

<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>DOW</b> 34,137.31 +316.01	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>NASDAQ</b> 13,950.22 +163.95	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>S&amp;P 500</b> 4,173.42 +38.48	<span style="color: red;">▼</span> <b>30-YR T-BOND</b> 2.26% -01	<span style="color: red;">▼</span> <b>CRUDE OIL</b> \$61.35 -1.32	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>GOLD</b> \$1,792.30 +15.00	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> <b>SILVER</b> \$26.57 +.73	<span style="color: red;">▼</span> <b>EURO</b> \$1.2029 -0001
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**BRIEFING**

**Amazon rolls out pay-by-palm**

Amazon is rolling out pay-by-palm technology at some Whole Foods grocery stores near its headquarters to make paying quicker and more convenient.

The technology, called Amazon One, lets shoppers scan the palms of their hands and connect it to a credit card or Amazon account.

After the initial setup, which Amazon says takes less than a minute, shoppers can scan their hand at the register to pay for groceries without having to open their wallets.

Amazon first launched the technology late last year and at the time said the technology could be used at stadiums, office buildings and other retailers. So far, Amazon hasn't announced any takers.

A Whole Foods store in Amazon's hometown of Seattle started using the technology on Wednesday. Seven additional Whole Foods locations in the area will have it installed in the coming months.

**U.S. halts oil, gas lease sales from public lands**

The U.S. Interior Department is canceling sales of oil and gas leases on public lands through June amid an ongoing review of how the program contributes to climate change, officials said Wednesday.

The action does not affect existing leases, and the agency has continued to issue new drilling permits during the open-ended review ordered by the White House, said Nada Culver, deputy director of the Bureau of Land Management.

The petroleum industry and its Republican allies in Congress have said the oil and gas moratorium will harm the economies of Western states without putting a significant dent in climate change. There is no end date for the review, but an interim report due this summer could reveal the Biden administration's long-term plans for lease sales.

**Europe outlines AI regulations**

Risky uses of artificial intelligence that threaten people's safety or rights such as live facial scanning should be banned or tightly controlled, European Union officials said Wednesday as they outlined an ambitious package of proposed regulations to rein in the rapidly expanding technology.

The draft regulations from the EU's executive commission include rules for applications deemed high risk such as AI systems to filter out school, job or loan applicants. They would also ban artificial intelligence outright in a few cases considered too risky, such as government "social scoring" systems that judge people based on their behavior.

The proposals are the 27-nation bloc's latest move to maintain its role as the world's standard-bearer for technology regulation, as it tries to keep up with the world's two big tech superpowers, the U.S. and China.

— Bulletin wire reports

**FDA | Johnson & Johnson vaccine**

## Inspection finds problems at factory

BY LINDA A. JOHNSON  
Associated Press

The Baltimore factory hired to help make Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine was dirty, didn't follow proper manufacturing procedures and had poorly trained staff, resulting in contamination of material going into a batch of shots, U.S. regulators said Wednesday.

The Food and Drug Administration released a statement and a 13-page report detailing findings from its just-com-

pleted inspection of the idled Emergent BioSciences factory.

Agency inspectors said a batch of bulk drug substance for J&J's single-shot vaccine was contaminated with material used to make COVID-19 vaccines for another Emergent client, AstraZeneca. The batch, reportedly enough to make about 15 million J&J vaccine doses, had to be thrown out.

Other problems cited in the inspection report included peeling paint, black and brown residue on factory floors and

walls, inadequate cleaning and employees not following procedures to prevent contamination between vaccine batches and ingredients.

Nothing made at the factory for J&J has been distributed, the FDA noted. The nearly 8 million doses of J&J vaccine given in the U.S. came from Europe.

Emergent and Johnson & Johnson said they are working to fix the problems as quickly as possible.

After quality problems sur-

facted late last month, J&J took control of the factory. The Biden administration is working to move AstraZeneca vaccine manufacturing to another factory. AstraZeneca has yet to seek emergency authorization for use of its vaccine in the U.S.

The Baltimore factory halted all production late last week at the FDA's request. The agency hasn't given emergency approval to the factory, which is needed before any vaccine material made there can be distributed.

All the bulk vaccine substance inside Emergent's factory, plus early batches made there and then put in vials and packaged by other J&J contractors, are being stored and will undergo additional testing by the FDA, the agency said.

At the moment, use of the J&J vaccine is on hold in the U.S. as government health officials investigate its possible connection to very rare blood clots. Their decision on whether to allow its use to resume could come Friday.

**MARIJUANA**

## Should states set policy by its potency?



Julie Jacobson/AP

The THC percentages of recreational marijuana are visible on the product packaging sitting on a countertop Monday in Mamaroneck, New York.

BY JENNIFER PELTZ • Associated Press

NEW YORK —

**A**s marijuana legalization spreads across U.S. states, so does a debate over whether to set pot policy by potency. Under a law signed last month, New York will tax recreational marijuana based on its amount of THC, the main intoxicating chemical in cannabis.

Illinois imposed a potency-related tax when recreational pot sales began last year. Vermont is limiting THC content when its legal market opens as soon as next year, and limits or taxes have been broached in some other states and the U.S. Senate's drug-control caucus.

Supporters say such measures will protect public health by roping off, or at least discouraging, what they view as dangerously concentrated cannabis.

"This is not your Woodstock weed," says Kevin Sabet, the president of Smart Approaches to Mar-

ijuana, an anti-legalization group that has been pressing for potency caps. "We need to put some limitations on the products being sold."

Opponents argue that THC limits could drive people to buy illegally, and amount to beginning to ban pot again over a concern that critics see as overblown.

"It's prohibitionism 2.0," said Cristina Buccola, a cannabis business lawyer in New York.

"Once they start putting caps on that, what don't they put caps on?"

THC levels have been increas-

ing in recent decades — from 4% in 1995 to 12% in 2014 in marijuana seized by federal agents, for example. Cannabis concentrates sold in Colorado's legal market average about 69% THC, and some top 90%, according to state reports.

A sweeping 2017 examination of cannabis and health by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine listed increasing potency among factors that "create the potential for an increased risk of adverse health effects."

See **Marijuana** / A12

**'VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED'**

## Oregon considers making fee mandatory come 2026

BY ANDREW THENE  
The Oregonian

Oregon lawmakers are considering a bill that would require owners of new, fuel-efficient cars and trucks to pay a fee for every mile they drive beginning in 2026.

The legislation is intended to help address what transportation officials say is a grim financial reality facing Oregon and other states: Gas taxes are not a sustainable way to pay for highway and street maintenance projects. That problem will only become more worrisome as vehicles become more fuel efficient, they argue. Oregon has estimated its highway fund, of which 40% comes from gas tax revenues, will be insolvent by 2024 without significant action.

Oregon's experiment with a "vehicle miles traveled" fee has been hailed nationally as a bold step toward what will eventually become a reality if, or when, local governments no longer can depend on gas taxes because the transportation sector won't run on fossil fuels. It's unclear whether Oregon's bill will move forward this session. But the national conversation has changed considerably as the pay-as-you-go funding mechanism has gained popularity, including among some advocates in the Biden administration and Congress and through legislation in multiple states, including a failed effort in Republican-led Wyoming.

If passed, Oregon's "vehicle miles traveled" fee wouldn't be effective until July 2026. That's just the beginning of the caveats. The House Bill 2342 fee would apply only to owners of new 2027 vehicles that don't use gas or get 30 miles or more per gallon of gasoline.

See **Gas tax** / A12

**OREGON**

## Farm building-code exemption bill passes House

BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

Agricultural buildings aren't currently subject to building codes in Oregon, but county code enforcers have called into question whether structures remain exempt if they're used for non-farm purposes, such as storing an old car or housing a camper.

House Bill 2611 was proposed to clarify the problem and avoid potential litigation if farmers are eventually cited

*The bill was amended by the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to clarify that farm buildings can have "incidental and accessory" uses in addition to housing livestock, storing machinery and other agricultural uses.*

for code violations.

Farmers use their barns like home garages and shouldn't face disqualification for storing common items in them, said Rep. Vikki Breese Iverson, R-Prineville.

"If that is the case, every farm in Oregon will lose their building code exemption because the barns are almost always used for farm uses and as a place for personal storage," she said. "This bill

will help Oregon farm families."

The House voted 48-8 in favor of HB 2611, which is supported by the Oregon Farm Bureau and the Oregon Property Owners Association.

The bill was amended by the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to clarify that farm buildings can have "incidental and accessory" uses in addition to housing livestock, storing machinery and other agricultural uses.

See **Farm code** / A12