

Human case of West Nile virus in county

By Craig Rullman
Correspondent

Deschutes County Health Services Communicable Disease Supervisor Heather Kaisner confirmed to *The Nugget* that West Nile virus has recently infected at least one person in Deschutes County. Kaisner told *The Nugget* that a second case of possible West Nile virus is still under investigation.

West Nile fever is an infection caused by the West Nile Virus. The virus is commonly found in birds, and transmitted by mosquitoes. Birds, horses, and humans are most often infected, though cases have been found in reptiles.

Symptoms of infection include fever, headaches, fatigue, muscle pain, aches, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, and rash. In a small percentage of cases — less than one percent according to the Centers for Disease Control — infection with West Nile Virus can result in severe neurological problems such as encephalitis or meningitis, which are swelling of the brain, spinal cord, and surrounding tissue.

There is currently no vaccine available for humans.

Kaisner told *The Nugget* that public health officials are currently working with Vector Control and have set up mosquito traps in Central Oregon in order to test mosquitoes. Kaisner emphasized that at present “no mosquitoes have tested positive.”

The confirmed case of West Nile was found in a resident of Bend; however Kaisner cautioned that the patient has recently traveled out of state and there is no definitive conclusion that the disease was contracted in Central Oregon.

Kaisner was unable to comment on the second possible case, as it remains under active investigation, and that results of testing “can take a while.”

Kaisner emphasized preventative measures. With the return of warm temperatures through September, those outside should remain vigilant with the use of insect repellents, wear long sleeves and pants in the morning and

at dusk, when mosquitoes are most active. Additional measures include removing standing water from around the home, cleaning rain gutters, pet dishes, and discarded tires to remove mosquito habitat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also advises that people over the age of 60 are at greater risk for severe reactions to the disease, as are those with current medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease.

It is recommended that all horse-owners have their equines vaccinated against the disease by a veterinarian.

HABITAT: Event marks 25 years of home building

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soon after the organization was formed. One of his early duties was serving as chair of the family selection committee for the house-building program of Koinonia, a rural Christian community where the idea of building homes in partnership with those living in poor conditions was conceived. It was Rainey who brought the concept of “sweat equity” to Koinonia — and ultimately Habitat — after learning that developers of middle-class housing sometimes used a family’s unskilled labor on a house in lieu of a down payment. Today sweat equity is a key part of every Habitat build in 80 countries

worldwide.

Future homeowners Marla Brinkman and Sharyn Benson, who will be breaking ground on their homes Sunday, have already been working on their sweat equity. They both have volunteered at the ReStore and helped with office work for the organization. Once building begins on each home, each future homeowner will be at the construction site helping alongside volunteers. Building these two homes will be a community effort, as the future home of Brinkman will be built in collaboration with the Heart of Oregon Corps, and the walls of Benson’s future home will be built by students in Tony Cosby’s construction class at Sisters High School.

Right after the groundbreaking ceremony, supporters will celebrate the dedication of the 60th Habitat home in

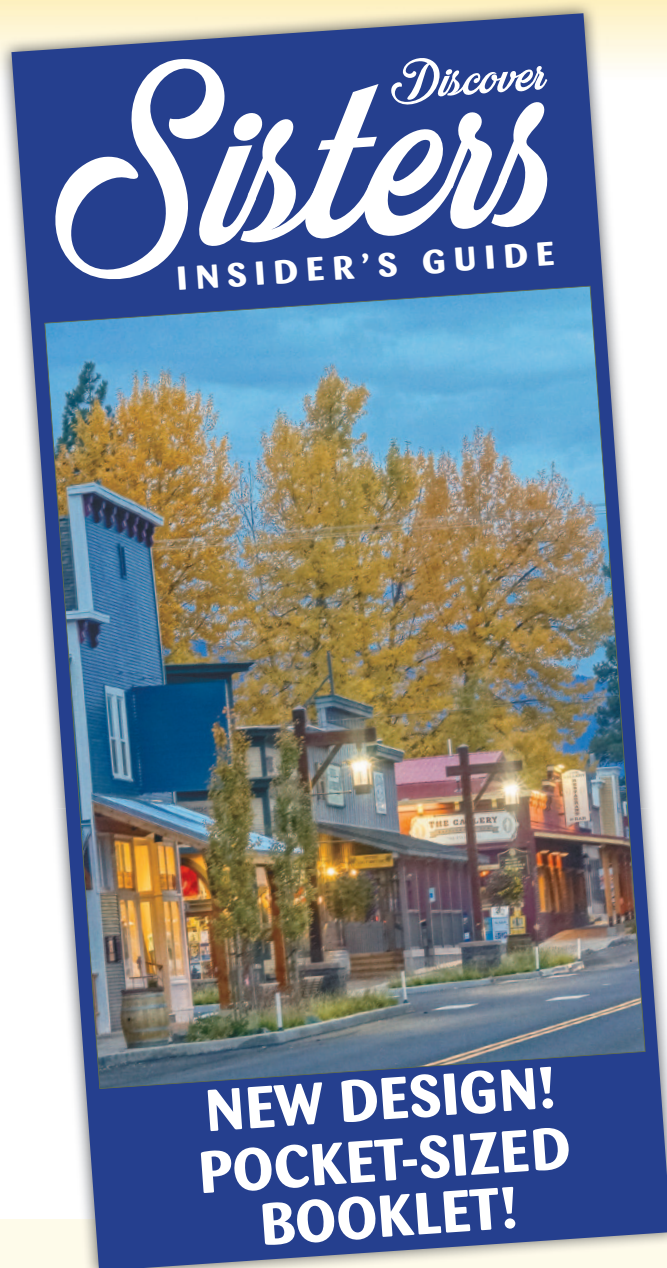


PHOTO PROVIDED

Chuck Rainey — volunteer extraordinaire.

Sisters. This home, which was started last October, will be purchased by Selah Broderick with a no-interest loan through Habitat.

Space is still available for the anniversary dinner and RSVP is required. Community members can reserve their spot by emailing celebrate@sistershabitat.org or by calling the Habitat office at 541-549-1193.



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