The Bulletin

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OREGON | VALUES AND BELIEFS CENTER

Survey finds optimism is in short supply

BY SUZANNE ROIG
The Bulletin

Optimism is in short supply these days, according to a survey of Oregonians by the Values and Beliefs Center.

And more than half those surveyed feel Oregon is headed down the wrong path, according to the survey of 1,400 residents from Jan. 13-20.

"It is sad that people are unhappy," said Amaury Vogel, Oregon Values and Beliefs Center associate executive director. "I think it's more sad that they are not hopeful that things are going to get better and that they feel their elected officials are not going to make progress in making things better."

"(Lawmakers) will be able to make significant progress in benefitting the opinions of Portlanders, but certainly not the whole Oregon, which is largely at odds with Portland and its politics."

— Savannah Singleton, a Deschutes County resident, in a written response to an Oregon Values and Beliefs Center survey

Rising prices, two years of pandemic related restrictions and a distrust for politicians are contributing to the amount of optimism people feel.

The emotional climate of Oregonians is a complex issue, said Peter Sparks, Oregon State University-Cascades senior instructor and program coordinator for the Psychology Program.

"There is likely to be many complex issues that have led people to be pessimistic and helping people become more optimistic will be difficult," Sparks said of the survey results.

According to the survey, 53% of those surveyed say they're optimistic about 2022, compared to roughly the same period in 2021 when 59% surveyed said they were very or somewhat optimistic.

More than half those surveyed also felt that the state was headed in the wrong direction, a feeling that is about the same as it was in February 2021, according to the results.

"They (lawmakers) will be able to make significant progress in benefitting the opinions of Portlanders, but certainly not the whole Oregon, which is largely at odds with Portland and its politics," wrote Savannah Singleton, a Deschutes County resident, in a response to a survey question.

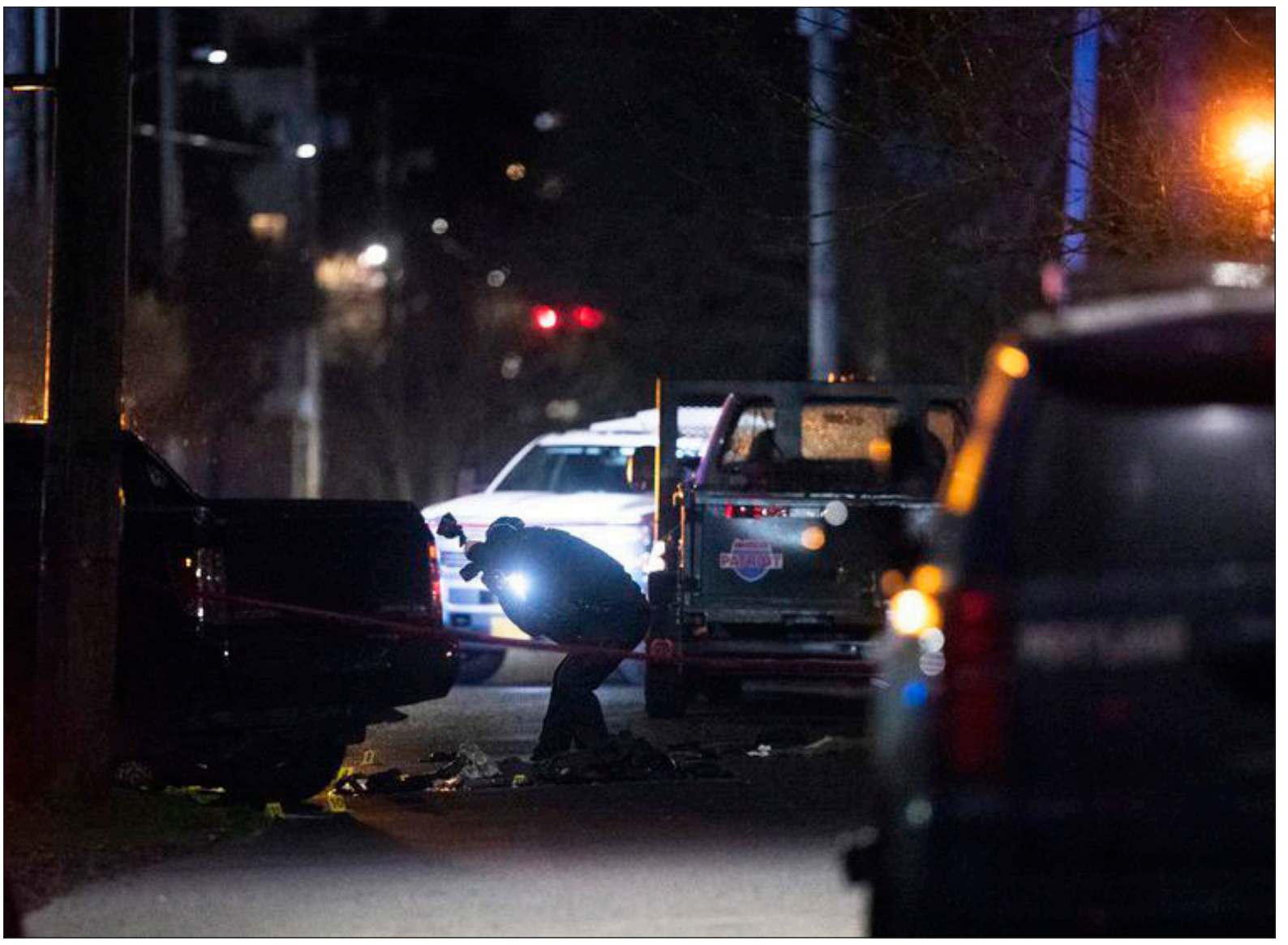
A deeper dive into the results shows that 62% of those surveyed are not optimistic that the Legislature and the governor will be able to make any progress on key issues during the current legislative session.

"Despite a nearly two-thirds majority in the Legislature, somehow I suspect that the nut job whiney third will find some way to draw attention to themselves and how they're being personally oppressed instead of doing any meaningful Democratic debates," wrote Brenda Pace, a Deschutes County resident, who responded to the survey.

See **Survey** / *A4*

PORTLAND | SATURDAY NIGHT

DEADLY SHOOTOUT AT PARK WHERE MARCH WAS PLANNED



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian

Portland Police responded around 8 p.m. Saturday to a shooting in the area of Normandale Park in northeast Portland. One person was killed and five injured.

One person killed; 50 people disrupt police briefing Sunday as city's record gun violence shows little sign of letting up

Associated Press

PORTLAND — One person was killed and five others were wounded in a shooting Saturday night at a Portland park where a march was planned to protest police violence.

Officers responding to a report of shots fired at Normandale Park found one woman dead, according to the Portland Police Bureau. Two men and three other women were taken to the hospital. Their conditions were not released.

Social media flyers show that at the same time as the shooting, a march was planned for Amir Locke, a Black man who was fatally shot by police in Minneapolis, KOIN-TV reported.

Police said Sunday the shooting came amid an apparent confrontation between demonstrators and an armed neighbor, according to a report from The Oregonian. A Sunday morning press conference where police officials planned to address multiple shootings in the city Saturday was disrupted by about 50 demonstrators, according to the report.

Two people were taken into custody after Saturday night's deadly shooting, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting.

"When officers arrived they located a female victim who was deceased," the Portland Police Bureau said in a press statement.

Portland saw months of nightly protests in 2020 that often spiraled into violence following the murder by police of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Portland became the center of the movement to defund the police, but the sustained protests in the city have largely faded away.

The city is now dealing with a plague of gun violence.

Police responded to six shootings within a nine-hour span between Thursday night and early Friday. Shortly before Saturday night's shooting at Normandale Park, police who were called to a separate disturbance were involved in a shooting that left one person dead. It wasn't immediately clear if the person died by police gunfire.

Although last year was marked by record-high numbers of gun violence in Portland, the number of shooting incidents during the first month of 2022 outpaced January 2021, according to police data. During January alone, police recorded 127 shootings.

Police and city officials say the increase in violence, which disproportionately affected Portland's Black community, was fueled by gang-related arguments, drug deals gone wrong and disputes among homeless people. The situation was exacerbated by the pandemic, economic hardships and mental health crises.

The number of homicides in Portland last year surpassed more populous cities such as San Francisco and Boston and was more than double the number of slayings in Seattle, Portland's larger Northwest neighbor. Portland recorded 90 homicides in 2021 amid a surge in gun violence, shattering the city's previous high of 66 set more than three decades ago.

Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals via AP

One of the largest opals in the world has been sold.

Oregon man once had a huge opal; it's been sold for big bucks

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — A gemstone, billed as one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence, was sold for $143,750 at auction in Alaska on Sunday.

The opal, dubbed the "Americus Australis," weighs more than 11,800 carats, according to the auction house Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals. It also has a long history.

Most recently, it was kept in a linen closet in a home in Big Lake, north of Anchorage, by Fred von Brandt, who mines for gold in Alaska and whose family has deep roots in the gem and rock business.

The opal is larger than a brick and is broken into two pieces, which von Brandt said was a practice used decades ago to prove gem quality.

Von Brandt said the stone has been in his family since the late 1950s, when his grandfather bought it from an Australian opal dealer named John Altmann.

Von Brandt said the opal for decades was in the care of his father, Guy von Brandt, who decided it had been "locked up long enough, that it's time to put it back out in the world and see what interest it can generate."

"He entrusted me to figure out which direction we wanted to go to part with the stone," von Brandt told The Associated Press.

The family, with roots in California, exhibited the stone at gem shows for years, until the early 1980s, he said. His father then branched out into furniture and displayed it at his shop. Guy von Brandt eventually moved to Oregon and kept the stone "kind of tucked away" for many years, von Brandt said.

Von Brandt said he brought it with him to Alaska over a year ago as he weighed the best approach to a possible sale.

See **Opal** / *A4*

TODAY'S WEATHER

Cloudy, chilly
High 39, Low 14
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