

▼ DOW 33,677.27 -68.13	▲ NASDAQ 13,996.10 +146.10	▲ S&P 500 4,141.59 +13.60	▼ 30-YR T-BOND 2.31% -0.4	▲ CRUDE OIL \$60.18 +.48	▲ GOLD \$1,746.20 +15.00	▲ SILVER \$25.42 +.57	▲ EURO \$1.1946 +.0040
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BRIEFING

Onion season wrapping up

Onion packer-shippers in southeastern Oregon and southwestern Idaho are wrapping up a 2020-21 marketing season that saw continued impacts from COVID-19. The region, home to more than two dozen fresh-pack sheds, produces 40-45% of U.S. onions consumed from September through March.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Monday reported a 50-pound sack of jumbo yellow onions from the Idaho-Oregon region sold for \$6 to \$7.50, mostly \$6. Year-earlier prices were \$5 to \$6.

Shipments to date totaled 28,219, up from 24,572.

Kay Riley, general manager at said Snake River Produce, said the business's shipment volume increased slightly from a year ago, when the crop was smaller and demand plunged in the second half of March as coronavirus disruptions shut down many restaurants.

Consumer prices increase 0.6%

U.S. consumer prices increased 0.6% in March, the biggest uptick since 2012, while inflation over the past year jumped 2.6%. The big gains had been anticipated and are largely expected to be a temporary blip rather than a reawakening of long dormant inflation.

The increase in the Labor Department's consumer price index Tuesday followed a 0.4% increase in February.

The year-over-year increase was far greater than the 1.7% increase for the 12-month change the previous month and while it easily exceeded the Federal Reserve's 2% target for inflation, the 2.6% increase in March was more of a snapshot of a period of time last year when prices tumbled as much of the world went into a pandemic lockdown.

For March, energy prices increased 5%, led by a 9.1% jump in gasoline prices. The gasoline surge accounted for nearly half of the monthly price gain. Food prices edged up 0.1% in March and are 3.5% higher than a year ago.

U.S. investigates GM air bags

The U.S. government's highway safety agency is investigating complaints that the air bags may not inflate in a crash on thousands of General Motors vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said the probe covers nearly 750,000 Chevrolet, Cadillac and GMC vehicles from the 2020 and 2021 model years. Most are full-size pickup trucks and SUVs.

The agency says in documents posted Tuesday on its website that it has 15 complaints of air bag malfunctions, including six crashes with eight reported injuries.

In a statement, GM contradicted NHTSA's complaints, saying it's not aware of air bags failing to inflate on roadways due to the problem.

The probe covers Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups as well as Chevy Tahoe and Suburban SUVs.

Also included are GMC Yukon and Cadillac Escalade SUVs, and the Cadillac CT4 and CT5 sedans and XT4 SUVs.

— Bulletin wire reports

State unemployment drops to 6%

Oregon added 20,000 jobs last month

BY MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

Oregon's jobless rate dropped slightly in March, according to new data released Tuesday from the Oregon Employment Department, falling a tenth of a percentage point to 6.0%.

Oregon added 20,000 jobs last month. Most of the gains were in the leisure and hospitality sector as bars and restaur-

ants steadily reopened after a broad wintertime shutdown that accompanied a spike in COVID-19 cases.

The state has now regained 54% of the jobs lost in the early days of the pandemic, 153,100 altogether. Oregon's jobless rate is less than half its peak 11 months ago, 13.2%, but it's still well above the historic lows around 3.5% in the months before the pandemic hit.

Oregon's unemployment rate in March matched the national figure. But the state's

unemployment rate has barely budged since December.

And more than 9,000 Oregonians filed new jobless claims in each of the past two weeks, the fastest pace of new filings since January.

Permanent layoffs make up a rising share of all job cuts, indicating that Oregonians losing their jobs now don't expect their employers will ever call them back to work. That could slow the pace of recovery in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, many workers

have exhausted their eligibility under prior jobless programs after a year of unemployment. That doesn't necessarily mean the end of benefits payments, but it does require that unemployed workers make a complicated shift to extend their aid.

That's produced a flood of phone calls to the employment department, more than at any point since the early days of Oregon's "stay home" order a year ago. The department's phone lines remain jammed, as they have been for most of the

past year, and the agency says it expects to take until the end of the year to unclog them.

So for now, the department recommends people with questions about their claims use its online Contact Us form to make inquiries about their benefits.

The form spares laid-off workers the anxiety and frustration of trying to get through the department's exasperating phone system, but 80% of inquiries submitted online take more than a week to resolve.

Organic farm near Portland

Something for everyone



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

Marketing Director Sofia Kondilis stands in front of the Bella Organic Farm Store and Winery Tasting Room. Kondilis' family bought the farm in 2004.

BY ALIYA HALL

For the Capital Press

SAUVIE ISLAND — Marketing Director Sofia Kondilis describes Bella Organic as “the full package.” The 100-acre organic farm offers everything from U-pick, hay rides, events, food, and tastings of its own beer to wine and cider.

“We’re slowly becoming known for, not just being a farm or a winery, we’re an experience,” Kondilis said.

Kondilis' parents bought the

farm in 2004 and intended to use the land to build their house. Instead, they decided to run the farm because it was already transitioning from no-spray to organic.

The farm sells homemade Lebanese style gyros along with other recipes from her mother in its food pavilion. The sauces for sale in the farm store are her recipes.

“We’ve done a lot of canning and making sauces,” Kondilis explained. “It really helped with planning for how much to plant. We use our product for all differ-

ent things.”

For the winery, they grow some of their grapes on land in Dundee and buy from other farms. Kondilis added that although they're not the winemakers, people on staff produce the wine — but they are learning how to create it.

“We don't want to do it and not understand it,” she said.

Going forward, Kondilis said she's looking forward to being able to hold birthday parties, picnics and holiday events like the haunted corn maze and Easter

egg hunts. They also want to include more art at their farm in the future, and are looking into how best to incorporate it.

The most rewarding aspect for Kondilis is the interaction with the customers who tell her how much Bella Organic means to them. She said that a few years ago they were considering selling the farm due to the commute from their home, but instead relocated their family to be closer.

“We just need this space. It's like home,” she said.

Business leaders urge Biden to set ambitious climate goal

BY MATTHEW DALY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 300 businesses and investors, including such giants as Apple, Google, Microsoft and Coca-Cola, are calling on the Biden administration to set an ambitious climate change goal that would cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% below 2005 levels by 2030.

The target would nearly double the nation's previous commitment and require dramatic changes in the power, transportation and other sectors. President Joe Biden is considering options for expected carbon reductions by 2030 ahead of a virtual climate summit the United States is hosting later this month.

The so-called Nationally Determined Contribution is a key milestone as Biden moves toward his ultimate goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Biden has promised to reveal the nonbinding but symbolically important 2030 goal before the Earth Day summit opens April 22.

“A bold 2030 target is needed to catalyze a zero-emissions future, spur a robust economic recovery, create millions of well-paying jobs and allow the U.S. to ‘build back better’ from the pandemic,” the businesses and investors said in a letter to Biden.

“New investment in clean energy, energy efficiency and clean transportation can build a strong, more equitable and

more inclusive American economy,” they wrote. The letter was organized by the We Mean Business coalition, a group of companies that support action to accelerate the transition to a carbon-free economy.

An ambitious 2030 target would guide the federal government's approach to sustainable and resilient infrastructure, as well as zero-emissions vehicles and buildings, and “would inspire other industrialized nations to set bold targets of their own,” the group wrote.

Besides the tech and consumer products giants, companies with major energy holdings, including Exelon, General Electric, PG&E and Edison International, also signed the letter.

Oregon employers mull requiring vaccinations

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — A large winery in Oregon has notified its workers that they must show proof they've received the COVID-19 vaccine by May 20.

Many workplaces are weighing similar requirements as pandemic restrictions loosen, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

King Estate Winery is on more than a thousand acres outside Eugene. Chief Operating Officer Brent Stone said it's like a small city, with about 70 employees and workers working close together on bottling lines. He said concerns about workplace safety and preventing a virus outbreak are behind the vaccine requirement.

“It's coming from a really

good place, in our minds,” Stone said. “It's really intended to be supportive and not punitive by any means.”

Stone said King Estate has offered on-site vaccination clinics and an additional vacation day as incentive, with paid sick time for vaccine recovery. During the pandemic, weekly food boxes have been available to workers and the winery boosted its minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

University of Oregon Law School Associate Professor Liz Tippet said employers can require their workers to get the vaccine, with some exemptions. But she expects most won't go that far. It's also in people's interest to get the vaccine, especially those who interact a lot with others in the workplace, she added.