

Weather

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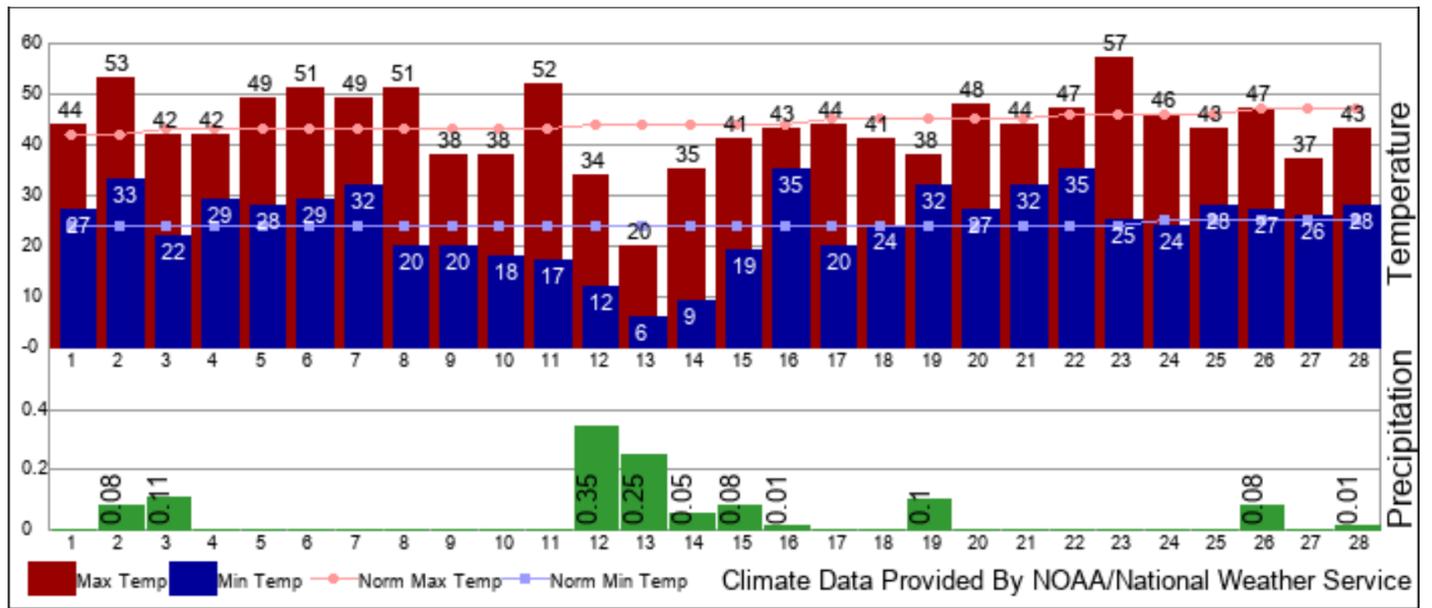
The record high temperature for the month was 76 degrees on Feb. 28, 1923, according to weather service data.

Low temperatures last month in Bend averaged 24.4 degrees, which was 0.2 degrees above normal. The lowest was 6 degrees on Feb. 13, which was much warmer than the record low temperatures of minus 26 degrees on Feb. 9, 1933, according to the data.

A total of 22 days last month in Bend had low temperatures below 32 degrees. On Feb. 13, the high temperature stayed below 32 degrees.

February precipitation in Bend totaled 1.12 inches, which was 0.03 inches above normal. Measurable precipitation of at least 0.01 inch was recorded on 10 days. The heaviest precipitation was 0.35 inches on Feb. 12.

Bend had 8.6 inches of snowfall in February. At least 1 inch of snow fell on three days.



The heaviest snowfall was 3.5 inches on Feb. 12. The deepest snow depth on the ground was 2 inches on Feb. 16.

The outlook for March calls for below normal tem-

peratures and near normal precipitation. The first week of March is forecast to have warm temperatures of 50 and 60 degrees, but those could cool down the following week, according to weather

service meteorologist Jim Smith. "It does look like it's cooling down," Smith said. "The trend is a little cooler than the upper 50s and near 60s this week. There is colder air mov-

ing in on Sunday and it looks like it's sticking around for much of next week." Normal high temperatures for March in Bend rise from 48 degrees at the start of the month to 54 degrees at the end.

Normal lows temperatures rise from 25 degrees to 29 degrees throughout the month. The normal March precipitation in Bend is 0.73 inches. ■ Reporter: 541-617-7820, kspur@bendbulletin.com

Tensions over vaccine equity pit rural against urban America

BY TRAVIS LOLLER, JONATHAN MATTISE AND GILLIAN FLACCUS
The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Rita Fentress was worried she might get lost as she traveled down the unfamiliar forested, one-lane road in rural Tennessee in search of a coronavirus vaccine. Then the trees cleared and the Hickman County Agricultural Pavilion appeared.

The 74-year-old woman wasn't eligible to be vaccinated in Nashville, where she lives, because there were so many health care workers to vaccinate there. But a neighbor told her the state's rural counties had already moved to younger age groups and she found an appointment 60 miles away.

"I felt kind of guilty about it," she said. "I thought maybe I was taking it from someone else." But late that February day, she said there were still five openings for the next morning.

The U.S. vaccine campaign has heightened tensions between rural and urban America, where from Oregon to Tennessee to upstate New York complaints are surfacing of a real — or perceived — inequity in vaccine allocation.

In some cases, recriminations over how scarce vaccines are distributed have taken on partisan tones, with rural Republican lawmakers in Democrat-led states complaining of "picking winners and losers," and urbanites traveling hours to rural GOP-leaning communities to score COVID-19 shots when there are none in their city.

In Oregon, state GOP lawmakers walked out of a legislative session last week over the Democratic governor's vaccine plans, citing rural vaccine distribution among their concerns. In upstate New York, public health officials in rural counties have complained of disparities in vaccine allocation and in North Carolina, rural lawmakers say too many doses were going to mass vaccine centers in big cities.

In Tennessee, Missouri and Alabama, a dearth of shots in urban areas with the greatest number of health care workers has led senior citizens to snap up appointments hours from their homes. The result is a hodgepodge of approaches that can look like the exact opposite of equity, where those most

Oregon to receive 34,000 doses of new COVID-19 vaccine

Oregon health officials said Monday they expect to receive 34,000 doses of the recently approved, Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine this week. Currently the two vaccines that Oregon has — Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna — both have reported efficacy rates around 95%, require two doses and need ultra-cold storage. Johnson & Johnson's is a single-dose vaccine and can be stored in a refrigerator for months, but has a lower efficacy rate.

"Having access to a third highly effective COVID-19 vaccine is a game changing development for Oregonians," said Paul Cieslak, the medical director for communicable diseases and immunization for the Oregon Health Authority. "We believe this vaccine is effective

against the virus, and a one-dose regimen will allow us to vaccinate more Oregonians more quickly." While officials say they are excited for the Johnson & Johnson doses, they anticipate that less will be available in the next few weeks following this week's initial allocation. So far, more a cumulative total of more than 986,000 first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to Oregonians. As of Monday, people who are 65 years and older became eligible to receive doses of the vaccine — joining other elderly residents, people in long-term care facilities, adults in custody, educators and health care workers. — The Associated Press

likely to be vaccinated are people with the savvy and means to search out a shot and travel to wherever it is.

"It's really, really flawed," said Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, who noted there are even vaccine hunters who will find a dose for money. "Ideally, allocations would meet the population's needs."

With little more than general guidance from the federal government, states have taken it upon themselves to decide what it means to distribute the vaccine fairly and reach vulner-

able populations. Tennessee, like many states, has divided up doses based primarily on county population, not on how many residents belong to eligible groups — such as health care workers. The Tennessee health commissioner has defended the allocation as the "most equitable," but the approach has also exposed yet another layer of haves and have-nots as the vaccine rollout accelerates.

In Oregon, the issue led state officials to pause dose deliveries in some rural areas that had finished inoculating their

health care workers while clinics elsewhere, including the Portland metro area, caught up. The dust-up last month prompted an angry response, with some state GOP lawmakers accusing Democratic Gov. Kate Brown of playing favorites with the urban dwellers who elected her.

Public health leaders in Mor-

row County, which has one of the highest COVID-19 infection rates, said they had to delay two vaccine clinics because of the state's decision. Other rural counties delayed vaccines for seniors.

States face plenty of challenges. Rural counties are less likely to have the deep-freeze equipment necessary to store Pfizer vaccines. Health care workers are often concentrated in big cities. And rural counties were particularly hard hit by COVID-19 in many states, but their residents are among the most likely to say they're "definitely not" going to get vaccinated, according to recent Kaiser Family Foundation polling. Adalja said most of these complications were foreseeable and could have been avoided with proper planning and funding.

"There are people who know how to do this," he said. "They're just not in charge of it."

Fairgrounds

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"In an ideal world, we would have gotten to deliberate on that," Chang said.

Chang said there are good reasons to try the pop-up clinic model. Several residents have been asking for the county to bring more vaccinations out to more rural parts of the county to serve more vulnerable residents who may have a hard time getting to the fairgrounds.

He also said he knows the fairgrounds as a department was one of the worst hit financially due to the pandemic, and understands the need to make

up for lost event revenue.

In this instance, Chang said he doesn't think "it's a terrible thing" to do pop-up clinics because the county is receiving so few vaccines from the state. But he worries about the long term once the county begins to receive more vaccines again.

"I'm concerned we will have created an expectation to bring vaccinations to all the corners of the county, and that could inhibit our ability to keep our vaccination clinic staying put at the fairgrounds," Chang said.

Geoff Hinds, director of the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, said the fairgrounds from the start of the mass vac-

ination clinic has shared with public health specific dates when the fairgrounds may not be able to make accommodations unless "absolutely necessary." He said the Sportsmen's Show was one of those events.

Hinds said vaccination clinics remain a priority, and that the fairgrounds can work with the public health department to ensure the health and safety of the community along with working with and honoring longstanding events.

"I certainly understand the concerns, and we're very understanding of the concern for public health in our community," Hinds said Monday.

"We're proud of the role we've been able to play thus far and will continue to play, and that will always remain our priority."

When asked whether there were any other future events that could result in moving the vaccination clinic, Hinds said the fairgrounds was working with public health to accommodate clinics to the "utmost extent possible into the future."

■ Reporter: 541-633-2160, bvisser@bendbulletin.com

DEATH NOTICES

George "Art" A. Barker III of Sisters, OR
July 26, 1954 - Feb 17, 2021
Arrangements: Autumn Funerals of Redmond is honored to serve the family. 541-504-9485
Memories and condolences may be expressed to the family on our website at www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: A celebration of life will be announced at a later date.
Contributions may be made to: St. Charles Hospice, 2275 NE Doctors Dr Bend, OR 97701

Sharron Lea Allman of Powell Butte, OR
November 30, 1931 - February 21, 2021
Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Redmond 541-504-9485
www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: A Gathering will be held at a later date.

OBITUARY DEADLINE
Call to ask about our deadlines
541-385-5809
Monday-Friday 10am-3pm
Email: obits@bendbulletin.com

OBITUARY

Bennie Edward Oatman
July 17, 1932 - February 19, 2021

After a rich, full life, Bennie Edward Oatman passed away of natural causes at the age of 88.

Bennie was born July 17, 1932 in the Texas Panhandle to Sallie and I.H. Oatman. His family moved to Bend Oregon when he was a child. Married to Eileen June Oatman for 63 years, Bennie was a family man, devoting his time and energy to creating an exciting environment for his wife and three children.

Joining the Air Force in 1950, Bennie was stationed in New Mexico (with the Nuclear Commission). After his Air Force duty, Bennie worked various jobs in construction and mills and working on a logging train in North-Central Oregon. He built planes at Boeing in Washington, as well as working to construct Round Butte Dam in Central Oregon. He finished his career in a job at the Bend School District where he did plumbing and heating.

In recent years, Bennie could be heard saying "we played with the kids!" And Bennie & Eileen did just that. His children were privileged to grow up in a family that did everything together: Camping, water skiing, trips to the Oregon Coast.

His creative energy led to a lifetime of memories and achievements. Building kites, whistles from green willow branches, and stilts for us to play with together. He built solar panels before most people had ever heard of them. He created a system where house water was heated by a wood stove. When he was building a woodshed out of lodgepole pine, he went to the extraordinary step of splitting his own shakes for the roof.

Bennie and Eileen retired in their fifties, traveling in a motorhome to all the continental states, except Maine. They spent decades on the road - Bennie would sing the Johnny Cash song: "I've been everywhere, man..." - and he had.

Bennie lived his Christian faith. Baptizing believers in a creek; his faith seen in action, setting an example for those around him.

Preceding Bennie in death was his wife Eileen, brothers Jerry and Joe, and sister Wanda. Bennie is survived by his son Nick and wife Carol, daughter Roxie and husband Ray, son Neal and wife Linda, sisters Ginger and Sherry, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.