

RE-ELECT

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for

SHERIFF

Paid for by committee to Re-elect Boyd Rasmussen.

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Oregonians support stay home order

■51% surveyed say Oregon is headed in the right direction

By Dick Hughes
For the Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Regardless of where they live, most Oregonians support Gov. Kate Brown’s stay at home orders, according to survey results released Wednesday by an independent firm. That support is strong even among the 40% of respondents who had suffered job losses, pay cuts or reduced work hours.

The survey conducted by Portland-based DHM Research indicated that overall, 60% of Oregonians strongly support the stay at home orders, and an additional 22% somewhat support them. Only 6% are strongly opposed. Those are similar to national results, in which strong opposition is uncommon.

“This last week we’ve been seeing small but visible protests, including in Redmond, and they are just absolutely the exception,” said John Horvick, DHM’s director of client relations and political research.

The online survey of 900 adult Oregonians was conducted April 17-21.

Participants indicated the most important prerequisites for reopening the economy were having widespread testing for COVID-19, sufficient hospital capacity and available effective treatments. But Horvick said support for testing hinges on Oregonians then seeing a decline in positive cases.

“This is very fluid. People could change their minds tomorrow,” he said. “As of today, without testing people are going to be reluctant to allow businesses to open. They’re going to be reluctant for themselves to re-engage in the community.”

His takeaway was Oregon should do whatever it could to increase testing.

As of Wednesday morning, 2,059 people in Oregon had tested positive

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County health boss urges caution



Staff photo by Phil Wright

Businesses continue to operate under COVID-19 precautions, such as designating one-way entrances and exits. Some authorities in Eastern Oregon are urging the state to relax some measures, but Union County’s public health administrator urges caution when taking those actions.

■Oregon Health Authority reported no new deaths Wednesday from COVID-19

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Union County’s number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 remains at four, and Wallowa County’s at one. While some Eastern Oregon officials are pushing to reopen the area’s economy, Union County’s head public health official is urging caution about moving too fast.

Union County Public Health Administer Carrie Brogoitti said COVID-19 primarily spreads through coughing and sneezing, but someone with the



Brogoitti

their face, for example, could end up with an infection as well.

The unknowns about the virus dictate prudence.

“As we learn more about this virus we also believe that COVID-19 can be detectable in the air for up to three hours, can live on copper for four hours, on cardboard up to 24 hours, and on plas-

tics and stainless steel for up to two or three days,” Brogoitti said. “We do not have definitive evidence that people can become infected this way, but until we have more information it is also not possible to rule this out.”

Whether people can have the virus and not have symptoms of illness is another question.

“It is possible there are people in the community who have the virus but are not showing signs of illness,” she said. “Because we are still learning about this virus, it is difficult to know exactly how people

are getting it and what mitigations need to be put into place to reduce disease transmission.”

All of these factors, Brogoitti said, make it difficult to completely reduce risk when in public places.

“I have been thinking about this myself, when I leave the house for essential needs like groceries,” she said. “During my most recent trip to the grocery store, I touched a number of shared surfaces: the grocery cart handle, freezer doors, all of the items I pur-

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Two vie for Union County commissioner seat

■Ballots go out April 29 for May 19 primary election

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — First-term Union County Commissioner Donna Beverage and her lone challenger in the May primary, Michael Barry, share a deep commitment to public service and a belief that local government can help boost the regional economy.

The candidates’ views on what the Union County Board of Commissioners can do best to that end, however, differ.

Beverage, a cattle rancher, wants the country to continue focusing on developing Baum Industrial Park, which the county operates and is adjacent to Highway 82 just north-east of Island City. Beverage counted the county board’s actions to develop the park as one of her proudest accomplishments during her 3-1/2 years on the commission.

Beverage, working closely with the Oregon



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Donna Beverage seeks a second term as Union County commissioner. She said she wants to continue her focus on economic development in the county.

Department of Transportation and Business Oregon, helped lead the effort to have the industrial park paved, a project completed in 2019. She also helped with the final steps involved in getting water, gas, electricity and sewer services to the park.

Beverage noted that since 2017, three businesses bought property at the park so they could expand their operations and that it now has 13 firms that employ a total of at least 250 people.

Beverage said if she wins a second and final term, she hopes to work to have a truck-to-rail-road spur installed at the



Photo contributed by Michael Barry

Imbler Fire Chief Michael Barry seeks to oust Donna Beverage as Union County commissioner. Barry said his connections in his work with the Oregon Department of Transportation would be a boon for the county.

industrial park, one connected to Idaho Northern Railroad. Truck drivers would be able to load items on to rail cars at the site. Beverage said this would make it easier for companies to ship items throughout the United States.

Barry, chief of the Imbler Rural Fire Department, said he believes he would be able to use his background as a multiple agency liaison officer for the Oregon Department of Transportation to stoke Union County’s economic engine. Barry as a liaison officer is responsible for making sure state and federal funding for transportation projects reaches

cities in three ODOT districts, which encompass Union, Wallowa, Baker, Morrow, Grant, Malheur and Harney counties. He said the knowledge and connections he has gained during his time on the job put him in a position to help Union County economically.

“If a need is identified, I know where to go (for the funding) and who to talk to,” Barry said. “I have developed relationships with people in state government and I know who can advocate for the county.”

The Imbler resident also said he would try to

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By the numbers*

Worldwide cases: 2,475,723
Worldwide deaths: 169,151
U.S. cases: 802,583
U.S. deaths: 44,575
Oregon cases: 2,058
Oregon deaths: 78
Union County cases: 4
Union County deaths: 0
Wallowa County cases: 1
Wallowa County deaths: 0
**As of 2 p.m. Wednesday, April 22. Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oregon Health Authority*

Oregon releases new testing guidelines

By Brad Schmidt
The Oregonian/OregonLive

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority on Tuesday released new guidelines widening the pool of Oregonians eligible for coronavirus testing after acknowledging last week that more tests could be completed with the supplies on hand.

State officials stopped their practice of discouraging testing of people with mild symptoms, emphasizing it’s up to a doctor or nurse to decide if testing is warranted. The state also began encouraging testing for people with symptoms who are members of minority groups, direct-care workers and front-line workers, such as people who work in grocery stores or food services.

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state epidemiologist and health officer, said Tuesday the state is “not standing in the way” of testing people with mild symptoms who aren’t on the state’s priority list for most at-risk groups, and testing decisions should be made by health care providers.

If Oregonians with mild symptoms are still turned away for testing under the state’s new guidance issued to physicians, Sidelinger said, “I would encourage them to have that dialogue with their provider.”

“We don’t want to step in between the provider-patient relationship in public health,” he said.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported over the weekend the state’s restrictive testing guidance were helping keep Oregon’s testing numbers low, even as states such as Utah and New Mexico have eased restrictions and promoted widespread testing.

Oregon ranks in the bottom half of the country in per-capita testing and hospital and health care providers told the news-room that hundreds of tests are going unused each day.

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight
35 LOW
Patchy clouds

Friday
60/38
Rain and drizzle

CONTACT US

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3 sections, 20 pages
La Grande, Oregon
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