

# The Bulletin

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**PGE contractors repair a transformer box on a power pole in Portland on Tuesday. This month's snow and ice storms knocked out power for 340,000 customers in Oregon.**

Kristyna Wentz-Graff/OPB

## OREGON ELECTRICITY

# Can utilities prevent extreme outages? Maybe, but at a cost

**BY TED SICKINGER**  
The Oregonian

Saturday marked day No. 8 without power at Elizabeth Bartolomeo's house in Mulino. No water to drink or wash. Using water from greenhouse rain barrels to flush toilets. Generator power to the fridge. Surge protectors everywhere. Because this is far from the first time. But this power outage was worse. Lon-

ger. No restoration information on Portland General Electric's website. No luck on the phone. More than a week in, no utility trucks on her road in rural Clackamas County.

The electricity finally came back Saturday midmorning. But Bartolomeo was far from appeased.

Worse things happened. Four people and a dog in Clackamas County died in

three separate instances of carbon monoxide poisoning. Medically vulnerable customers were put at risk. Appliances fried in power surges. Hundreds of roads were blocked by downed trees, branches and power lines. Countless people endured spoiled food, cold showers and the difficulty of continuing remote school and work without internet service.

See **Outages** / A11



## FAIR-WEATHER FLY FISHING

As the sun briefly breaks through the clouds Saturday, a pair of anglers cast to a pod of rising trout while fishing the Crooked River.

Photo by RYAN BRENNER • The Bulletin

## FIRST OF ITS KIND

# Oregon releases missing, murdered Indigenous persons report

*Effort meant to rectify the underreporting of such data*

**BY LAUREN DAKE**

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Rosenda Strong was missing for nearly a year before her body was found in an abandoned freezer on July 4, 2019, near Toppenish, Washington.

"We have her back; not the way we wanted but we can after 275 days looking, wondering, our baby sister, mother, aunt, cousin, friend is coming home to our mother," Cissy Strong Reyes, wrote in a Facebook post, according to reporting by the Yakima Herald-Republic.

For years, activists have tried to draw attention to a growing crisis of

missing and murdered Indigenous people, particularly women. There have been many challenges, including confusion surrounding different jurisdictions, a lack of coordination between law enforcement entities, not enough resources and gaps in data.

Over the period of time Strong was missing, the conversation around missing Indigenous women grew louder. Reyes started sharing her sister's story as loud as she could, determined to not let her be one of the forgotten ones.

"I read stories on the internet and stopped to think, like, there's these

other women missing, and I can't let my sister be one of these people. She has to be found," Reyes told the Yakima Herald-Republic.

In 2019, a national strategy was created in an attempt to rectify the underreporting of missing and murdered Indigenous people. Last week, the U.S. Attorney's Office released its first annual report.

"For generations, American Indians and Alaskan Natives have suffered from disproportionately high levels of violence. Tragically, this is not a crisis of the past; it's a crisis of the present," U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams said in a statement.

Under what has been coined the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Initiative, officials in 11 U.S.

Attorney's offices, including Oregon, will create a more coordinated law enforcement response to missing persons cases, according to the press release from Williams' office. The new effort also calls for improving data, both collection and analysis, and for more training for local response efforts when a person is reported as missing.

One of the first steps is to create an overview of current missing persons cases connected to Oregon. The report draws on data from several different databases and identified 19 unsolved cases of people who have connections with Oregon. The latest information, while only considered a "snapshot" of the full picture, shows 11 missing Indigenous persons, six

women and five men. Of the 11, six are members of Oregon tribes:

- Two are from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.
- One is from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.
- Two are from the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla.
- One is from the Klamath Tribes.

The report identifies eight murdered Indigenous people, three men and five women. Of the eight, seven are members of an Oregon tribe.

One of those is Strong, who was a 31-year-old mother of four and a member of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla. Strong's family is hoping in 2021 they will find out who killed her and finally be able to bury her body.

