

<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>DOW</b> 33,153.21 +171.66	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>NASDAQ</b> 13,480.11 +233.24	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>S&amp;P 500</b> 4,019.87 +46.98	<span style="color: red;">▼</span> <b>30-YR T-BOND</b> 2.34% -08	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>CRUDE OIL</b> \$61.45 +2.29	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>GOLD</b> \$1,726.50 +12.70	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>SILVER</b> \$24.94 +.42	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>EURO</b> \$1.1773 +.0047
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**BRIEFING**

**Staff members ratify contract with St. Charles**

The approximately 150 technicians, technologists and therapists ratified the first-time contract on Wednesday with St. Charles Bend.

The Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals negotiated wage increases and market adjustments for the first year.

The average increase is about 11%, which is consistent with increases received from 2019 through the first quarter of 2021 for non-contracted technical caregivers, according to the hospital statement.

The salaries are about 40% higher than the median hourly rate in Central Oregon, said Damon Runberg, Oregon Employment Department regional economist.

The standard wage range for "radiologic technologists" across the state is about \$87,000 or about \$41.82 an hour, Runberg said.

The union members organized a nine-day walk out that ended March 13. One sticking point was over allowing current and future employees to join the union. The ratified contract makes the workplace "open shop" and allows current and future St. Charles Bend employees to choose whether they join the union and pay dues, according to the hospital statement.

**United plans to hire 300 pilots**

United Airlines said Thursday it plans to hire about 300 pilots, another sign that airlines feel more confident that a recent increase in travel will continue.

The airline plans to start by hiring pilots who received conditional job offers or had a class for new hires canceled last year, when the industry was slammed by the coronavirus pandemic.

**U.S. jobless claims rise to 719K**

The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose by 61,000 last week to 719,000, signaling that many employers are still cutting jobs even as more businesses reopen, vaccines are increasingly administered and federal aid spreads through the economy.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the number of claims increased from 658,000 the week before.

**U.S. factory activity expands**

U.S. manufacturers expanded in March at the fastest pace in 37 years, a sign of strengthening demand as the pandemic wanes and government emergency aid flows through the economy.

The Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers, said that its measure of factory activity jumped to 64.7 last month, from 60.8 the previous month. That's the highest since December 1983. Some of the gain may reflect a bounce-back from February, when harsh winter weather in Texas, Louisiana and other southern states knocked some oil refineries and petrochemical plants offline.

— Bulletin wire reports

**U.S. SENATE**

## Bill would soften federal pot laws

BY STEVEN T. DENNIS  
Bloomberg

Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is pushing the U.S. Senate toward lifting the federal prohibition on marijuana with legislation that would rep-

resent the biggest overhaul of federal drug policy in decades.

The bill that Schumer is drafting with Senate Finance Chair Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, also a Democrat, is still

being written. Though they avoided the term legalization when announcing their plan, it is expected to remove marijuana from the list of controlled substances and tax and regulate it on the federal level while leav-

ing states able to enforce their own laws regarding the drug.

Their proposal goes beyond decriminalization, which President Joe Biden voiced support for during his campaign, and may be a stretch for some

Senate Democrats. But it taps into building public sentiment for legalization and moves by states to change marijuana laws, including Schumer's home state.

See **Pot laws** / A8

**COVID-19 | Funerals**

# Industry innovates



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Brad Byrholdt, general manager of Oregon Care Group Inc., sits in the mausoleum at Deschutes Memorial Chapel and Gardens in Bend.

BY SUZANNE ROIG • The Bulletin

**T**he pandemic denied many the opportunity to grieve in traditional ways with their friends and family who sought to memorialize those lost lives. In the wake of restrictions to control the spread of the virus, funeral homes had to quickly adopt new ways of handling people's grief over the past 12 months.

Documents signed electronically rather than in person, video services and a higher use of technology were measures quickly adopted. Online marketplaces for one-stop shopping for funerals helped the industry adapt to the changes.

Some of these measures will be around in post-pandemic times; others may fall by the way side, like walk-by and drive-by services that some funeral homes devised as a way to maintain social distancing.

The pandemic has not only changed the way the industry does business, but it's also caused finan-

**“It’s been devastating for some families. It’s gotten better, obviously. There was a lot of fear. Now we’re allowed to let people come and say goodbye. That’s vital.”**

— Brad Byrholdt, general manager of Oregon Care Group Inc.

cial losses for funeral homes and altered the way directors comfort grieving customers.

“COVID-19 has forced the death industry to innovate,” said Wally Ordeman, Oregon Funeral Directors Association executive director.

“Funeral directors are not wired to have remote grieving. They’re not wired to say no to someone grieving.”

“But early on, it was unsafe to hold memorials in person.”

As the nation vaccinates more

people, cases drop and fewer people die of the disease, Oregon counties are opening up, loosening restrictions. In the past year, the virus alone has caused the deaths of 119 people in Central Oregon, 2,383 statewide and 548,162 in the United States.

A livestream service, or so-called distance memorialization, could become a thing in the future, Ordeman said, because it can connect people. Another prominent change will be the ability to purchase arrangements, even caskets and urns online, he said.

See **Funerals** / A8

**OREGON**

## Dems’ bid to eliminate second-home tax break draws backlash

BY HILLARY BORRUD  
The Oregonian

Some Democrats in the Oregon Legislature want their colleagues to look closely at who benefits from the state's largest housing subsidy and consider scaling it back.

Five Democrats in the state Senate and House proposed various changes to the mortgage interest deduction this session to pare back the tax break, such as eliminating the state's version of it for second homes and for primary homes of people with more than \$250,000 in federal adjusted gross income.

“It is a racial justice issue,” said Rep. Khanh Pham, D-Portland, a chief sponsor of three bills

on the mortgage interest deduction. “There is a huge racial disparity in homeownership.”

Homeownership among white Oregonians stood at 65% in 2017, while the rate for Latino residents was 43%, and the rate for Black Oregonians was 35%, according to a U.S. Census Bureau estimate.

Lawmakers have pitched the idea of limiting the state mortgage interest deduction for well-off Oregonians in previous legislative sessions only to see it quickly hit a wall of opposition, and some supporters concede the most they might achieve this year is to keep the discussion alive.

See **Homes** / A8

**WASHINGTON**

## Cattle rancher who pleaded guilty to fraud now faces new charges

BY DON JENKINS  
AND GEORGE PLAVEN  
Capital Press

On the same day an Eastern Washington cattle rancher pleaded guilty in federal court to wire fraud, he was hit with new fraud charges by another federal agency charge — with all of it related to the sale of cattle that only existed on invoices.

Cody Easterday, 49, pleaded

guilty Wednesday to committing wire fraud against Tyson Foods and another unnamed company.

He agreed to pay \$244 million in restitution and faces up to 20 years in prison, according to the U.S. Justice Department.

He is scheduled to be sentenced Aug. 4.

See **Rancher** / A8