

DOW 35,084.53 +153.60	NASDAQ 14,778.26 +15.68	S&P 500 4,419.15 +18.51	30-YR T-BOND 1.91% ...	CRUDE OIL \$73.62 +1.23	GOLD \$1,831.20 +31.50	SILVER \$25.76 +.90	EURO \$1.1891 +.0048
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BRIEFING

Oregonians to lose pandemic benefits

Oregonians could lose more than \$70 million in weekly employment benefits after Labor Day, when some federal pandemic aid programs expire and the state stops paying a \$300 weekly unemployment bonus.

David Gerstenfeld, acting director of the Oregon Employment Department, called it a “sobering” moment Wednesday, *The Oregonian* reported. He warned that more than 115,000 Oregonians are receiving assistance under temporary programs that date to the first COVID-19 relief act from March 2020.

Oregon has paid more than \$10 billion in jobless aid since the start of the pandemic, most of it federal money provided through a succession of pandemic relief bills.

Those programs expire the week ending Sept. 4.

The number of Oregonians collecting benefits each week has been declining for several months and beginning this week, workers must demonstrate they are searching for new jobs to continue receiving aid.

U.S. jobless claims drop by 24,000

The number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits slid last week, another sign that the job market continues to recover rapidly from the coronavirus recession.

Jobless claims dropped by 24,000 to 400,000 last week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The weekly applications have fallen more or less steadily this year — from a peak of 904,000 in early January. But they remain high by historic standards: Before COVID struck the United States in March 2020, claims were coming in at about 220,000 a week.

The job market and overall economy have been recovering from the collapse of the spring of 2020. The rollout of vaccines this year has encouraged businesses to reopen or expand their hours and sent cooped-up consumers back out to visit restaurants, bars and shops.

Handheld video game sells out

Playdate, the hotly anticipated handheld video game system from Portland tech company Panic, sold all 20,000 of its initial manufacturing run in just 20 minutes Thursday.

Panic is taking orders for more of the \$179 devices but won't deliver them until sometime next year.

Playdate is a throwback to small handheld video game systems from the 1980s. Instead of incorporating the latest graphics and sharpest graphics, Panic equipped Playdate with an old school directional pad, a black-and-white screen and a crank on the side.

It's meant to be both nostalgic and innovative. Playdate comes with 24 games, to be delivered over a dozen weeks like episodes of a TV series.

Playdate's retro style triggered fevered interest but presented enormous challenges for Panic, which is primarily a software company. It announced Playdate more than 2 years ago and initially planned to start delivering the gadgets early in 2020.

—Bulletin wire reports

State says it will enforce heat-safety rules

BY JAMIE GOLDBERG
The Oregonian

Oregon's workplace safety agency says it will aggressively enforce new emergency requirements aimed at protecting workers from extreme heat as the state once again prepares for hot weather.

Temperatures in Portland could reach 99 degrees on Friday, according to the National Weather Service, with even hotter conditions expected elsewhere in the state. An excessive heat warning is in place from Roseburg to Ashland in Southern Oregon, where of-

ficials say temperatures could reach 106 degrees.

At least two Oregon workers died last month due to suspected heat-related illnesses after working through an unprecedented heat wave that shattered temperature records across the state. The state is in-

vestigating two other workplace deaths that occurred during the heat wave as possibly heat-related, and dozens more heat-related investigations from that stretch remain open.

In the wake of those deaths, Gov. Kate Brown directed the Oregon Occupational Safety

and Health division, known as Oregon OSHA, to immediately adopt emergency rules to protect workers from extreme heat. Permanent rules, already in the works but delayed by the pandemic, are expected later this year.

See **Heat** / A8

Once fading, mask sales starting to rebound



A merchant displays masks for sale in Los Angeles in March. Retail analysts expect mask sales will increase after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed course on some masking guidelines, recommending that even vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the U.S. where cases are surging. Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP file

With new guidance from the CDC, retail experts expect another jolt for face coverings

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Face masks, which had started to disappear from store shelves, may be front and center again.

A spot check of businesses and other data sources are showing that mask sales have been rising in recent weeks as Americans worry about the surging cases of the delta variant of the coronavirus. Retail analysts expect mask sales will get another jolt after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention late Tuesday changed course on some masking guidelines, recommending that even vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the U.S. where the cases are surging.

Sales of masks rose 24% for the week ended Tuesday, compared to the prior week, reversing weekly declines since May, according to the Adobe Digital Economy Index. San Francisco-based grocery delivery company Instacart said mask sales via its online platform have increased since the Fourth of July weekend, reversing a decline that had begun in April. And Google reports that searches for the term “masks” doubled since the CDC announcement.

The scenario marks a shift from the past two months when masks were getting heavily discounted and were being pushed to the side on the sales floor following the CDC move to relax guidance on masks in May. Even before then, data from NielsenIQ shows that mask sales started to consistently decline weekly

since early April, going from \$101 million worth of masks to roughly \$37 million for the week ended July 3. It doesn't yet have July sales figures.

“People were just not buying them — masks were really fading out,” said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail. He noted that even as consumers go back to buying masks, the mask business is still not going to be as big as last year during the height of COVID-19. But he noted that stores face challenges in determining how much they should order and how much they should display them.

“No one actually wants to go out and make another big commitment,” Saunders said. “No one knows what's going to happen.”

See **Masks** / A8

Survey: Conservatives far more likely to decline COVID-19 vaccine

BY SUZANNE ROIG
The Bulletin

Vaccination rates drop significantly outside of the Portland metro area, according to results of a Oregon Values and Beliefs Center survey.

The online survey of Oregon residents showed the three counties making up the Portland area had a 77% vaccination rate. In the survey, 42% of those surveyed said they had not received a COVID-19 vaccine.

The survey results mirror those from December 2020 that gauged how likely someone would be to get the vaccine when it became available. The results were published at the same time Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced the state would follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indoor-mask guidelines.

People who identified as socially conservative were four times



A health care worker fills a syringe with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine July 22 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The number of Americans getting a COVID-19 vaccine has been rising in recent days as virus cases once again surge and officials raise dire warnings about remaining unvaccinated.

as likely to say they would not receive the vaccine than those who said they were liberal. What's more, nearly all those surveyed who said

they were college educated reported having received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

See **Survey** / A8

Vacasa to go public; valued at \$4.5 billion

BY MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

Portland vacation rental giant Vacasa said Thursday it plans to go public in a deal that values the business at \$4.5 billion, vaulting the young company into the top tier of Oregon businesses.

A deal with an investment fund called TPG Pace Solutions will list Vacasa under the ticker symbol VCSA without the initial public offering typically associated with new stock listings. Such arrangements have become extremely popular over the past two years as a mechanism for going public without the expense associated with a traditional IPO.

The deal stands to make Vacasa the most valuable new Oregon company in generations. It's the latest in a string of public offerings in Oregon and southwest Washington that signals the emergence of a new class of young business that could help anchor the regional economy.

See **Vacasa** / A8