President Kamala Harris was among the VIPs who arrived

for the event.

Assuming the shakedown flight goes well, astronauts will strap in for the second mission and fly around the moon and back as soon as 2024. A two-person lunar landing could follow by the end of 2025.

The problems seen Monday were reminiscent of NASA's space shuttle era, when hydrogen fuel leaks disrupted countdowns and delayed a string of launches back in 1990.

Later in the morning, NASA also officials spotted what they feared was a crack or some other defect on the core stage — the big orange fuel tank with four main engines on it — but they later said it appeared to be just a buildup of frost in a crevice of

the insulating foam.

Launch director Charlie Blackwell-Thompson and her team also had to deal with a communication problem involving the Orion capsule.

Engineers scrambled to understand an 11-minute delay in the communication lines between launch control and Orion that cropped up late Sunday. Though the problem had cleared by Monday morning, NASA needed to know why it happened before committing to a launch.

Regardless of all the technical snags, thunderstorms ultimately would have prevented a liftoff.

Dark clouds gathered over the launch site as soon as Blackwell-Thompson halted the countdown, with thunder echoing across the coast.

Survey: Gun control popular with Ore. voters

BY JOE SISS

Oregon Capital Bureau

A slim majority of Oregonians plan to vote for a candidate that supports more gun control in the November general election, according to a new survey published by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

The survey found that 54% of Oregonians surveyed indicated they are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports more gun control, compared to 19% of Oregonians who said they are more likely to vote for a candidate who is in favor of less gun control. Two and 10 Oregonians surveyed were either undecided or did not care, the survey showed.

Women were found to be more likely than men to seek candidates who support more gun control, the survey found.

The values and belief center, an independent, nonpartisan research group, released the survey Thursday. The center surveyed 1,572 Oregon residents ages 18 and older between July 8 and July 16. A previous gun control survey was released in June and showed the majority of Oregonians support stricter gun laws.

The new survey was done to provide more comprehensive and nuanced results than the previous survey, which was meant to create more of a baseline, said Amaury Vogel, the associate executive director of the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

"In June we asked people just a couple of questions that were surface level questions because everybody had just gone through the shooting in Buffalo and the shooting in Uvalde," Vogel said. "In July we wanted to ask about it particularly because we had several mass shootings and a rise in gun violence and it is something that is a big factor

in the November election."

The more recent survey showed that about half of Oregonians indicated the recent mass shootings do not affect the likelihood they will vote in the November election. More than a third of Oregonians, or 36%, said they are more likely to vote in November as a result of the recent mass shootings.

The survey found the vast majority of Oregonians, or four in five residents, believe there should be some level of gun control, and that gun control laws in Oregon should be stricter than they are today.

The survey results showed men in Oregon are more likely to own guns than women, and women are united in wanting at least some level of gun control, with 88% of women compared to 79% of men indicating they believe there should be some gun control.

Deschutes County gun owner Slater Kellstrom said he believes the current gun laws in Oregon should be enforced instead of passing new laws.

"The amount of people, both private citizens and public officials, who don't know laws regarding guns and concealed carrying of guns in this state boggles my mind," Kellstrom said. "Officials make laws or regulations or pronouncements that directly contradict established state laws and suffer no repercussions. Enforce the laws as written, treat infractions as serious matters not slaps on wrists."

The survey also found that a strong majority, or 88% of Oregonians, support background checks for all gun purchases, preventing the sale of firearms to those with certain mental health conditions, as well as the expansion of screening and treatment for people with mental illnesses.

Oregon reports surge in out-of-state patients seeking abortions

BY CLAIRE RUSH

Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Planned Parenthood leaders in Oregon on Thursday, Aug. 25 said there has been a surge in the number of people traveling from out of state for abortions, including from neighboring Idaho, where most of a near-total abortion ban has taken effect.

"We are definitely seeing an uptick as more and more trigger bans are being put into effect and laws are being enacted," said Anne Udall, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette.

"We're seeing people from all over," Udall said. "Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Idaho, Florida."

Oregon, along with Washington and California, has sought to establish the West Coast as an abortion safe haven, pledging to welcome patients traveling from states where the procedure has been banned or greatly restricted.

Shortly after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade on June 24, the Democratic governors of the three states issued a joint "multi-state commitment," saying they will work together to defend abortion access and protect patients and providers.

Speaking at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Portland, alongside Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and Oregon Democratic U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Udall said Planned Parenthood was "fully committed" to serving people from Idaho and other states.

Brown said she is working with "colleagues up and down the West Coast" to ensure abortion access.

Bend is the site of the sole Planned Parenthood clinic serving the eastern half of Oregon, a vast, rural area. The small clinic, which has struggled with staffing shortages and limited scheduling availability, is hiring more personnel and expanding telehealth services to respond to the growing demand.

Betsy Johnson gains a spot on ballot

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

Former state Sen. Betsy Johnson has qualified for the Nov. 8 general election as an unaffiliated candidate for governor.

"Damn straight," Johnson said in a statement.

"This is a momentous day for Oregon."

Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan issued a statement Thursday, Aug. 25 that Johnson had submitted 37,679 valid signatures, well above the threshold of 23,744 required. State law sets the number as 1% of the total vote in the most recent presidential election.

Former House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, won the Democratic primary in May. Former House Minority Leader Christine Drazen, R-Canby, won the Republican race.

Kotek and Drazen won closed primaries in which only members of their own party could cast ballots. The system excluded the largest share of voters — the 34% with no party affiliation — from voting for governor in the primary election.

In November, all 2.9 million voters vote for the same slate of candidates.

Johnson on Thursday re-

turned to her central theme since her announcement last year, casting herself as running between a too-liberal Democrat and too-conservative Republican.

"We have an incredible opportunity this year to reject the extremes and elect an independent governor who will put Oregonians first," Johnson said Thursday.

Johnson supports abortion rights, but in the Senate has broken with Democrats on gun control and recent efforts to curb carbon pollution in the state.

Drazen has cast Johnson's 20 years as a Democratic lawmaker as evidence that she is part of the one-party power structure that has dominated Salem for most of the past two decades.

Kotek points to Johnson's gun and environmental record as showing she's out of step with the bulk of Oregonians who have kept Democrats in the governor's office as a hedge against Republican turmoil of recent years in Washington.

Johnson raced ahead on fundraising, paced by \$1.75 million so far from Oregon's wealthiest resident, Nike founder Phil Knight.

With major financial backing from timber and con-

struction interests, Johnson has reported over \$10.5 million in contributions, according to Thursday's state campaign finance summaries. Kotek has raised about \$7.6 million, while Drazen has totaled about \$6.3 million.

Kotek and Drazen have received backing from their party's traditional allies, labor and progressive interests groups for Democrats, business and conservative activists for Republicans.

But Johnson has already spent about \$6.9 million before even officially qualifying for the election on Thursday.

Johnson's campaign has said the money is needed to build a campaign infrastructure to compete with the ones handed to Kotek and Drazen by their national and state parties.

Democratic and Republican party groups have given over \$1 million each to Kotek and Drazen, and are expected to keep up contributions as the race is touted in some forecasts as a "toss-up."

Johnson spent over \$300,000 on paid signature gatherers to go along with her volunteer "Betsy Brigades" to ensure the Secretary of State's signature count didn't come up short.

The final statewide ballot

will be set Aug. 30. County and local ballots must be finalized no later than Sept. 8.

The trio of women running for governor will ensure a historic election in November.

No matter who wins, it will be the first time that a woman has succeeded a woman to the state's top job. Gov. Kate Brown could not run again because of constitutional term limits.

Johnson is seeking to become the second governor in state history to be elected without major party support. Julius Meier won one term in 1930.

Drazen is running to be the first Republican to win the office since Gov. Vic Atiyeh was elected to a second term in 1982.

Kotek is seeking to extend the Democratic win streak dating back to the election of Neil Goldschmidt in 1986.

The ballot will feature three major candidates with the added twist that for the first time since 2002, no incumbent or former governor will be up for election.

The ballot will likely include at least two minor party candidates. Even if they poll just 5% of the vote altogether, that may be enough to throw a tight race into chaos.

Feds warn of 'rainbow fentanyl' in Oregon

PORTLAND (AP) — At least two notable seizures of a brightly-colored version of fentanyl this week in the Portland, Oregon, area have prompted the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to warn people to be on the lookout for it.

Rainbow fentanyl, as it's known, is a version of the highly-toxic and often fatal synthetic opioid that can look

like sidewalk chalk, or candy, officials said in a statement Friday.

Rainbow fentanyl has appeared recently in several forms in cities across the country.

Anyone who encounters it or any version of fentanyl is urged to refrain from handling it and call 911 immediately.

"We urge all Oregonians to be on the lookout for fen-

tanyl in our community and respect the highly-toxic nature of this substance," said Steve Mygrant, Chief of the Narcotics and Criminal Enterprises Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

He said fentanyl is commonly disguised in fake prescriptions pills and that the fakes are indistinguishable from real pills.

"If you find or come in contact with pills not dispersed by

a licensed pharmacist, assume they are fake and potentially lethal," Mygrant said.

Provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate there were over 107,000 fatal drug overdoses in the U.S. in 2021, an increase of nearly 15% from the previous year, federal officials said. Synthetic opioids — primarily fentanyl — accounted for more than three quarters of those deaths.

With summer here, there is lots of traveling. Be safe & have fun!



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