

Mumps hits Marion County

Four confirmed cases this year is most in a decade

LAUREN E HERNANDEZ
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Four cases of mumps have been confirmed in Marion County, the most in any one year in a decade.

Since October 3, 12 suspected cases were reported to health officials; eight of those turned out to be a different infection, but four have been confirmed as mumps, according to a statement released by the Marion County Health Department.

Prior to this year's outbreak, there was one case reported in 2012, one in 2009 and one in 2006, according to the Marion County Health Department in-

ternal database tracking the reports.

"What we're seeing is very uncommon," said Karen Landers, Marion County Health Officer.

Mumps is a viral disease that can be spread by coughing or sneezing on an another person, Landers said.

"If you look at the reports across the country though, there are a lot of mumps going around," Landers said.

Landers refers to mumps outbreaks in Iowa and Illinois, where hundreds of college students were infected, according to the Centers of Disease Control.

Of the people infected in Marion

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How to spot the mumps

Karen Landers, Marion County Health Officer, said like many viral illnesses, early mumps symptoms can mirror cold or flu symptoms. Swelling underneath the ear and jaw are classic indicators for the mumps, Landers said.

Infected people can spread the virus to others as soon as two days before symptoms arise, and until five days after the swelling begins.

Landers cautions anyone who experiences symptoms of the mumps to watch the signs and contact their health care provider if the illness develops. Diagnosed people should stay home for five days after the start of swelling and not attend school, work, or visit public places where they could infect others.

To schedule an appointment with the Marion County Health Department to update your MMR vaccination, call 503-588-5342.

Supply cools for Oregon's Christmas tree industry



DANIELLE PETERSON/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Gerald Beard, left, and Alberto Valdez bale and sort Christmas trees on Tuesday, Nov. 22, at Hupp Farms in the Silverton area. Hupp Farms is wholesale grower of Christmas trees, but the farm also offers a "Choose N' Cut" service for those who want to find and cut down their own tree.

Many growers, facing slumping sales, leave the market

JONATHAN BACH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Be prepared to pay a bit more for your Christmas tree this year.

Oregon's Christmas tree industry, traditionally a powerhouse for the country's holiday firs, has faced a cool down in supply as growers have sold fewer trees and left the market.

This signals a reversal from the glut of inventory growers had faced during this millennium that forced prices on the trees down. The Pacific Northwestern trees can make their way across the U.S. and overseas.

In Oregon, harvest and sales of trees dropped 26 percent in 2015 compared to 2010, according to the United

States Department of Agriculture, with Oregon growers selling 4.7 million trees. In 2015, Clackamas and Marion counties had the most acreage allotted to tree-growing in the state.

Dave Losh, a statistician with the USDA, said growers planted an overabundance of trees compared to the demand for them. As supply outpaced demand, prices fell and growers left the industry.

"Now it's just a matter of who's left," he said.

Hupp Farms in the Silverton area is one of those businesses.

"We're getting inundated with phone calls," said Tracy Fisher, a bookkeeper and office manager with

Hupp Farms. The company has seen high sales and turned down at least 50 to 75 inquiries for trees. "People are just scrambling for Christmas trees," she said.

She said people are going to end up paying more for their Christmas trees. Hupp Farms is selling noble firs for around \$5 per foot — popular sizes are between 6 and 8 feet tall. Fisher said their prices have returned to 2005 levels.

The farm has sold 22,000 trees. "We'll do about 50 (thousand)," she said.

Jami Warner, executive director of the American Christmas Tree As-

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DANIELLE PETERSON/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Curtis Zahr of Salem proposed to Gabi Gundersen of Leavenworth, Washington.

Salem man proposes on 'Green Friday' at Silver Falls

DANIELLE PETERSON
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Visitors to Silver Falls State Park on "Green Friday" got to see more than the park's stunning scenery. They also witnessed a surprise wedding proposal on the South Falls trail.

As a steady stream of hikers navigated the steep trail leading to the base of the falls, Curtis Zahr of Salem and his girlfriend, Gabi Gundersen of Leavenworth, Wash., stopped on the footbridge for a moment. Zahr arranged for family to wait at the overlook, holding umbrellas that spelled "Marry me."

"I knelt down and pointed up at the umbrellas and asked her to marry me," Zahr said.

She said "yes."

When the couple and their black Labrador, Emma, made their way back up to the overlook, they were surrounded by family, friends and curious onlookers.

The park was crowded due to "Green Friday," despite the rainy weather. This is the second year entry fees were waived at Oregon's state parks, including Silver Falls, on Black Friday as a way to encourage people to get outdoors instead of shopping.

"It's a really a great movement that seems to be gaining a lot of strength," said Matt Palmquist, an interpretive park ranger. "It's nice to see all these people out here enjoying our parks."

"There were about as many people last year, but the weather was much better," Palmquist said.

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Festival celebrates all things hazelnut

CARLEE WRIGHT
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Go nuts at the fifth annual Mt. Angel Hazelnut Fest and German Holiday Market Saturday, Dec. 3, and Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Mt. Angel Festhalle, 500 S. Wilco Highway in Mt. Angel.

The festival, which is a salute to the growing hazelnut industry, includes a German holiday market with regional arts and crafts, as well as Oregon wineries, brewer-

ies and foods that feature hazelnuts, plus a race, live music and other entertainment, said event co-founder Maureen Ernst.

"Every year the event gets bigger and bigger," said Ernst. "You can do all your Christmas shopping right at the Festhalle. We have over 40 vendors this year, which is considerably more than last year, including anything related to the hazelnut industry."

The "Run for your Nuts" 5K Roadrace kicks off the festivities

at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 3. Check in begins at 9 a.m. at the Mt. Angel Festhalle. Registration is \$25. Add an event t-shirt for \$10 more. Day of race registration is \$28. Runners receive nuts after crossing the finish line with awards presented at 11 a.m. To register, visit racenorthwest.com.

Following the race there is a variety of entertainment, from live music with Joe Szabo 'the Accor-

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