

▼ DOW 31,402.01 -559.85	▼ NASDAQ 13,119.43 -478.54	▼ S&P 500 3,829.34 -96.09	▲ 30-YR T-BOND 2.31% +07	▲ CRUDE OIL \$63.53 +.31	▼ GOLD \$1,774.40 -22.20	▼ SILVER \$27.64 -.22	▲ EURO \$1.2184 +.0036
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BRIEFING

Powell's to reopen more of its store

Powell's Books said Thursday that it will expand operations at its flagship Portland store Friday, reopening the Purple and Red Rooms on the store's second floor to public browsing.

"Since the holidays, we have continued our focus on expanding store operations. And so, it is with great excitement that we're taking this next step towards fully reopening our flagship store location. We can't wait to see customers wandering the aisles once again in our Purple and Red Rooms," Powell's Books owner and president Emily Powell said in the statement.

The Purple and Red Rooms contain titles on history, health, politics, religion, games, business, psychology, languages, travel and more.

The third-level Pearl Room, which includes the store's author events space, remains closed.

Powell's hasn't been fully open since March. It reopened its first floor in August in what it called an "experiment."

US jobless claims fall to 730K

The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell sharply last week in a sign that layoffs may have eased, though applications for aid remain at a historically high level.

Jobless claims declined by 111,000 from the previous week to a seasonally adjusted 730,000, the Labor Department said Thursday. It is the lowest figure since late November and the sharpest one-week decline since August. Still, before the virus erupted in the United States in March, weekly applications for unemployment benefits had never topped 700,000.

The latest figures coincide with a weakened job market that has made scant progress in the past three months. Hiring averaged just 29,000 a month from November through January. Though the unemployment rate was 6.3% in January, a broader measure that includes people who have given up on their job searches is closer to 10%.

Twitter to let users charge to see premium posts

Twitter announced a new feature Thursday called "Super Follows," which will let users charge for extra, exclusive material not shown to their regular followers including subscriber-only newsletters, videos, deals and discounts.

Users would pay a monthly subscription fee to access the extra content. Twitter did not detail what percentage of the revenue it would share with celebrities and others who sign up paying subscribers.

Super Follows is not available yet but Twitter says it will have "more to share" in the coming months. Another coming product, "Revue," will let people publish paid or free newsletters to their audience. There's also "Twitter Spaces," a Clubhouse competitor that lets users participate in audio chats. It is currently in private beta testing, which means it's not yet available to the general Twitter audience.

— Bulletin wire reports

COVID-19 in Oregon

Stimulus could mean higher tax bill

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — Federal stimulus payments last year during the COVID pandemic will generate \$112 million in additional Oregon taxes because of a quirk in state tax law and mean many people are on the hook for a higher tax bill.

The Oregonian reports the taxes will affect 877,000 Oregonian taxpayers, about half of all those who received federal stimulus payments in 2020 and early in 2021. They would owe an average of about \$130 apiece from just the first stimulus payments in the spring;

many lower income workers would owe \$100 or more.

Lawmakers from both parties say that's unfair, and the Legislature is examining a fix that would wipe out the higher tax bill. But with the April tax filing date approaching it's not clear there's consensus to make

a change.

Last March, Congress authorized \$1,200 in stimulus checks for adults and an additional \$500 for children, with the amount declining for wealthier taxpayers. A second round authorized in December, and paid early in 2021, paid \$600

per adult and another \$600 per child — again, with the totals declining in more affluent households.

The stimulus payments were structured as a tax rebate, which means they aren't subject to federal or state income taxes.

See **Tax bill** / A8

A mister no more

Hasbro removes gender from its Mr. Potato Head brand

BY JOSEPH PISANI • The Associated Press

NEW YORK —

Hasbro created confusion on Thursday when it removed the gender from its Mr. Potato Head brand, but not from the actual toy. The company, which has been making the potato-shaped plastic toy for nearly 70 years, announced Thursday morning that it was dropping Mr. from the brand in an effort to make sure "all feel welcome in the Potato Head world."

That set off a social media frenzy over the beloved toy.



Later Thursday afternoon, Hasbro clarified in a tweet that the Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head characters will still exist, names and all, but the branding on the box will say "Potato Head."

"While it was announced today that the POTATO HEAD brand name & logo are dropping the 'MR.' I yam proud to confirm that MR. & MRS. POTATO HEAD aren't going anywhere and will remain MR. & MRS. POTATO HEAD," the company tweeted.

Many toymakers have been updating their classic brands, hoping to relate to today's kids and reflect more modern families.

"It's a potato," said Ali Mierzejewski, editor in chief at toy review site The Toy Insider.

"But kids like to see themselves in the toys they are playing with."

Barbie, for example, has tried to shed its blonde image and comes in multiple skin tones and body shapes. The Thomas the Tank Engine toy line added more girl characters. And American Girl is now selling a boy doll.

Dropping the "Mr." from its brand name could encourage other companies to stop assigning genders to its toys, a trend that has already been happening, said Mierzejewski.

See **Potato Head** / A8

Hasbro, the company that makes the potato-shaped plastic toy, is giving the brand a new gender-neutral name: Potato Head. The change will appear on boxes this year.
Hasbro via AP

Biden directive expands jobless aid

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Unemployed Americans who have turned down job offers because they feared their prospective employers weren't providing sufficient protection from the coronavirus would qualify for jobless aid under a directive the Labor Department issued Thursday.

The measure would also expand a federal unemployment-benefits program, established in the spring economic relief package, to cover workers who have lost hours or who were laid off because of the pandemic. It would also cover school employees who lose jobs or work hours because of school closings.

The federal program, known as Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, made the self-employed and gig workers eligible for jobless aid for the first time.

"Until now, unemployment insurance benefits during the pandemic have been too scattered and too uncertain," said Patricia Smith, senior adviser to the labor secretary. "That begins to change today, with many more workers now eligible for unemployment insurance benefits."

The directive stems from an executive order President Joe Biden issued last month. The White House said it sought to "ensure that unemployed Americans no longer have to choose between paying their bills and keeping themselves and their families safe from COVID-19 by clarifying that workers who refuse unsafe working conditions can still receive unemployment insurance."

Speaking to reporters, department officials declined to estimate how many Americans would now become newly eligible for jobless benefits.

See **Jobless** / A8

Legislation seeks to boost Oregon film industry

BY KEVIN HARDEN

Oregon Capital Bureau

New legislation could give Oregon's pandemic-battered film industry a boost.

House Bill 3244, introduced Tuesday, would increase the maximum annual tax credit for certified film productions from \$14 million to \$20 million. That jump could give the state a leg up in hot competition for film projects.

"It's huge for us," said Tim Williams, executive director of Oregon Film, the state agency that helps attract movie projects to Oregon. "Every time we get an increase like that we see a proportionate increase in spending across the state."

Oregon's film and video tax credit has been around since



Beverly Corbell/Estacada News/Oregon Capital Insider

Crews in Estacada for the filming of "The Librarians" for TNT take a break before shooting a scene on Broadway Street.

2005, when it was just \$750,000 a year. Each legislative session the credit has gone up, leading to more production companies

taking a harder look at Oregon, Williams said.

"Every year we use up our \$14 million and could really

use at last \$7 million or \$8 million more," he said.

Oregon's film incentive programs are rebates distributed to film production companies that spend money in the state on things like hiring crews, caterers or support staff.

Between 2017 and 2018, three dozen movie projects spent about \$184 million in the state, providing about 6,000 jobs. From 2015 to 2017, about four dozen projects spent more than \$300 million in the state.

Among those were Dean Devlin's Electric Entertainment shows "Leverage," four seasons, spending \$120 million, and "The Librarians," four seasons, spending \$106 million. NBC's "Grimm" filmed in the Portland area for six seasons,

spending more than \$200 million. IFC's "Portlandia" turned the Rose City into a wacky backdrop for eight seasons, spending about \$35 million.

Oregon has attracted dozens of film projects during the past couple of decades, mostly because it was a short plane ride from Los Angeles and because of the state's thriving film production industry. Recent movies filmed here include "A Stone in the Water," filmed near Bend; "First Cow," filmed in Portland and Elkton; "The Last Blockbuster," filmed in Bend; "Timmy Failure," filmed in Portland; "Sophie Jones," filmed on the North Coast and in Portland; and "One Dead Dog" filmed in Black Butte and Portland.