

READY

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the virus, including visitor restrictions and reducing to one the number of hospital entrances. He also said preparation is part of the routine for the 25-bed hospital, but taking on the coronavirus is not the same as handling an influx of bus crash victims.

“This obviously is more slow moving and has a longer period in which we have to manage (patients),” Davis said. “We’re trying to gear up and ramp up for what we anticipate is going to be a long haul as this disease continues.”

Brogioitti said there have been 14 negative test results in Union County and concern is growing about having enough testing kits. But while the number of tests is small, she said, so is the number of people who

“We’re trying to gear up and ramp up for what we anticipate is going to be a long haul as this disease continues.”

— **Jeremy Davis**, Grande Ronde Hospital CEO and President

need to be tested.

Testing criteria frequently changes, but Brogioitti explained the people being tested are those most at risk. And getting tested isn’t something everyone needs to do. She said as long as we all are responsible in our social distancing, having or not having test kits is not going to increase the spread.

“I want to acknowledge that it’s hard and that people want that information and want to be tested,” Brogioitti said. “We just don’t have the ability to have that much testing.”

Rice said the novel coro-

navirus is often a minor illness for those who do not have underlying health problems. If a person tests positive, unless there is a need for further medical care, they can go home to isolate and recover. Even in the hospital, Rice said there is no treatment, just management of symptoms, such as using ventilators or CPAP machines.

The hospital has 12 ventilators with three more on the way and six respiratory therapists. Davis also said the hospital has canceled elective surgeries to preserve personal protection equipment, such as gloves,

masks and face shields.

“We want to put ourselves in the best position possible to help those who need it most,” he said.

Brogioitti explained the Center for Human Development is doing everything it can to keep the public informed about this health risk. While repetitive information may frustrate and annoy people, such as frequently being reminded of social distancing or washing your hands, Brogioitti said, “In the absence of a treatment and vaccine for the disease, hand washing and social distancing are the best tools we have.”

Brogioitti also said the center finds out information around the same time as the public does. She explained there is very little lag time between CHD knowing and the public knowing, and when there is information people want from

the center, sometimes it is not something that can be shared, such as personal health care information.

Gov. Kate Brown told reporters during a conference call Wednesday she has ordered the Oregon Health Authority to share “all COVID-19 information with the public that does not compromise patient privacy.”

That includes more exact age ranges of patients, hospitalization status and the number of available hospital beds and ventilators for COVID-19 patients.

Legislators, journalists and others have asked repeatedly for data that track the situation. The Oregon Health Authority only had been releasing cumulative data from Jan. 24, plus daily updates on confirmed cases, testing and deaths.

Scarfo during the local video conference spoke

about how the county continues to remain open and supports small businesses. He asked people to continue to shop locally, even reaching out online to see if businesses sell items.

Scarfo also said business owners need to track all losses due to the mandates to fight the virus. As the state and federal government work out how to help small businesses, he said keeping track will be key to maximizing any assistance.

“We don’t know what they are going to ask, (so) track everything,” Scarfo said.

The three officials acknowledged while this is a scary and uncertain time, Union County will continue to come together to support the community.

Dick Hughes of the Capital Bureau contributed to this article.

NONPROFITS

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rent and the gift shop is open for those who make an appointment. The center is looking into putting the store online and offering classes digitally as well in order to help pay operating and maintenance costs.

While ACE does receive some grant funding, a majority of the cost for operating the center, such as rent, utilities and payroll, comes from community participation in programs, memberships and donations. According to West, ACE has to raise \$8,000 if it is to keep the doors open until the end of April.

The center is reaching out to national and state foundations for help — however, that may not be enough, and the funding may not come in time. Arts Center East also is offering community members several ways to help increase the organization’s cash flow through April, including through donations and memberships. For more information, visit artcentereast.org.

Art Center East far from alone

The Oregon Cultural Trust in a news release Friday announced Gov. Kate Brown directed the agency to explore opportunities to identify relief funding to address the devastating effect the COVID-19 health crisis is having on Oregon’s arts and cultural community.

Since the crisis began, nonprofit cultural organizations across the state have canceled thousands of performances, events and activities — including key fundraising events — and most have closed their doors to the public. As of March 24, according to Oregon Cultural Trust, 423 Oregon cultural organizations reported financial losses exceeding \$8.6 million, and data still is coming in from more than 1,000 organizations.

Following consultation with the Governor’s Office, Business Oregon and statewide partners, including the Oregon Arts Commission, the Cultural Trust Board of Directors held an emergency meeting Saturday, March 21, and unanimously voted to use up to \$10 million of its \$29 million permanent fund to create an emergency relief funding program.

But the Cultural Trust statute does not contain a provision for emergency relief funding, so the program requires the approval of the Oregon Legislature.

The Cultural Trust is working on a concept for the Legislature, which is moving toward holding several special sessions starting soon to contend with fallout from the spread of the coronavirus. The Cultural

Trust in the news release also reported it “will convene a committee of stakeholders to fully and quickly develop and implement an emergency funding program that is equitable and easy to use to expedite funding.”

The Legislature created the Oregon Cultural Trust permanent fund to protect Oregon’s cultural organizations for future generations, and that future, according to the trust’s news release, is at dire risk.

Disaster relief loans also a possibility

The Eastern Oregon Film Festival also is feeling the effects of the crisis.

The 2020 festival is not until October, but the nonprofit works year-round to raise money for the weekend-long event. Festival director Chris Jennings said major setbacks include a halt of sponsor money and the loss of fundraising and engagement events. The festival is revamping the film adjudication process to allow for individual screenings and is pushing back the May regional touring campaign until later in the year.

Jennings said the festival is applying for emergency grant funding in the meantime.

Nonprofits can apply for some of the same disaster relief loans that are available for small businesses, many of which offer lower interest rates. The U.S. Small Business Association is offering \$2 million to various organizations that apply for loans to help with operational costs. The amount of the loan varies for each business, and nonprofits have an interest rate of 2.75% as opposed to the 3.75% for small businesses.

Some nonprofits, such as Union County’s Shelter From the Storm, receive federal funding to help with operational costs. This has helped ensure vital services stay available to the public while following the social distancing guidelines. Jamie Landa, the shelter’s executive director, said the domestic abuse organization will remain open to the public with minor changes, relying on money community members have donated for emergency situations.

She said the office is minimally staffed Monday and Friday with advocates working from home Tuesday-Thursday to help keep clients and staff safe. The food bank is open with curbside service on Monday and Friday. When the building is staffed, the doors remain locked. To access services, including the food bank, people must call ahead to make an appointment.

“Fortunately we are set up for this in a way,” Landa said. “We are still able to provide an essential service.”

Motels, RV parks work to dispel rumors of COVID-19 refugees

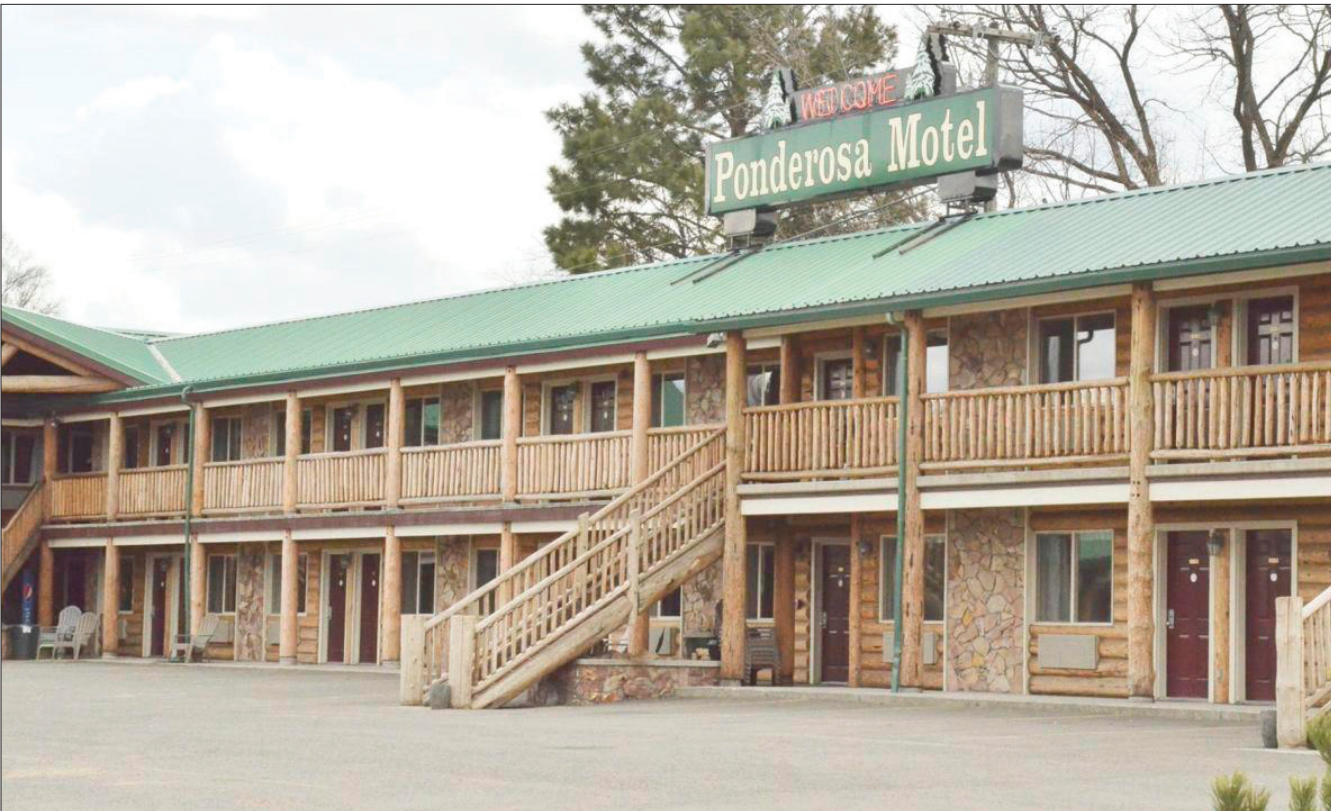


Photo by Bill Bradshaw/EO Media Group

An empty parking lot at the Ponderosa Motel in Enterprise helps dispel rumors of hordes of out-of-county visitors coming to Wallowa County to escape the COVID-19 outbreak. The motel manager confirmed room bookings do not reflect the rumors and there are protocols in place to keep all rooms clean.

By **Bill Bradshaw**
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — Rumors that Wallowa County is being flooded with visitors fleeing COVID-19 outbreaks in more populous areas appear to be just that — rumors that confirm social media is not the best place to get your news.

Several motels and RV parks in the upper Wallowa valley contacted said they have either fewer bookings than normal or at least no such hordes as claimed by social media alarmists.

“We haven’t had that experience of people trying to escape Portlandia,” said the manager of Mountain View Motel and RV Park at Joseph.

The manager, who declined to be identified, said bookings at his establishment are about typical for this time of year.

“If this is a real concern, why don’t we just blockade the county,” he joked.

Spokespeople at Enterprise motels, the Wilderness Inn and the Ponderosa Motel, confirmed that.

Jaden Hazzard, general manager at the Wilderness

“We’ve pretty much closed because of the coronavirus.”

Raylene O’Connor, co-owner with husband Mike of the Bronze Antler Bed & Breakfast in Joseph

Inn, said that establishment has fewer than normal bookings.

Kelly Noble, manager at the Ponderosa Motel, said the few customers they have are families taking advantage of school closures to break free of being cooped up at home.

“They decided to take the time with their families and go hiking,” Noble said.

She said her customers aren’t taking the so-called coronavirus flight too seriously.

“Folks who are traveling think it’s somewhat of a joke,” she said. “They’re just bonding as a family.”

Noble said the Ponderosa staff has strict protocols in place to do their best to prevent the spread of any contamination.

She said when a customer leaves a room, they air it out for three hours before even entering. Then they use a disinfectant spray similar to what hospitals

use to kill both airborne and surface germs. They also use a hospital-grade sanitation procedure for laundry, she said.

Noble said she believes those at highest risk of infection — particularly the elderly — are generally staying home.

“For those outside of that zone, for them, it’s just getting back into the realness of family and what that means,” she said.

Todd Morrow, owner of the Log House RV Park and Campground — Enterprise’s lone RV park — said he, too, has seen no evidence of people fleeing coronavirus. He said his bookings are down considerably from previous years and the few customers he does have are locals who regularly book either short or long terms.

Raylene O’Connor, co-owner with husband Mike of the Bronze Antler Bed & Breakfast

in Joseph, said their four-room B&B is empty and they’ve blocked their online booking system until early April.

“We’ve pretty much closed because of the coronavirus,” she said.

Marcy Hamilton, owner of 5 Peaks RV Park in Joseph, said although her park is empty right now, she’s expecting things to pick up soon. She has just a couple reservations booked for the middle of April and more for May. But she’s noting the closure of state and federal campgrounds may be a mixed blessing for private parks.

“I would imagine that those of us in the county are going to pick up with full-time RV’ers because, after all, where are they going to go?” she asked.

“Unless we’re mandated that we can’t take them, I’m going to take them because I need the money and they need a place.”

But this begs more questions: Money changing hands and social distancing.

“We’ll have to wear gloves handling money, I guess,” she said.

NUMBERS

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or take leave if you or someone in your household gets sick with COVID-19 symptoms, or if your child’s school is dismissed temporarily.

•Stay in touch with others by phone or email. If you have a chronic medical condition and live alone, ask family, friends and health care providers to check on you.

Stay in touch with family and friends, especially those at increased risk of developing severe illness, such as older adults and people with severe chronic

medical conditions.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

Fever, cough and shortness of breath may appear two to 14 days after exposure.

IF I FEEL I HAVE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, WHAT DO I DO?

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your health care provider for medical advice.

WHERE CAN I GET THE TEST FOR COVID-19?

If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough and/or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have

recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19, stay home and call your health care provider. Your doctor will determine whether you should be tested.

**Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

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