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IDAHO · MAGIC VALLEY · NATION

Feeding the Beast Brief

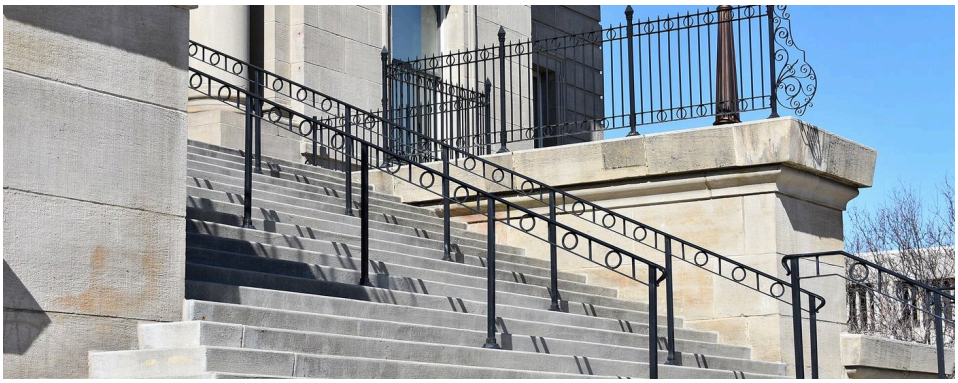
Daily news on power, land, data and liberty in Idaho

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2026 JEFFAPIERSON.COM 24 STORIES

SCHOOL CHOICE IDAHO

Three in four tax credit students have never attended public school

News outlets put recipients' average adjusted gross income at $178,000 in the first state report on the $50 million program.



The east steps of the Idaho Capitol in Boise. The Tax Commission owes lawmakers a close-out report on the credit in January. TAMANOECONOMICO / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 4.0

BOISE: Nearly three of every four students awarded Idaho's new private education tax credit had never been enrolled in a public school, according to the first state report on the $50 million program.

The State Tax Commission released the figures Friday, 10 days after the election. It had turned down public records requests for months and had promised a report by January, Idaho Education News reported.

The awards total $49,325,100 for 12,216 students, on applications from 6,875 parents. That is the program's $50 million cap less $674,900 for administration. The data run through Nov. 6.

Of those students, 3,092, or 25.3%, had ever been enrolled in a public school. About one in five, 19.3%, is home-schooled or plans to be.

On their 2024 tax returns, 55.3% of the parents were above 300% of the federal poverty level, the line that decides who may take the money as an advance payment. News outlets that reviewed the report put the average adjusted gross income at $178,000.

"Idahoans were sold a lie about this voucher scheme," said House Minority Leader Ilana Rubel, D-Boise.

Sen. Lori Den Hartog, R-Meridian, an original sponsor, told Boise State Public Radio she is thankful the program let parents choose, and she disputed that wealthier families gained the most. Gov. Brad Little's office said the report offers the best data available for judging the program.

Cole Valley Christian School topped the list of schools with 642 awards worth $3.1 million, Idaho Education News reported.

The commission plans year-end figures and, in January, a close-out report to the Legislature.

Keywords: Parental Choice Tax Credit, Idaho State Tax Commission, House Bill 93, school choice, Ilana Rubel
Sources: Idaho State Tax Commission report · Idaho State Tax Commission release · Idaho Education News via KMVT · Boise State Public Radio

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CORRECTIONS

No corrections. To report an error, reply to the morning email.

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"The federal and State governments are in fact but different agents and trustees of the people, constituted with different powers, and designed for different purposes."

James Madison, Federalist No. 46, Jan. 29, 1788

Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School

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DATES TO WATCH

Nov. 16 Supreme Court orders are expected from the Nov. 13 conference. Petitions on gun carry, backyard searches and phone location data were relisted for it.

Nov. 16 San Diego City Council votes at 2 p.m. Pacific on shutting off its 505 license plate readers.

Nov. 16 Election audits in Latah, Caribou and Gem counties. Bannock, Oneida and Adams follow Tuesday. Benewah and Washington are Wednesday.

Nov. 16 Twin Falls City Council meets at 5 p.m.

Nov. 17 BLM online geothermal lease sale, 35 Idaho parcels.

Nov. 17 Idaho PUC comments close on Avista's Carlin Bay line, AVU-E-26-10.

Nov. 17 Idaho Fall Water Summit opens at Boise State University. It runs through Wednesday.

Nov. 17 Effingham County, Georgia, votes on an OpenAI data center and a moratorium.

Nov. 18 Idaho Fish and Game Commission votes in Lewiston on the Sacred Resource Protection Zone petition and spring steelhead season changes.

Nov. 19 Legislature's Rural Health Transformation Committee meets at 9 a.m.

Nov. 24 State Board of Canvassers certifies Idaho's general election.

Nov. 30 DEQ comments close on the Bunker Hill Mine air permit.

Dec. 2 Supreme Court argument in Viramontes v. Cook County, the AR-15 ban case.

Dec. 3 Idaho Legislature's organizational session begins.

Dec. 3 DEQ comments close on the Idaho Cobalt mine groundwater ruling.

Dec. 4 Written comments due on Idaho Power's sale of its Oregon territory, IPC-E-26-21. The customer hearing is Dec. 15.

Dec. 14 Written comments due on Idaho Power's cost-of-service case, IPC-E-26-07.

Dec. 16 University of Idaho Ag Market Outlook Seminar, Garden City.

TOP STORIES

ELECTIONS IDAHO

Hand-count audits open today in Latah, Tuesday in Bannock

Eight counties will be checked through Wednesday. The state certifies the election Nov. 24.

BOISE: Hand counting starts this morning in Latah County, where more than 2,300 early votes were left out of the election night totals. It is one of eight Idaho counties drawn for post-election audits.

Latah County's audit is set for 9:30 a.m. Pacific time, according to the schedule the Secretary of State's Office released Friday. Caribou and Gem counties also go today. Bannock County, where a sealed box of 333 ballots went uncounted on election night, follows Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. Mountain time, the same day as Oneida and Adams. Benewah and Washington counties finish the round Wednesday.

All eight were drawn at random Friday from a bingo-style tumbler. In the counties selected, officials are slated to audit at least 2,100 ballots, or 5% of precincts, and compare the hand tallies with the results already reported, the Idaho Capital Sun reported.

The Pocatello precinct where Bannock's late box turned up was not among those drawn. It is unclear whether the once-missing ballots in either county will be part of the sample, the Capital Sun reported.

"Confidence in our elections comes from being able to show our work," Secretary of State Phil McGrane said in the announcement.

A full recount in Latah County was finished last week, and officials in both counties have said no race changed. Latah County Commission Chair Tom Lamar has called for a review of how ballots were handled, Newsweek reported.

The audits are open to the public. Results stay unofficial until the State Board of Canvassers meets Nov. 24.

Keywords: post-election audit, Latah County, Bannock County, Phil McGrane, hand count
Sources: Idaho Secretary of State · Idaho Capital Sun via Yahoo News · Newsweek · Idaho Secretary of State, Bannock County release

ON THIS DATE



NASA, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Skylab 4 lifts off from Kennedy Space Center at 9:01 a.m. Eastern time on Nov. 16, 1973. Gerald Carr, Edward Gibson and William Pogue, all on their first spaceflights, stayed up 84 days, a record at the time.

Source: NASA

NUCLEAR WASTE IDAHO

Wright: Congress must act before nuclear campuses move ahead

Idaho is a finalist. No bill to loosen the waste program's tie to Yucca Mountain has been introduced.



The Experimental Breeder Reactor-I building on the Idaho National Laboratory site in 2010. No Idaho location for a nuclear campus has been identified.

IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY 2.0

LULING, La.: "To actually move forward, we need an act from Congress," Energy Secretary Chris Wright said last week of the nuclear campuses his department wants states to host. Idaho is one of the finalists.

Wright spoke Tuesday in Louisiana, another finalist. He said Congress must change the law so the waste program is no longer tied only to Yucca Mountain in Nevada, the Louisiana Illuminator reported. No member of Congress has

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TOP STORIES *continued*

Wright: Congress must act before nuclear ..., continued

introduced such a bill, the news site reported.

The Energy Department took applications from 26 states for what it calls nuclear lifecycle innovation campuses. Six made the short list: Idaho, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and West Virginia. West Virginia's governor has since withdrawn.

Wright said he expects no trouble and cited bipartisan support. Republicans lose their majorities in both chambers Jan. 3, the Illuminator reported, and the department has pledged neither money nor faster permits to the states it picks. It expects to name them late this year or early next, with no more than one site in a state.

Gov. Brad Little said in September that storing spent fuel above the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer is a nonstarter, the Idaho Capital Sun reported. No Idaho site has been identified.

A 1995 settlement limits spent fuel shipments into Idaho and sets cleanup deadlines, the major ones in 2035. Joel Case, a retired Energy Department project manager, told the Capital Sun the state should use it to limit any deal. He put Idaho's share at about 33,000 metric tons if the nation's spent fuel were split three ways.

State Sen. Dave Lent, a Republican, supports bringing a campus to Idaho and says Idaho National Laboratory could handle it safely. Rep. Monica Church, D-Boise, has said the state should not trade its federal protections for vague promises.

Keywords: nuclear waste, Chris Wright, Idaho National Laboratory, 1995 Settlement Agreement, Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer
Sources: Louisiana Illuminator via Yahoo News · East Idaho News / Idaho Capital Sun · Nuclear Newswire (American Nuclear Society)

DATA CENTERS IDAHO

Lawmaker: $4 billion data center would pay no Idaho sales tax

State law also exempts property value above $400 million. Boise's mayor says the city can require only what the state allows.



Downtown Boise in 2019. The city's six-month pause on large data centers stops at the city line.
TAMANOECONOMICO / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 4.0

BOISE: A $4 billion data center built in Idaho would owe no sales tax on its construction materials or on the servers and equipment inside, a Boise lawmaker told the City Council last week at the hearing where it froze large projects.

Rep. John Gannon, D-Boise, also said property taxes on investments above $1 billion are limited to a $400 million valuation, the Idaho Press reported Friday.

Both statements track state law, and each comes with conditions. Idaho Code 63-3622VV exempts eligible server equipment and new data center facilities from sales and use tax, buildings and their materials included. To qualify, a company must invest at least $250 million within five years of starting construction and add at least 30 jobs within two years of starting operations.

A separate statute, Idaho Code 63-4502, covers property tax. When a taxpayer invests at least $1 billion in new plant and buildings within 84 months of its building permit, the law exempts the net taxable value above $400 million in a single county. That section is open to any industry.

"We can only require of data centers what the state allows us to require," Mayor Lauren McLean said, according to the Idaho Press.

Lawmakers passed two bills on the subject this year. House Bill 895 requires new data centers to use water without consuming it or to take it from a city or district system. House Bill 911 lets a utility serve a new large load only under a contract the Public Utilities Commission has approved, backed by a test meant to show existing ratepayers are unharmed. Both took effect July 1.

Boise's moratorium covers data centers of at least 100,000 square feet or 20 megawatts and stops at the city line. City staff plan to spend about a month on how the public will weigh in on permanent rules.

Keywords: data center tax exemption, Idaho Code 63-3622VV, John Gannon, Boise moratorium, House Bill 895
Sources: Idaho Press via Post Register (subscription) · Idaho Code 63-3622VV · Idaho Code 63-4502 · Idaho Legislature, House Bill 895 · Idaho Legislature, House Bill 911 · Yahoo News

THE BROKEN DICTIONARY

Lame Duck *noun*

A lawmaker who has lost the election and kept the vote. For a few weeks he answers to no one, and it is the only stretch of his career in which he is seen to hurry.

Used in a sentence: "The lame duck session finished in three weeks what the healthy ducks had been studying for two years."

See also Mandate: what the winner calls the same election.

Suggested entry for Jeff's edit. Not found in the existing volumes. Source story

BY THE NUMBERS **12,216** **STUDENTS** Students awarded Idaho's Parental Choice Tax Credit in its first year, on applications from 6,875 parents.

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IDAHO LEGISLATURE

BUDGET IDAHO

Five budget committee seats open as lawmakers organize Dec. 3

Republican leaders will name the replacements. The committee starts on the fiscal 2028 budget in January.

BOISE: Five of the 20 lawmakers who wrote this year's state budget will not be back, and Republican leaders will name their replacements when the Legislature organizes Dec. 3.

Leaving the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee are Sens. Jim Woodward of Sagle, Glenneda Zuiderveld of Twin Falls and Cody Galloway of Boise, along with Reps. Steven Miller of Fairfield and Dustin Manwaring of Pocatello, the Idaho Capital Sun reported. All five are Republicans. Committee members toured Moscow and Lewiston last week.

Democrats arrive with 14 of 70 House seats, up from nine, and seven of 35 in the Senate, a gain of one. Republicans still hold about 80% of each chamber.

"For the most part, I don't think it's that much of a change," House Speaker Mike Moyle said of the Democratic gains.

Moyle said he expects the new Democrats to get committee assignments. House Minority Leader Ilana Rubel said seats on committees could help her caucus stop bills early, and that Democrats can decide close votes when Republicans split, as they have on the budget.

Political scientist Jaclyn Kettler said the Democrats' six-seat gain is too small to change floor votes dramatically.

The committee set most agency budgets 4% lower for fiscal 2026 and 5% lower for fiscal 2027, with K-12 schools left out of the cuts. It begins work on the fiscal 2028 budget in January.

Keywords: Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, organizational session, Mike Moyle, Ilana Rubel, state budget
Sources: Idaho Education News / Idaho Capital Sun · Yahoo News · University of Idaho Argonaut

IDAHO

On the front page: Three in four tax credit students have never attended public school

On the front page: Hand-count audits open today in Latah, Tuesday in Bannock

HEALTH CARE IDAHO

Rural health panel meets Thursday after federal grant shrinks

Idaho's second-year award is about $3.25 million smaller than its first. The governor's office has no explanation.

BOISE: The legislative committee that oversees Idaho's share of a federal rural health fund meets Thursday with a smaller second-year award on the table and no explanation for the cut.

Idaho's award for year two is $182,698,376.93, Gov. Brad Little's office announced Nov. 9. That is a little more than $3.25 million below the first-year award of $185.9 million, Idaho Education News reported. Only nine states lost more.

The governor's release did not mention the decrease. Spokeswoman Emily Callihan said the office had no explanation, the news site reported. Department of Health and Welfare spokesman AJ McWhorter said the agency is reviewing the award and will work with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on a revised plan.

Idaho committed its first-year money Oct. 28. More than $25 million of it went to education and training, including $12.5 million for career advancement programs and $8 million for rural fellowships and residencies.

Two of the oversight committee's eight members, Reps. Dori Healey of Boise and Dustin Manwaring of Pocatello, lost their seats Nov. 3. Health and Welfare Director Juliet Charron is stepping down later this year.

The Rural Health Transformation Committee is listed for 9 a.m. Thursday on the Legislature's calendar.

Keywords: Rural Health Transformation, federal grant, Department of Health and Welfare, Brad Little, Medicaid
Sources: Office of the Governor · Idaho Education News · Idaho Legislature calendar

MAGIC VALLEY

BELLEVUE LOCAL

Prosecutor: Bellevue mayor's land purchase broke state law

The statute calls it misconduct in office and sets no penalty. A council member has taken the matter to the attorney general.

BELLEVUE: Bellevue Mayor Christina Giordani violated state law when a company she manages bought property inside the city's urban renewal district, Blaine County's prosecutor has concluded.

"Mayor Giordani violated Idaho Law by purchasing property within Bellevue's urban renewal project," Prosecuting Attorney Matthew Fredback wrote in a memo reported Friday by the Idaho Mountain Express.

The property is 100 S. Main St., bought in mid-October by a company Giordani manages with two partners. It sits in a block the city wants to redevelop. Bellevue has sought a $650,000 federal block grant to redevelop it and pledged $200,000 of its own if the grant comes through.

Idaho Code 50-2017 bars officials of a city or its urban renewal agency from voluntarily acquiring a personal interest in an urban renewal project. The statute says a violation is misconduct in office. Fredback wrote that the code provides no remedy and that a prosecutor has no authority over a public official in such a case, the newspaper reported.

He found no conflict-of-interest violation at an Oct. 26 council hearing on the block.

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MAGIC VALLEY *continued*

Prosecutor: Bellevue mayor's land purchase ..., continued

The mayor had disclosed the purchase and stepped aside before any action, he wrote, and he advised her to stay out of any decision that affects the property.

Councilwoman Suzanne Wrede asked for the review and has also complained to the Idaho Attorney General's Office, which had not responded to the newspaper. Giordani could not be reached, the Express reported.

The council's packet for tonight's 5:30 meeting at 115 E. Pine St. lists no urban renewal item.

Keywords: Bellevue, Christina Giordani, urban renewal, Idaho Code 50-2017, Blaine County prosecutor
Sources: Idaho Mountain Express (subscription) · Idaho Code 50-2017 · City of Bellevue council packet, Nov. 16

BLAINE COUNTY LOCAL

Hailey, Bellevue libraries win state award after voters merge them

The new tax-supported library district begins operating Oct. 1, 2027.

HAILEY: Two Blaine County libraries with small budgets, merged by voters this year, have been named Idaho's Library of the Year.

The Idaho Library Association gave the award to the Hailey and Bellevue public libraries, KMVT reported Sunday. Voters approved a levy in May that joins the two in a single tax-supported library district.

Getting on the ballot took a petition signed by 20% of the voting community, Hailey co-director Lee Dabney said. A simple majority then had to approve it.

"We were not expecting this at all," said Kristin Marlar, executive director of the Bellevue library. She said the libraries had faced possible closure because their budgets are so small.

The district is set to begin operating Oct. 1, 2027. Before then the two libraries have to move onto the same operating systems and settle staffing, and the cities of Hailey and Bellevue must sign a memorandum of understanding.

Keywords: Hailey Public Library, Bellevue Public Library, library district, Idaho Library Association, Blaine County
Sources: KMVT

HYPERSCALE AND DATA CENTERS

On the front page: Lawmaker: $4 billion data center would pay no Idaho sales tax

DATA CENTERS NATIONAL

Georgia county votes Tuesday on OpenAI site and a building pause

Effingham County has put the decision off twice. Pauses are also advancing in South Carolina and South Dakota.

SPRINGFIELD, Ga.: County commissioners here are scheduled to vote Tuesday on site plans for an OpenAI data center and, at the same meeting, on a moratorium that would halt new data center approvals.

Effingham County put the vote off in September and again Nov. 3, the Savannah Morning News reported. The plans show six data center buildings where four larger ones were first proposed, along with a 100,000-square-foot warehouse and three electrical substations. The meeting starts at 5 p.m.

The moratorium would pause rezonings, land use amendments, special permits and public hearings for data centers.

Democrats Shelia Edwards and Peter Hubbard won seats on the state Public Service Commission this month, a result Canary Media reported likely means a challenge to Georgia Power's buildout of gas plants. Gov.-elect Keisha Lance Bottoms has promised a temporary halt to new data center approvals while the state reviews them.

"The first thing is that they have to pay their own way," Commissioner-elect Shelia Edwards said.

In South Carolina, the Beaufort County Council voted 7-3 on Nov. 9 to advance a two-year moratorium, which needs two more votes, according to the Post and Courier. Rapid City Mayor Jason Salamun said he would propose a six-month permit pause after the city took more than 900 public comments, KOTA reported.

Idaho caps an emergency moratorium at 182 days and bars back-to-back renewals.

Keywords: OpenAI, Effingham County, data center moratorium, Georgia Public Service Commission, local control
Sources: Savannah Morning News via Yahoo News · Canary Media · Post and Courier · KOTA · Yahoo News

DID YOU KNOW

Idaho's highest point, Borah Peak, stands 12,662 feet in the Lost River Range.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

POP QUIZ

Which New York delegate signed the Constitution in a personal capacity?

Answer: Alexander Hamilton. He was the only New Yorker present, and one delegate could not cast the state's vote, the National Park Service says.

Source: National Park Service

THEY SAID IT

"Idahoans were sold a lie about this voucher scheme."

House Minority Leader Ilana Rubel, D-Boise, on the tax credit report

Source: Idaho Education News via KMVT

FROM THE FOUNDERS *"It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government."* George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796

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REGULATORS: IPUC, FERC, DEQ

IDAHO PUC IDAHO

Comments close Tuesday on Avista line east of Lake Coeur d'Alene

The utility says the two feeders serving the area are at capacity. The commission also meets Tuesday on a gas cost request.

COEUR D'ALENE: Tuesday is the last day for the public to comment on Avista's plan for a 115-kilovolt transmission line on the east side of Lake Coeur d'Alene.

Avista has asked the Idaho Public Utilities Commission for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the Carlin Bay line and related facilities.

Two feeders, from the Blue Creek and O'Gara substations, serve the area now. Avista says both have had sustained outages and are at capacity, according to the commission's notice. The notice gives neither a route nor a cost.

The commission moved the comment deadline from Oct. 27 to Nov. 17 in Order No. 37208. The case file, AVU-E-26-10, shows public comments filed on four dates since Sept. 1 and no intervenors.

Comments can be filed through the form at puc.idaho.gov or emailed to secretary@puc.idaho.gov. They should carry the case number along with the commenter's name and address.

Every business item on the agenda for the commission's 1:30 p.m. Tuesday decision meeting is on the consent agenda. One is Intermountain Gas Co.'s request, case INT-G-26-09, for an accounting order that would let it defer the added cost of temporary liquefied natural gas facilities. Another is Columbine Telephone Co.'s application for a guaranty loan of up to $38,220,991.10.

Keywords: Avista, AVU-E-26-10, Carlin Bay transmission line, Idaho PUC, Intermountain Gas
Sources: Idaho PUC release, AVU-E-26-10 · Idaho PUC case file, AVU-E-26-10 · Idaho PUC agenda, Nov. 17

IDAHO POWER IDAHO

Idaho Power's $154 million Oregon exit: comments due Dec. 4

A cooperative would take over about 20,000 customers in four counties. Idaho regulators hear from customers Dec. 15.

BOISE: Idaho Power wants to sell its entire Oregon service territory for $154 million, and Idaho regulators will take written comments on the deal through Dec. 4.

The buyer is Oregon Trail Electric Consumers Cooperative. Idaho Power serves about 20,000 customers in Malheur, Harney, Baker and Wallowa counties, according to the Idaho Public Utilities Commission's notice.

Under the application, filed June 30 as case IPC-E-26-21, the company would hand over its Oregon retail customers. It would keep its Oregon generating plants, most of its bulk transmission there and 11 power purchase agreements with Oregon qualifying facilities.

Idaho Power would also sell the cooperative firm capacity and energy through September 2030, with an option to extend four years. The case file shows no new filing since Sept. 23.

The commission will take customer testimony Dec. 15 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., or until everyone has spoken. The hearing is by Microsoft Teams or phone and has no physical location. Written comments go through the case comment form at puc.idaho.gov or to secretary@puc.idaho.gov.

Keywords: Idaho Power, IPC-E-26-21, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, service territory sale, Idaho PUC
Sources: Idaho PUC release, IPC-E-26-21 · Idaho PUC Order No. 37129 · Idaho PUC case file, IPC-E-26-21

IDAHO DEQ IDAHO

DEQ takes comment on idled cobalt mine's groundwater plan

Deadlines also near on a Bunker Hill air permit and on piping canals for a Star subdivision.

SALMON: The state is taking comment on a revised groundwater ruling for the idled Idaho Cobalt Operations mine near here, where the owner is winding down water treatment.

Jervois Mining USA suspended operations in March 2023. Active water treatment was to stop beginning in November 2025, once ponds reached minimum levels, and underground dewatering is to be discontinued, according to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's notice. The site would then rely on passive water management.

DEQ issued an earlier version of the ruling, called a points of compliance determination, May 15. Jervois appealed June 15, opening a contested case that was put on hold while the two sides negotiated. The new draft, numbered 3.1, reflects the agency's response. Comments are due by 5 p.m. Mountain time Dec. 3 to Troy Saffle in DEQ's Idaho Falls office.

In Kellogg, comments close Nov. 30 on a draft permit that would let Silver Valley Metals Corp. increase the material moved through the Bunker Hill Mine and enlarge its waste rock area. DEQ says the change will not violate air quality standards.

In Star, a comment period opened Friday on a water quality certification for the Rivermoor project, which would pipe and fill parts of Phyllis Slough, the Eureka Canal and two unnamed ditches. The notice lists 10 wetland mitigation areas and does not name the applicant. That deadline is Dec. 4.

Keywords: Idaho DEQ, Jervois Mining, Idaho Cobalt Operations, Bunker Hill Mine, public comment
Sources: Idaho DEQ, Jervois notice · Idaho DEQ, Bunker Hill notice · Idaho DEQ, Rivermoor notice

NUCLEAR AND SMR

On the front page: Wright: Congress must act before nuclear campuses move ahead

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NUCLEAR AND SMR *continued*

ADVANCED REACTORS IDAHO

Oklo now lists Idaho reactor startup for 2028 to 2029

Its Texas test reactor cleared the last Energy Department hold point Nov. 11. Third-quarter revenue was $1.861 million.

IDAHO FALLS: Oklo's latest quarterly filing lists its Aurora reactor at Idaho National Laboratory as coming online in 2028 to 2029, an analyst said on the company's Nov. 6 earnings call.

He asked whether that range amounts to a slip to 2029. The published transcript cuts off the answer from Chief Executive Jacob DeWitte, so a delay is unconfirmed.

Excavation of the reactor area is complete and safety-related rebar is being placed, executives said. Structural steel was going up by Nov. 4, according to the company's presentation.

The Energy Department has approved the project's preliminary safety analysis. DeWitte said the final one would come near the end of construction, around 2028, followed by a readiness review and authorization to start up. The reactor would first sell power under Energy Department authorization, with a move to NRC oversight later.

Oklo reported a net loss of $123.3 million for the first nine months of 2026 and capital spending of $280.9 million. It had $3.1 billion in liquidity on Sept. 30, including $2.3 billion raised by selling stock. Third-quarter revenue was $1.861 million, the trade site Discovery Alert reported.

On Nov. 11 the department cleared the last operating hold point for Groves-1, Oklo's test reactor near Lockhart, Texas, which first sustained a chain reaction Aug. 5. The clearance does not replace a commercial license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which Aurora will still need, Discovery Alert reported.

Keywords: Oklo, Aurora reactor, Idaho National Laboratory, Department of Energy, advanced reactors
Sources: The Motley Fool, earnings call transcript · Discovery Alert

GRID, RENEWABLES AND TRANSMISSION

GEOTHERMAL IDAHO

BLM geothermal auction Tuesday includes Twin Falls, Cassia land

Thirty-five parcels covering 113,330 acres in eight counties go up for bid online. Half the revenue goes to the state.



The Raft River geothermal plant in Idaho in a 2012 U.S. Department of Energy photo. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

BOISE: Thirty-five parcels of federal land in Idaho, 113,330 acres in all, are scheduled to go up for geothermal leasing Tuesday in an online auction. Some are in Twin Falls and Cassia counties.

The Bureau of Land Management sale covers parcels in Boise, Cassia, Clark, Elmore, Lemhi, Owyhee, Twin Falls and Washington counties, according to the agency's announcement as reported by IdahoNews.com. Bidding runs through the EnergyNet website.

A lease lasts 10 years to start and can be extended if the holder establishes production or shows it has explored diligently. Any drilling or other surface work would need its own environmental review once a company files plans.

Half of the revenue goes to the state of Idaho, a quarter to the county where the lease sits and a quarter to the U.S. Treasury. The state puts 90% of its share into its renewable energy resources fund and sends the rest to the lease counties for roads and schools.

BLM Idaho Acting State Director Tanya Thrift called geothermal "a promising national energy resource" in the announcement.

The agency first proposed 36 parcels in April and took comments until May 13. Published reports do not say how many parcels are in each county or give a minimum bid.

A BLM geothermal sale in California follows Nov. 27.

Keywords: geothermal leasing, Bureau of Land Management, Twin Falls County, Cassia County, EnergyNet
Sources: IdahoNews.com · ThinkGeoEnergy · Bureau of Land Management

DID YOU KNOW

Vice presidents have cast 309 tie-breaking votes in the Senate since 1789.

Source: U.S. Senate

POP QUIZ

How many articles does the Idaho Constitution have?

Answer: Twenty-one, from the Declaration of Rights in Article I to the Schedule and Ordinance in Article XXI.

Source: Idaho Legislature

THEY SAID IT

"I don't understand why this isn't an easy case."

Chief Justice John Roberts, at argument in a pipeline land case

Source: SCOTUSblog

BY THE NUMBERS **113,330** ACRES Federal land in eight Idaho counties scheduled for geothermal leasing in Tuesday's online auction.

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PUBLIC LANDS

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST IDAHO

Sawtooth cabin tied to USDA official still stands despite order

A 2024 Forest Service letter set a July 2025 removal deadline. USDA says nothing can happen until a federal survey is done.



The Boulder Mountains in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, seen from near Galena Summit in 2008. The disputed cabin stands in the same range.
FREDLYFISH4 / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 4.0

BOISE: A cabin the Forest Service ordered removed from the Sawtooth National Recreation Area by July 1, 2025, is still standing, and the man whose former company received the order now oversees the agency.

In January, Michael Boren, an Idaho businessman and rancher, was sworn in as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for natural resources and environment, the post above the Forest Service. He managed Galena Mines until last year, Cowboy State Daily reported Saturday.

The cabin went up in fall 2024 along Germania Creek in the Boulder Mountains, High Country News reported Oct. 30. That November the area ranger, Kirk Flannigan, wrote to Galena Mines that the structure sat on national forest land. He ordered it removed by July 1, 2025, with a restoration plan due in 45 days.

Who built it is disputed. Aaron Murphy of the Montana group American Hunters and Anglers told Cowboy State Daily that Boren did. A USDA spokesperson told High Country News that backcountry skiers built a warming hut on private land for public use.

The private-land claim turns on where a set of old mining claims lies. Bureau of Land Management records place the claims about a mile south of the cabin. Private surveys done in 2003 and 2020, the second one hired by Boren and filed in Custer County, place them about a mile farther north.

"No action can be taken until an official federal survey is completed," the department said in a statement to High Country News.

The department also called the allegation against Boren maliciously false, Cowboy State Daily reported. His office did not respond to the site's questions.

Keywords: Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Michael Boren, Forest Service, Galena Mines, public land
Sources: High Country News · Cowboy State Daily

FISH AND GAME IDAHO

Fish and Game to rule on hunting buffer near Yellowstone

The commission meets Tuesday and Wednesday in Lewiston. Steelhead limits and nonresident wolf tags are also up for votes.

LEWISTON: The Idaho Fish and Game Commission must rule Wednesday on a petition for a protection zone reaching 50 kilometers from national park boundaries, a rule that would affect hunters in eastern Idaho.

The petition comes from the group Protect the Wolves. Besides the zone, which would extend about 31 miles from the parks, it would make it illegal to shoot game animals wearing radio collars or other identifying markers and would ban predator calls within 15 miles of the zone.

The group cites a study that found 82% of human-caused wolf deaths in five national parks over 35 years happened outside park boundaries.

Commission staff made no recommendation. The briefing paper offers two motions: begin negotiated rulemaking on a safety zone around the Idaho side of Yellowstone, or deny the petition. Idaho Code 67-5230 requires a written denial with reasons if the commission says no.

Also set for action Wednesday are changes to the spring steelhead season, including bag limit reductions for 2027, and a nonresident tag discount order covering mountain lions, black bears and gray wolves. Commissioners are scheduled to vote on a litigation position after a closed session.

The agenda also lists a presentation on habitat conservation planning in the Magic Valley Region.

The public meeting starts at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Clearwater Regional Office, 3316 16th St., and business resumes at 8 a.m. Pacific time Wednesday. A Zoom link is posted with the agenda.

Keywords: Idaho Fish and Game Commission, Protect the Wolves, Yellowstone, steelhead, wolf hunting
Sources: Idaho Fish and Game Commission agenda · Idaho Fish and Game briefing paper

DID YOU KNOW

The federal government spent $7.01 trillion in fiscal 2025 and took in $5.23 trillion, a deficit of $1.78 trillion.

Source: U.S. Treasury, Monthly Treasury Statement

BY THE NUMBERS

5 of 20

Budget committee members who will not be back when the Legislature organizes Dec. 3.

Source: Idaho Education News / Idaho Capital Sun

PLAIN ENGLISH

300% of poverty

Three times the federal poverty level. For a family of four that is about $99,000 a year, Boise State Public Radio reported.

Source: Boise State Public Radio

FROM THE FOUNDERS *"I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution."* **Benjamin Franklin, speech at the Federal Convention, Sept. 17, 1787, as recorded by James Madison**

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AI

NVIDIA NATIONAL

Huang agrees to closed-door House testimony by Thanksgiving

Three committee chairmen had asked for him. South Korea and Taiwan say their chip plans stand.

WASHINGTON: Jensen Huang, who resigned last week as chief executive of Nvidia, has agreed to answer questions from three House committees behind closed doors before Thanksgiving, TechCrunch reported.

The request came in a Nov. 4 letter from Republican Reps. Brian Mast, John Moolenaar and Rick Crawford, who lead the Foreign Affairs Committee, the select committee on the Chinese Communist Party and the Intelligence Committee. Several senior lawmakers had threatened subpoenas. The session is expected to be recorded on video and transcribed, and Mast said Huang "has some very serious questions to answer."

Huang stepped down Thursday amid reports about his relationship with a former executive of Megaspeed, a Singapore-based Nvidia customer alleged to have ties to Chinese intelligence, TechCrunch reported. China's foreign ministry has called the spying allegations groundless. Nvidia's board opened an independent investigation Nov. 8, and Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress is interim chief executive.

In Asia, South Korea's science ministry said Nvidia reaffirmed a plan to supply 260,000 advanced graphics processors. Taiwan's economy minister, Kung Ming-shin, said the departure is unlikely to change the industry's growth much.

Nvidia holds about 80% of the market for the graphics processors that run AI data centers, by one TechCrunch panelist's estimate.

Keywords: Nvidia, Jensen Huang, House Foreign Affairs Committee, export controls, AI chips
Sources: TechCrunch · TechCrunch, Nov. 14 · TechCrunch, Nov. 15

FEDERAL AI NATIONAL

Pentagon renames its AI office the Super Intelligence Office

A September executive order tells agencies to use the new term where the law allows.

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon's Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office has a new name, the Super Intelligence Office, and a new web address, SI.mil.

The change was made Friday under Executive Order 14434, SecurityWeek reported. The order, issued in September, directs federal agencies to use the terms Super Intelligence and SI in official communications and in other documents whose wording is not set by statute, to the maximum extent the law permits.

"This redesignation is a clear signal of where the Department of War is going," said Cameron Stanley, who keeps his job under the title chief super intelligence officer.

Existing programs and solicitations continue without interruption, the department said. Procurement information and partner portals have moved to the new site.

In October the president announced a government-wide Super Intelligence Force chaired by Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton. On Nov. 5 the Justice Department announced a task force under the same label to coordinate civil and criminal enforcement involving AI, including fraud and attacks on critical infrastructure.

Keywords: Super Intelligence Office, Pentagon, Executive Order 14434, artificial intelligence, federal agencies
Sources: SecurityWeek

IT AND CYBERSECURITY

OUTAGE NATIONAL

Microsoft names no cause yet for outage of up to 36 hours

Governments and schools in dozens of countries lost email and Teams. Many turned to social media.

REDMOND, Wash.: Microsoft has not named a cause for last week's Microsoft 365 outage, which lasted about 36 hours going by the times The Register reported.

Services failed at about 18:00 UTC Thursday, or 11 a.m. Mountain time. The company announced they were restored for all customers at about 06:00 UTC Saturday. TechCrunch, citing an analyst at the network firm Kentik, put the outage at about 18 hours.

Email, Teams meetings, cloud PCs and the Copilot assistant were affected, along with about 15 other hosted services tied to Exchange Online. Microsoft said servers began failing automated health checks and that a surge of traffic followed. Stuck virtual machines slowed the recovery.

The company said it saw no sign of malicious activity. Its full post-incident report had not been published as of Friday, Government Technology reported.

Banks, courts, railways and health services were hit, CNN reported. Downdetector logged reports from 74 countries and territories within about an hour. Many state and local governments and school districts fell back on social media to reach the public.

North Dakota's chief information officer, Corey Mock, described the bind: "you send out the notification by email that email is out."

No Idaho agency was named in the published reports. A multi-day Microsoft 365 outage in September was traced to what the company called a core authentication configuration issue.

Keywords: Microsoft 365, cloud outage, Exchange Online, state and local government, Teams
Sources: The Register · TechCrunch · Government Technology · Government Technology, Nov. 13

AVIATION NATIONAL

Duffy points to contractor's fiber upgrade in FAA ground stop

Officials see no sign of a cyberattack. The FAA is still looking for the root cause.

WASHINGTON: A routine job replacing copper wire with fiber at a remote site

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IT AND CYBERSECURITY *continued*

Duffy points to contractor's fiber upgrade in ..., continued

appears to have set off Friday's nationwide ground stop, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Saturday.

The contractor was L3Harris, Duffy said, according to TechCrunch. After the work, a router overloaded a critical communications system. Officials are checking for an installation or user error and for a faulty router.

Rebecca Guy, the FAA's acting chief technology officer, said two sources were hitting the network with about 1,000 connections every four to five seconds. The agency disabled both and is doing a root cause analysis.

L3Harris said it is supporting the investigation. Duffy said the agency will rethink doing such work on a Friday afternoon instead of overnight.

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said there was no sign of a cyberattack and declined to rule one out, SecurityWeek reported. Bloomberg reported that the FBI is examining a software update.

The administration is seeking $30 billion more from Congress for the air traffic control overhaul, East Idaho News reported.

Cancellation counts vary by tracker. Cirium counted more than 8,200 Friday evening and at least 3,000 Saturday, TechCrunch reported. The FAA said travel should be back to normal by Sunday.

Keywords: FAA ground stop, L3Harris, Sean Duffy, air traffic control, root cause
Sources: TechCrunch · East Idaho News · SecurityWeek

CYBERSECURITY NATIONAL

Attackers reach offices through their IT providers' tools

A ScreenConnect add-on let intruders into 288 machines at 48 organizations in 90 minutes.

Attackers have broken into offices that hire an outside firm to manage their computers, getting in this month through two of the tools those firms use.

In the first case, attackers used the remote command feature in ConnectWise ScreenConnect to install rogue software on machines managed by several IT service providers, The Register reported Nov. 12. The security firm Huntress counted at least 288 machines across 48 organizations, all hit within 90 minutes.

Huntress traced the break-ins to a possible weakness in a third-party extension called RMM+. Versions 1.0.31 and 1.0.32 accept a blank access key when none has been set. ConnectWise said it found about 400 installations using extensions in that family and remotely disabled five extensions where it could. It said it found no compromise of its own infrastructure and no flaw in ScreenConnect itself.

Some machines were reinfected within minutes of being taken out of isolation, Huntress said.

The second case involves N-able's N-central. A researcher published working attack code Nov. 12, and intruders were using it about five hours later, SecurityWeek reported. On Nov. 13 N-able restricted certain features and integrations, including its Legacy API.

One firm tied 21 compromised servers, nine of them in the United States, to a single cryptocurrency wallet. Another said 19 victims had already applied the latest patches.

Keywords: ScreenConnect, N-central, managed service providers, Huntress, remote management
Sources: The Register · SecurityWeek

SURVEILLANCE AND ALPR

PLATE READERS NATIONAL

House bills from both parties would curb plate readers

Sponsors range from Thomas Massie to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. San Diego's council votes today on its 505 cameras.



A Flock Safety license plate reader in Kearney, Nebraska, in April 2025. TONY WEBSTER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY 2.0

WASHINGTON: At least nine proposals to restrict license plate readers are before Congress, written by Republicans and Democrats. The Congress that could pass them had just over 20 working days left as of Nov. 9.

InvestigateTV described the House bills in a report carried that day by KY3. Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., would bar federal agencies from buying or running automated surveillance systems and bar states and cities from using federal money for them. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., would cut federal funds for plate reader and biometric camera systems.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., would bar federal use unless Congress authorizes it and would limit data retention to 48 hours. Rep. Pat Harrigan, R-N.C., would require a warrant for searches and deletion within a day.

"This issue transcends philosophy," Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., told InvestigateTV. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said there may be an opening in the lame-duck session if there is enough consensus.

Idaho Rep. Russ Fulcher announced in late August that he was cosponsoring a bill to limit federal agencies' use and storage of plate reader data, East Idaho News reported. The story did not name the bill.

In Oregon, Democratic Rep. Willy Chotzen and Republican Rep. Alek Skarlatos plan a bill for a statewide ban, KATU reported Nov. 12, the same week Roseburg's council voted 6-2 to keep its 15 Flock cameras.

San Diego's City Council votes at 2 p.m. Pacific time today on whether to shut off all 505 of its readers.

Keywords: license plate readers, Flock Safety, Congress, Russ Fulcher, Fourth Amendment
Sources: InvestigateTV via KY3 · East Idaho News · KATU · Times of San Diego

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LIBERTY

PUBLIC RECORDS IDAHO

Judge orders Idaho agencies to release officers' job histories

After a series on prison guards, State Police and the Department of Correction stopped saying whether officers were fired.

BOISE: Whether a state police officer or prison guard was fired, resigned or retired is public information in Idaho, an Ada County judge has ruled.

District Judge Patrick J. Miller ordered Idaho State Police and the Idaho Department of Correction on Nov. 5 to release officers' employment dates and the reasons they left. He also told both agencies to search again for records they said they could not find.

InvestigateWest and the Invisible Institute sued June 16. The same kind of records had been released before and were used in InvestigateWest's October 2025 series on alleged sexual misconduct by dozens of prison guards, many of whom were allowed to resign. After the series ran, the agencies stopped saying how an officer's employment ended.

A records clerk told the Invisible Institute that State Police leadership had decided to disable a search tool for an internal employment database. The judge wrote that disabling a tool does not make the records go away.

The state argued that revealing a termination implies discipline, which lawmakers exempted from disclosure. State Police said the history sits in confidential decertification files and that its report tool was unreliable and no longer used. Miller rejected the argument that confidential files shield everything stored with them.

InvestigateWest Executive Director Jacob Fries called the ruling a win for transparency and accountability.

Neither published account says whether the state will appeal or when the records are due. The suit was backed by the Idaho Press Club and two national press groups.

Keywords: public records, Idaho State Police, Idaho Department of Correction, InvestigateWest, government accountability
Sources: InvestigateWest · Idaho State Journal

PROPERTY RIGHTS NATIONAL

Justices sound skeptical of landowners in pipeline land case

The question is whether state law, including attorney fee awards, applies when a private company condemns land.



The Supreme Court building in Washington in June 2024. 顾园居 / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 4.0

WASHINGTON: "I don't understand why this isn't an easy case," Chief Justice John Roberts said as the Supreme Court heard a dispute over what a pipeline company owes the landowners whose property it takes.

The case, Hoffmann v. WBI Energy Transmission, No. 25-159, was argued Nov. 9. It arises under the Natural Gas Act of 1947.

The landowners argue that when a private company and not the United States does the condemning, state law should set the terms. North Dakota law may require the company to pay their attorney fees.

Most of the bench seemed unpersuaded, SCOTUSblog reported. Justice Clarence Thomas doubted that a federal grant of eminent domain carries state compensation rules along with it. Roberts said it is more efficient for a private developer to get land on the same terms the government would.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson pointed out that Congress expressly imported state law in a condemnation statute passed in 1946, a year before the Natural Gas Act. Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett pressed the landowners' lawyer, Robert McNamara of the Institute for Justice, on the same statute.

SCOTUSblog's Ronald Mann predicted a unanimous ruling for the company and said it could be among the first decisions from the November sitting. Reason's Damon Root found the landowners' argument stronger than the justices seemed to and wrote that any grant of eminent domain to a private firm ought to be clear.

Keywords: eminent domain, Natural Gas Act, Supreme Court, Institute for Justice, property rights
Sources: SCOTUSblog · Reason

POP QUIZ

Who signed the Constitution for John Dickinson, who was ailing and could not sign it himself?

Answer: George Read of Delaware. Dickinson had asked him two days earlier, the National Park Service says.

Source: National Park Service

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct."

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist No. 8, Nov. 20, 1787

Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School

BY THE NUMBERS

$154 million

What Idaho Power would be paid for its Oregon service territory, where it serves about 20,000 customers.

Source: Idaho PUC release, IPC-E-26-21

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"... the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others."

Benjamin Franklin, speech at the Federal Convention, Sept. 17, 1787, as recorded by James Madison

Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School

FROM THE FOUNDERS

"The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government."

George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796

Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School

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THE WIRE

Links that did not make the cut today

CYBER-ALERT GROUP FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS LOSES TWO-THIRDS OF ITS MEMBERS

IDAHO AND MAGIC VALLEY

Little names two district judges, two Judicial Council members [Office of the Governor]

Idaho candidates and committees raise more than $30 million
[Boise State Public Radio]

Moscow plant levy passes with 60.34% after Latah recount [Idaho Education News]

Boise State may tap $18 million in reserves for athletics deficits
[Idaho Education News]

Blaine County treatment court could run out of money in January
[Idaho Mountain Express]

Hailey hearings on 108.8-acre annexation run to June
[Idaho Mountain Express]

Friedman airport signs lease for private plane terminal
[Idaho Mountain Express]

Idaho barley crop is smallest in more than a decade [Idaho Farm Bureau]

Magic Mountain plans Dec. 1 opening after a snowless season [Idaho News 6]

DATA CENTERS, POWER, NUCLEAR, LAND

Fort Worth holds first hearing on 90-day data center pause [CBS Texas]

PUC staff asks whether Caldwell-area water company must be regulated [Idaho PUC]

Meadows Water seeks 10.11% rate increase in Valley County [Idaho PUC]

Water Board's Mountain Home pipeline finishes $10 million under budget
[Idaho Department of Water Resources]

Generators tell NERC they are ready for extreme cold
[Utility Dive]

About 400 wind projects await Pentagon review, official says [Utility Dive]

First North American small reactor will be late and over budget [Canary Media]

Micron gives Boise $2.5 million to extend geothermal heat [Canary Media]

Radio roundtable: wolf pup payments, Idaho County land rules [Boise State Public Radio]

SURVEILLANCE, COURTS, AI, CYBER

Utah detective's certification suspended over plate-reader search [KSL]

EFF asks appeals court to require warrants for plate-reader searches
[Electronic Frontier Foundation]

Ninth Circuit lifts limits on federal crowd-control force in Portland
[Ninth Circuit opinion]

Appeals court sends LinkedIn journalist-data orders back as overbroad [Reason]

Postal Service tracked protest plans online, records show [Reason]

Texas bill would create a state Department of AI
[Government Technology]

New York opens registration under its AI safety law
[TechCrunch]

Uber says hackers stole thousands of drivers' license records [TechCrunch]

Year's count of software flaws passes 100,000
[The Register]

About this brief. How stories are chosen: each must touch Idaho or set a precedent that will reach it, put law, rates, land, water, rights or money at stake, be new, and have a source anyone can read free. Stories carry their sources. Links marked (subscription) may be paywalled.

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