

DOW 33,970.47 -614.41	NASDAQ 14,713.90 -330.07	S&P 500 4,357.73 -75.26	30-YR T-BOND 1.85% -.06	CRUDE OIL \$70.29 -1.68	GOLD \$1,761.80 +12.40	SILVER \$22.16 -.14	EURO \$1.1724 -.0006
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BRIEFING

Investigation opens into Takata airbags

The U.S. government's highway safety regulator has opened an investigation into a potential problem that surfaced last year with 56 million Takata airbags but that the agency eventually deemed safe based on industry research.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has not posted an official document on the investigation yet, but said that it wasn't aware of any injuries or fatalities due to the problem and that the public "does not need to take any action."

The agency said Monday its investigation will try to determine if there's a defect in nonrecalled frontal and passenger inflators manufactured by Takata, adding that "no present safety risk has been identified."

More than 25 people were killed and more than 300 were injured by metal flying from the airbags, setting off a series of the largest automotive recalls in U.S. history. About 50 million inflators were recalled in the U.S. and another 100 million worldwide.

State sets max rent increase at 9.9%

Most Oregon landlords will be allowed to increase rent by a maximum of 9.9% in 2022, state economists announced on Monday.

The state calculates the highest allowable rent increase for the next calendar year each September. The maximum rent increase for 2021 was 9.2%.

The Legislature in 2019 imposed a statewide rent control policy, making Oregon the first state in the nation to do so. The law capped rent hikes at 7% plus inflation during any 12-month period.

The rent increase only applies to homes that were built 15 years ago or more. Newer homes are exempt, a carve-out intended to keep the rule from discouraging the construction of new rentals.

Hospitals in need of staff in Washington

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has asked the federal government for assistance staffing hospitals and long-term care facilities in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"In Washington State, our hospitals are currently at or beyond capacity, and we need additional assistance at this time," Inslee wrote in Friday's letter — released publicly Monday — to Jeffrey Zients, the White House COVID-19 coordinator. Inslee wrote that the state Department of Health has requested 1,200 clinical and nonclinical staff, and that he was requesting deployment of Department of Defense medical personnel "to assist with the current hospital crisis."

Inslee spokesman Mike Faulk said the state had not yet received a response.

Meanwhile on Monday state hospital leaders said COVID-19 hospitalizations are ticking down across Washington.

The Seattle Times reports this week hospitals counted 1,504 COVID-19 patients throughout the state, compared to 1,673 last week.

— Bulletin wire reports

COVID-19

U.S. easing inbound foreign flight restrictions

BY ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a major easing of pandemic travel restrictions, the U.S. said Monday it will allow foreigners to fly into the country this fall if they have vaccination proof and a negative COVID-19 test — changes replacing a hodgepodge of rules that had kept out many noncitizens and irritated allies in Europe and beyond where virus cases are lower.

The changes, to take effect in November, will allow families and others who have been separated by the travel restrictions for 18 months to plan for long-awaited reunifications and allow foreigners with work permits to get back to their jobs in the U.S.

Airlines, business groups and travelers cheered — though also calling the step long overdue.

See **Travel** / A13

Pfizer says vaccine works in kids 5 to 11

Associated Press

Pfizer said Monday its COVID-19 vaccine works for children ages 5 to 11 and that it will seek U.S. authorization for this age group soon — a key step toward beginning vaccinations for youngsters.

The vaccine made by Pfizer and its

German partner BioNTech already is available for anyone 12 and older. But with kids now back in school and the extra-contagious delta variant causing a huge jump in pediatric infections, many parents are anxiously awaiting vaccinations for their younger children.

See **Pfizer** / A13



≈ Grape stomping, also called "treading."

≈ Christine Clair, winery director at Willamette Valley Vineyards, puts Muscat wine grapes into a vat. Then she holds onto an employee acting as her "swabbie" for support while she treads on grapes.

Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Stomping contest highlights an old-world tradition that's still alive: 'It's a heck of a workout'

BY SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

TURNER — Christine Clair stomped zealously on clusters of green Muscat wine grapes in a vat, trying not to fall in the cold, slippery fruit.

Juice dripped down her ankles.

"It's a heck of a workout," said Clair.

She laughed.

Clair, winery director at Willamette Valley Vineyards, was gearing up for the Annual Oregon Grape Stomp Championship and Harvest Celebration. The event, which drew more than 1,500 people in 2019, was canceled in 2020. Now, with social distancing, the stomp returned for its 30th anniversary Saturday and Sunday.

"It's exciting to bring it back," said Clair.

Contestants competed in pairs, the "stomper" crushed grapes under foot while the "swabbie" guided the juice into a jug. The pair to make the most juice the fastest won a \$500 gift card and an overnight stay in a Winery Suite.

Many contestants each year dress in costume, including dozens of Lucy and Ethel pairs, a nod to Italian grape stomping in an iconic "I Love Lucy" episode.

In past years, stompers from Willamette Valley Vineyards have represented Oregon in the World Grape Stomp Championship.

For Willamette Valley Vineyards, the contest is purely for fun. None of these foot-treaded grapes from the contest will ever be made into wine because they've been exposed to open air and a large number of people. But stomping, or "treading," as part of real winemaking is not just ancient history.

Willamette Valley Vineyards uses modern equipment to crush the vast majority of its wine grapes, as do most U.S. wineries.

See **Stomping** / A13



Oregon's labor crunch is a supply and demand problem

BY MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

Oregon businesses have been struggling to find workers all year — especially in the health care and hospitality fields, which have been among the most tumultuous sectors throughout the pandemic.

There are many reasons for the state's labor squeeze: Some workers are staying home to care for the kids; some don't want to work because they fear exposure to COVID-19; others don't feel they need to work after pocketing last year's stimulus money; some were still collecting expanded jobless benefits.

Above all, though, there's a simple mismatch between supply and demand. Oregon's job openings have been soaring even as the number of people looking for jobs has fallen.

That means that Oregon's job market is tighter now than it was in the winter of 2020, before the pandemic hit, when the jobless rate was near an all-time low.

The state's employers had nearly 98,000 openings last spring, according to a quarterly survey by the Oregon Employment Department. That's nearly double the number of openings just three months earlier and the highest tally, by far, in the eight years the department has been conducting the survey.

Oregon's jobless rate was in steep decline during the same period, from 10.3% in June 2020 to 5.6% this past June.

That's easy math: The number of job vacancies nearly doubled while the jobless rate fell by nearly half. You can see why hiring might be a challenge.

Here's another way to look at it. Last spring, Oregon had 1.3 unemployed people for every open job.

That's an extremely tight labor market by historical standards. Over the prior eight years, a stretch that included some of Oregon's strongest job growth on record, the average was 2.6 unemployed people per open job.

The national job market was even tighter — just one unemployed worker per open job.

Complicating matters, Oregon's job openings aren't distributed equally.

See **Jobs** / A13