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Making the most of limited instruction

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

The three themes undergirding the work of Sisters School District — Belong, Prepare, Inspire — are harder to accomplish during the battle with COVID-19 and the resultant distance learning. The teachers of Sisters middle and high schools are doing all they can to safely offer person-to-person interaction through what is known as “limited in-person instruction” under the state’s “Ready School, Safe Learners” guidelines.

Limited In-Person Instruction, or LIPI, allows schools to meet in small groups with time restrictions. According to Tim Roth, the assistant principal at Sisters Middle School, teachers have found ways to employ LIPI in most core subject areas such as music, art, various electives, counseling, academic support, and co-curricular activities.

Roth said, “Right now LIPI is imperative...and mission-critical. Many of our kids are down in one way or



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

The wood shop at Sisters High School remains active as students get some hands-on building experience crafting Adirondack chairs.

another — they are isolated.”

He continued, “Even the students who typically don’t like school are truly excited for the opportunity to come back in. They want to be here.”

That is not to say some students aren’t thriving in the virtual classroom, according to Roth, but, he said, “Humans are meant to be together and kids are eager to have ways to connect.”

There are limits to LIPI including the number of people using the building, meetings cannot be a required part of the regular

See **SMALL GROUPS** on page 31

Sisters residents volunteer in record numbers

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

People living in and around Sisters are showing their care for the community by volunteering in record numbers for a variety of City boards, committees, and the Comprehensive Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

The CAC had 37 applications submitted for a committee that was slated to have 10-12 members. So many well-qualified citizens volunteered that the membership was expanded to 14.

“We had an amazing pool to choose from,” said Community Development Director Scott Woodford.

See **VOLUNTEERS** on page 29

COVID-19 uptick likely to delay return to school

By Charlie Kanzig
Correspondent

The surging COVID-19 caseload has cast a shadow over efforts to get middle school students back into the classroom.

In a letter sent to parents Thursday, November 19, Superintendent Curt Scholl addressed the questions and confusion about getting fifth and sixth graders at Sisters Middle School back into the classroom under the “hybrid” model amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Rising numbers of infections in Deschutes County have resulted in a move into the “orange zone” of the metrics lined out by the

Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Education. Being in the orange zone means a delay in getting fifth graders back into the middle school building.

Deschutes County reported a total rate of 196.4 cases per 100,000 for the week ending November 14, placing county schools very near the red zone rate of 200 or more cases per 100,000.

The infection rate was on track to worsen further last week as the 60 new cases of COVID-19 that were reported on Friday, November 20, marked the highest single total since the start of the pandemic.

See **DELAY** on page 30

Staying in business amid pandemic

By Jodi Schneider
Correspondent

Two weeks ago, Governor Kate Brown announced the most extensive set of restrictions since the March Stay-at-Home order, in order to combat a surge in COVID-19 cases in Oregon. Some businesses closed — like restaurants, bars, and gyms — and gatherings are limited to no more than six people. Grocery and retail stores are open but capped at 75 percent of normal occupancy.

The statewide “freeze” went into effect for two weeks beginning November 18.

Unlike large retail chains, which see a sales peak over the winter holidays, revenue for businesses in a smaller city like Sisters is highest



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

Sana Hayes at Sisters Cascade serves up homemade fudge for a local customer. Shops in Sisters are mindful of sanitizing and distancing and are open for business through the holidays, despite restrictions.

during the spring and summer. This year, coronavirus shutdowns hit the stores hard, with closures,

fewer back-to-school sales, and with events in town

See **OPEN** on page 29

Inside...

Letters/Weather	2	Announcements.....	10	Holidays in Sisters	15-18	Obituaries	22	Classifieds.....	26-28
Meetings	3	Events	11	Stars over Sisters	19	Crossword	25	Real Estate	28-32