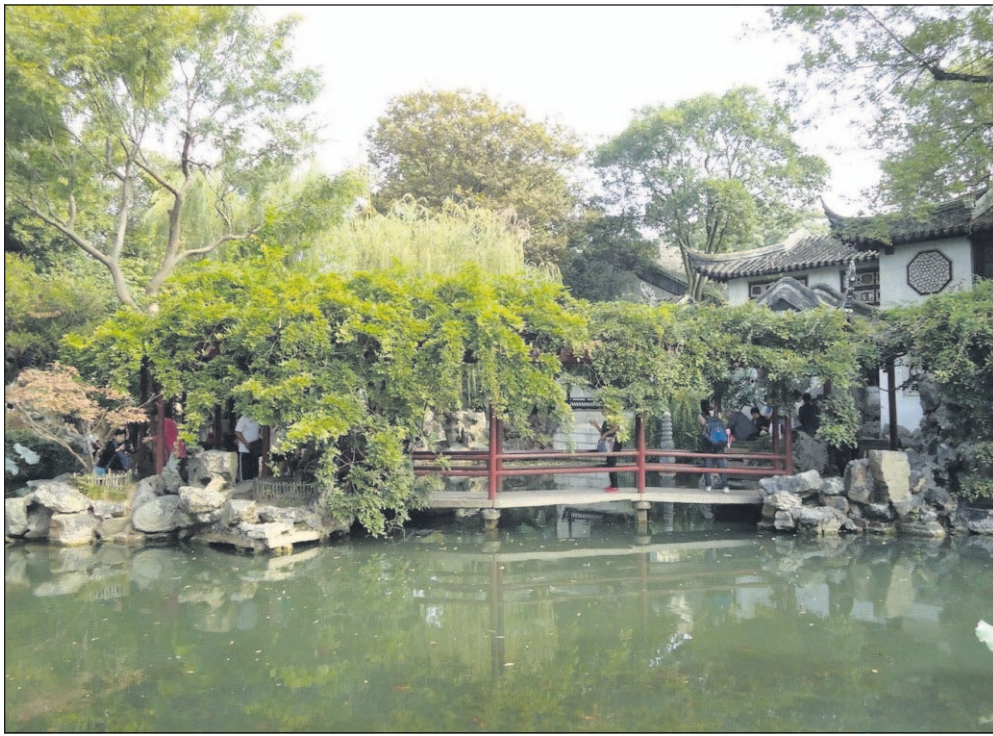


LOCAL WEATHER



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN HUTCHINSON-TALASKI

Karen Hutchinson-Talaski took this photo of the Linger Garden in Suzhou China on a trip last fall.

CHINA:

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was to go to the Great Wall," Hutchinson-Talaski said. "I knew we were in China, but it didn't really hit me until I saw the Great Wall."

She said the wall is the only man-made structure visible from space and seeing the "huge undertaking" in person was exciting.

"It was so incredible to be there and walk on those steps and walk where people have been walking for centuries," she said. "It was an incredible thing to see."

During the 10-day guided trip, the group visited Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou. Hutchinson-Talaski said the "hou" suffix signifies the city is near water, and a canal ride through Suzhou provided a chance to see people performing everyday tasks.



Umatilla Chamber of Commerce Director Karen Hutchinson-Talaski poses on the Great Wall of China during a recent trip with other chamber executives to promote tourism in the country.

The group visited a market that she described as a large shopping mall in a very small area with people offering a wide variety of items.

"They had everything from stainless steel pots and pans to live frogs and chickens," Hutchinson-Talaski said. "There was a guy making blankets. Another guy was sell-

ing household goods like brooms and mops. Scooters are beeping their way through these narrow little alleyways — and people with carts. It was just so incredibly cool because that's how people live there."

She said the people were "warm and friendly" and "very generous." She said she was surprised how

many people spoke English and how excited they were to see Americans. She said people approached the group asking to have their picture taken with the tourists.

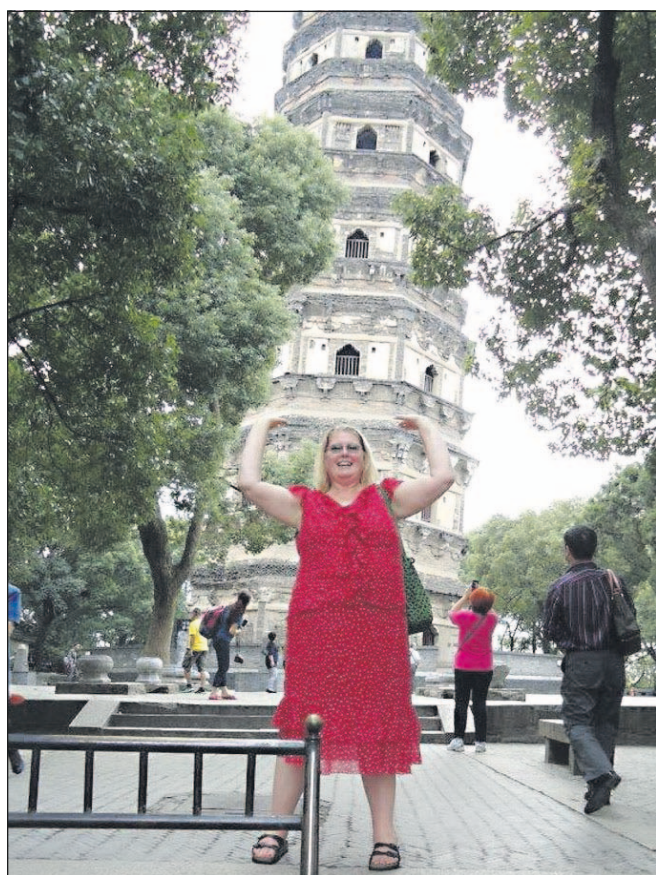
"When I think of China, I think of very austere people all dressed the same, a lack of food, all these things," she said. "It wasn't like that. It's very Westernized. These people have embraced that with open arms."

Hutchinson-Talaski said the food in the country was not like Chinese food in the United States. She said it was not deep fried and always fresh with rice and vegetables. Soup was served at the end of the meal, and fruit was served for dessert, she said.

"I was pleasantly surprised because I wasn't sure what the food would be," she said. "I'm kind of a picky eater, but there was nothing I couldn't eat."

She said another highlight of the trip was the Linger Garden in Suzhou. She said the three- or four-century-old Chinese garden had coy ponds and a large collection of bonsai, artistically trimmed miniature trees.

"It's a beautiful garden," she said. "It was so peaceful. I could have stayed there all day."



Karen Hutchinson-Talaski poses in front of a temple that was built over a warlord's tomb at Tiger Hill in Suzhou on a recent trip to China with other chamber of commerce executives.

HOMELESS:

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Smith said the district doesn't want those students to have to change schools every time they move, so the busing arrangement gives them some consistency in their lives.

"We bus from wherever they are to the school to accommodate what can be a chaotic lifestyle," he said.

Smith said the district also provides homeless students who qualify with free and reduced lunches and breakfasts. The district also collaborates with area faith-based groups on their backpack programs, which provides students with food and other items in backpacks over the weekend.

"For some of these kids, they

may only get two square meals a day when they eat breakfast and lunch at school," Smith said. "The weekend backpacks provide sustenance for throughout the rest of the week."

Smith said the district can also waive all student fees, which encompasses more than just academic costs. "We can cover all of the fees associated with schooling," he said.

Smith said the district also partners with the Hermiston Sports Boosters to help cover the costs for items like sneakers or jerseys so a student who doesn't have money for those things can still participate.

"Those can weigh very heavily on a family," he said. "We are trying to take away some of those things so the student has less to worry about."

Smith said the district also offers students support from counselors and other staff, who can help with them cope with the weight of their situation. He said the district uses community resource specialists to work with the students and the families as it can be a very sensitive topic.

Lisa Depew, grants and curriculum manager for the district, said the stigma associated with being homeless can be a huge barrier for families. She said, although the district has identified 18 students as homeless, the number could be greater, so having counselors and support staff, such as secretaries, is vital in communicating and supporting those families who are struggling with homelessness.

"Counselors and secretaries are our first line of communication in establishing a relationship with

those families," she said. "There is a stigma attached, so these families may be embarrassed about their situation that has occurred due to circumstances that are beyond their control."

Depew said families having to repeat their circumstances four or five times to various people can also be another huge barrier for them.

"Secretaries and counselors are made aware of the situation so they are able to communicate with these families with confidentiality and discretion," she said.

Smith said teachers and counselors help identify homeless students based on what they see, adding they are trained to look for signs of homelessness, such as when students stop coming to school, they show signs of needing a bath or wearing the same clothes multiple days.

"Those are typically some of the things that peaks the attention of a classroom teacher, who then will report it to the school counselor," he said.

Depew said the whole process is confidential, however, families do have to meet certain criteria to receive benefits under the McKinney-Vento law.

"What we find is that it is on a case-by-case determination," she said.

Depew said what makes Hermiston's program a success, in particular, is the partnerships with neighboring school districts and the Mid-Columbia Bus Company, which provides the transportation for students.

"We have our challenges being very rural, but we work closely with the surrounding districts and we make it work," she said.

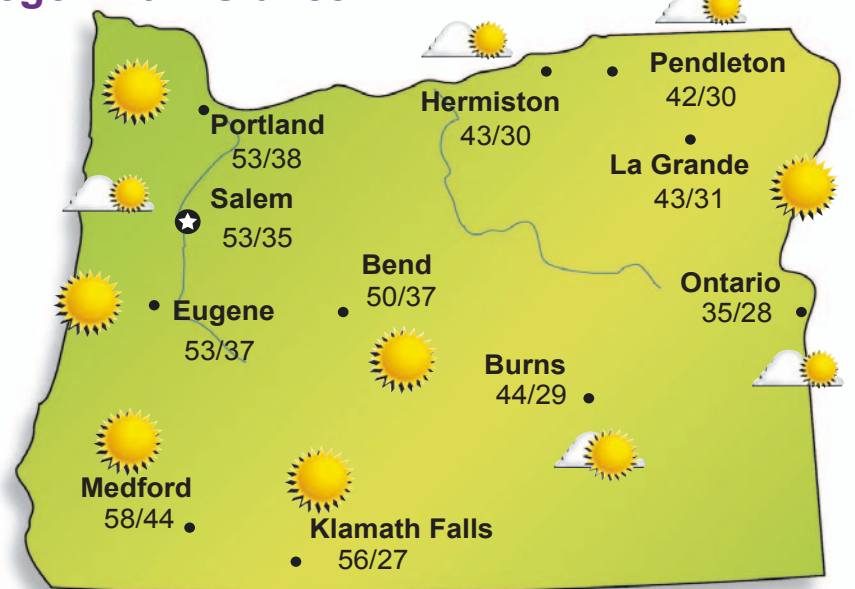
Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Wed 1/7	Thu 1/8	Fri 1/9	Sat 1/10	Sun 1/11
43/30 Partly cloudy skies. High 43F. Winds light and variable.	38/31 Considerable cloudiness. Highs in the upper 30s and lows in the low 30s.	38/30 Morning clouds followed by afternoon sun.	41/27 Morning clouds followed by afternoon sun.	39/30 Afternoon showers. Highs in the upper 30s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise 7:38 AM Sunset 4:28 PM	Sunrise 7:37 AM Sunset 4:30 PM	Sunrise 7:37 AM Sunset 4:31 PM	Sunrise 7:37 AM Sunset 4:32 PM	Sunrise 7:36 AM Sunset 4:33 PM

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Oregon At A Glance



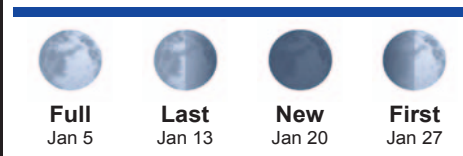
Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Albany	52	35	sunny	Florence	61	44	sunny	Newport	61	46	sunny
Ashland	57	45	sunny	Grants Pass	58	40	sunny	Pendleton	42	30	pt sunny
Astoria	60	41	sunny	Hermiston	43	30	pt sunny	Portland	53	38	sunny
Baker City	37	26	mst sunny	John Day	48	32	sunny	Redmond	50	29	sunny
Bend	50	37	sunny	Klamath Falls	56	27	sunny	Roseburg	59	42	sunny
Brookings	63	47	sunny	La Grande	43	31	sunny	Salem	53	35	pt sunny
Burns	44	29	mst sunny	Lakeview	55	29	sunny	Springfield	60	42	sunny
Coos Bay	63	45	sunny	Lincoln City	64	47	sunny	The Dalles	46	34	mst sunny
Corvallis	52	36	sunny	Mcminville	54	37	sunny	Tillamook	66	42	sunny
Eugene	53	37	sunny	Medford	58	44	sunny	Vale	35	28	pt sunny

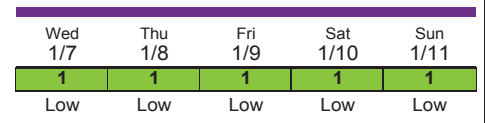
National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	38	13	windy	Houston	52	29	pt sunny	Phoenix	76	48	sunny
Boston	26	-2	windy	Los Angeles	77	54	mst sunny	San Francisco	68	49	sunny
Chicago	0	-13	windy	Miami	79	55	pt sunny	Seattle	52	39	pt sunny
Dallas	35	19	windy	Minneapolis	-3	-7	pt sunny	St. Louis	8	1	windy
Denver	34	28	pt sunny	New York	25	9	windy	Washington, DC	27	12	windy

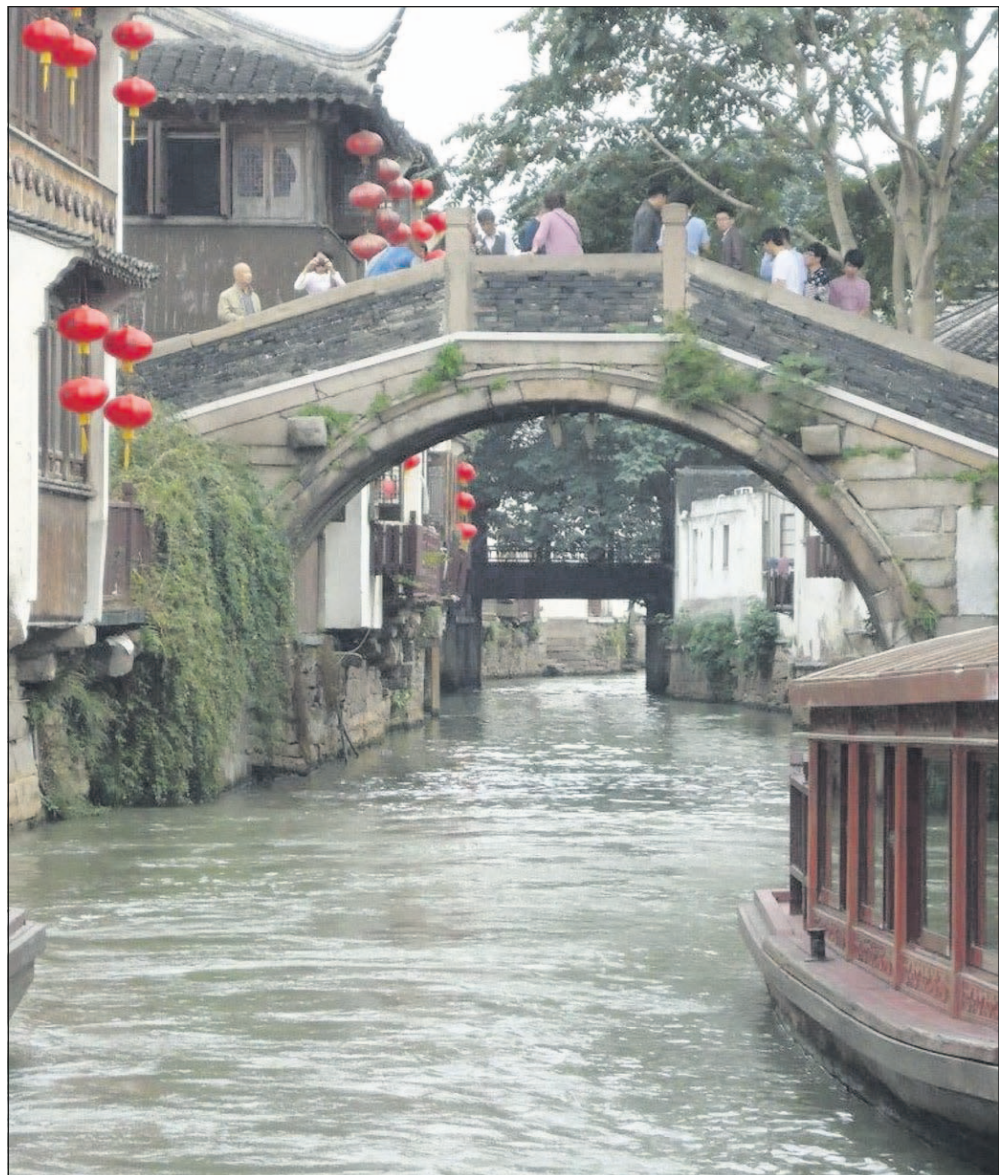
Moon Phases



UV Index



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Karen Hutchinson-Talaski took this photo on a canal ride in Suzhou while on a free trip to China designed to promote tourism in the country.