

The Bulletin

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Armed supporters of then-President Donald Trump attend a "Stop The Steal" rally at the Oregon Capitol in Salem on Nov. 14, protesting the outcome of the election. Paula Bronstein/AP file

Report: Oregon led U.S. in militia interest online

State is also called a breeding ground for FEMA concentration camps' conspiracy theory

BY DOUGLAS PERRY
The Oregonian

In the run-up to the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, Oregon led all states in per capita internet searches for "armed groups" and

conspiracy theories.

This data comes from Moonshot CVE, an anti-extremism tech company that, from September to December, tracked internet disinformation and threats of violence that were linked to the U.S. presidential election.

The results don't surprise University of Oregon political science professor Joseph Lowndes, who studies populism, racial politics and far-right groups.

"Oregon has seen a convergence of strong QAnon support, an active

POLITICS

• Trump speaks publicly, A10

paramilitary milieu and, in Portland, Patriot Prayer," he says.

He points out that the state has been a longtime home to right-wing militia activity, spurred years ago by the reduction in federal timber payments as well as increasingly limited government services in some rural areas.

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SPRING IS NEAR



Photo by RYAN BRENNECKE • The Bulletin

Jacob Watters, 13, prepares to field a ground ball while practicing with his stepfather and coach, Josh Forcier, at Pine Nursery Park on Saturday. The pair were out taking advantage of the warm weather to get ready for the upcoming season playing and coaching with the 13U Jr. Bend Elks travel baseball team. **IN SPORTS » Fans are back for spring training openers in Florida and Arizona, A5**

COVID-19 | Shift in focus

Amid vaccine push, plunging demand for tests may leave U.S. exposed

BY MATTHEW PERRONE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just five weeks ago, Los Angeles County was conducting more than 350,000 weekly coronavirus tests, including at a massive drive-thru site at Dodger Stadium, as health workers raced to contain the worst COVID-19 hotspot in the U.S.

Now, county officials say testing has

nearly collapsed. More than 180 government-supported sites are operating at only a third of their capacity.

"It's shocking how quickly we've gone from moving at 100 miles an hour to about 25," said Dr. Clemens Hong, who leads the county's testing operation.

After a year of struggling to boost testing, communities across the country are seeing plummeting demand, shuttering

testing sites or even trying to return supplies.

The drop in screening comes at a significant moment in the outbreak: Experts are cautiously optimistic that COVID-19 is receding after killing more than 500,000 people in the U.S. but concerned that emerging variants could prolong the epidemic.

"Everyone is hopeful for rapid, widespread vaccinations, but I don't think

we're at a point where we can drop our guard just yet," said Hong. "We just don't have enough people who are immune to rule out another surge."

U.S. testing hit a peak on Jan. 15, when the country was averaging more than 2 million tests per day. Since then, the average number of daily tests has fallen more than 28%.

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1 billion

The number of monthly tests the U.S. should be able to conduct by June. The current testing rate is about 40 million.

TODAY'S WEATHER



Some clouds
High 61, Low 30
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