

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, May 5, the 126th day of 2020. There are 240 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On May 5, 1961, astronaut Alan B. Shepard Jr. became America's first space traveler as he made a 15-minute sub-orbital flight aboard Mercury capsule Freedom 7.

ON THIS DATE

In 1494, during his second voyage to the Western Hemisphere, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica.

In 2009, Texas health officials confirmed the first death of a U.S. resident with swine flu.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.9 million
20-23-30-42-44-46
Mega Millions: \$215 million
28-30-31-35-66-14 x2
Powerball: \$59 million
13-16-33-58-68—PB-24 x5
Win for Life: May 2
11-18-43-55
Pick 4: May 3
• 1 p.m.: 8-3-5-5; • 4 p.m.: 2-6-8-2
• 7 p.m.: 2-5-8-6; • 10 p.m.: 4-7-5-1
Pick 4: May 2
• 1 p.m.: 8-8-6-1; • 4 p.m.: 3-4-1-3
• 7 p.m.: 1-3-5-0; • 10 p.m.: 6-8-7-6
Pick 4: May 1
• 1 p.m.: 4-5-6-9; • 4 p.m.: 1-8-4-7
• 7 p.m.: 1-6-5-5; • 10 p.m.: 1-2-5-4

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people."
— Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, "father" of America's nuclear navy (1900-1986)

Health officials warn COVID-19 surges in Umatilla County

By Alex Castle and Antonio Sierra
EO Media Group

UMATILLA COUNTY — Umatilla County is quickly becoming the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in rural Oregon.

Over the span of a week, the number of reported cases of COVID-19 has grown by 78%, culminating in Umatilla County Public Health's announcement Friday that the virus had claimed its first county resident, a 76-year-old woman who died at Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland, Washington.

Despite the surge in case numbers, Umatilla County isn't altering its plans to begin lifting restrictions by May 15.

Gov. Kate Brown held a video conference with all the Eastern Oregon county commissioners on Friday afternoon, after which Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock said there's been "no indications" that their proposal couldn't be achieved.

"All numbers are relative," he said. "The guidelines issued by the state deal with hospitalizations and emergency room visits and would not be impacted by that rise."

COVID-19 by the numbers

The three new cases announced on Friday brought Umatilla County's



Photo by Ben Lonergan/EO Media Group

An overhead sign along Interstate 84 east of Pendleton advises drivers to continue to stay home in an effort to save lives on Wednesday afternoon.

COVID-19 total to 59, and on Monday that increased to 70, a number that lags far behind hot spots like the Portland metro area and Marion County.

But using a per 100,000 population rate, a measurement meant to create direct comparisons by multiplying the total confirmed cases by 100,000 and dividing by total county population, Umatilla County's infection rate still places it toward the top of the heap.

According to data compiled by Lane County Public Health, Umatilla County's 69.3 cases per 100,000 population is tied with Linn County for the fourth highest in the state.

Even going by raw totals, Umatilla County is starting to outpace counties with larger populations. The fourteenth largest

county by population, Umatilla County has more cases than any of the counties ranked 9-13. Lane County, a county more than four times larger than Umatilla County, has nine less cases despite conducting nearly five times as many tests.

Alisha Southwick, deputy director of Umatilla County Public Health, attributed the county's higher ratio of positive test results to the region's slow start on COVID-19 testing, which limited who could be tested to only those most likely to test positive.

"I think local providers in our county have done a really good job at assessing those who need to be tested the most," she said.

But in order to effectively track the spread of the virus, officials have repeatedly highlighted the

importance of mass testing that isn't just for those who need it the most, which Umatilla County and the rest of the state may start doing soon.

Gov. Brown announced new testing and contact tracing plans Friday, which included opening up testing criteria to allow anyone with symptoms of the virus to be tested within 48 to 72 hours. The plan is aiming to perform 30 tests per week for every 10,000 Oregonians.

Oregon Health Authority spokesman Jonathan Modie said the recent spike in cases in Umatilla County has caught the eye of the state, which intends to work with the county health department to try to mitigate further infections.

Reopening complications

Interviewed on Thursday, Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara said Umatilla County may not have flattened its curve yet.

According to the latest "epi curve," which can be found on the health department's website and shows the particular date that an individual began showing symptoms of the virus, 18 of the county's confirmed cases began exhibiting signs of COVID-19 in the week after Easter Sunday between April 19 and April 26.

The curve also shows

that at least one confirmed case began showing symptoms of the virus each day that week.

Though Fiumara signed off on the reopening plan at the start of the week and said the recent rise in cases is only one piece to consider for the reopening framework, he wasn't as confident that the state will give the county the go-ahead after seeing the latest data.

"If we're trending upwards, I'm not sure the state is going to grant it," he said of the county's proposal earlier this week. "And I'm not sure I can argue that. All we can really do is follow the data."

But just a day later, Commissioner Murdock still seemed bullish on the county's prospects.

While Umatilla County only has one resident who is currently hospitalized with COVID-19, Murdock said the board of commissioners will be following the case numbers closely next week and the proposal to reopen is still subject to change.

But as of Friday, Murdock remained confident that May 15 could be the beginning of "Phase 1," which would loosen some restrictions and reopen some non-essential businesses.

"I feel reopening will be by region, and I feel that rural Eastern Oregon will be leading the charge," Murdock said.



Submitted photos/EO Media Group

Clockwise from top left, Nick Heuertz, John Holm, Chris Vaughn and Alex Spenser, Democrats seeking the nomination to run for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District.

Democrats livestream in congressional race

EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Four candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District gathered virtually Friday for an online forum.

The candidates were: Nick Heuertz, 48, a Central Point resident and a business consultant; John Holm, 51, a real estate agent and political strategist from Medford; Alex Spenser, 55, a writer and performance coach from Klamath Falls; and Chris Vaughn, 54, a Bend resident and specialty food sales representative.

The EO Media Group hosted the forum, which was livestreamed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Heuertz suggested investing in infrastructure to keep the economy running through the pandemic. He and the other candidates criticized the Trump administration's response to the pandemic.

Holm said the pandemic has revealed problems in the region, such as unreliable internet and people struggling to afford health care.

Spenser said her top priority is addressing the division in politics between Republicans and Democrats.

Vaughn said his top priority in Congress would be to support work related to climate change.

La GRANDE
AUTO REPAIR
975-2000
www.lagrandeautorepair.com

Joe Horst

MOST
ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY
AVAILABLE
ACDelcoTSS

COVID-19
Coronavirus

Stay home let us Deliver your medicines to you

Red Cross
DRUG STORE
"People Who Care"

1123 Adams Ave., La Grande
541-963-5741 redcrossdrugstore.com

Red Cross Drug Store offers Delivery in Union County

Making sure you are cared for, we always offer delivery to La Grande, Union and Elgin or mailed anywhere. Contact us today to make the easy switch. Let us do our part to keep you safe in this time of uncertainty

Olive Branch
PHARMACY

306 W North St, Enterprise
(541) 426-7455 olivebranchpharmacy.com

VOTE FOR CHANGE, VOTE FOR EXPERIENCE

INTEGRITY • TRANSPARENCY • HARD WORK
EXPERIENCED • VETERAN • PRO 2ND AMENDMENT

BILL MILLER FOR SHERIFF

2020 UNION COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS CHART				
Candidate Name	William L. Miller	Boyd R. Rasmussen	Cody M. Bowen	Shane A. Rollins
DPSST Number	37647	30542	50531	None
Military Service	USAF	None	None	USMC
College Degree	EOU-BS	EOU-BS	None	None
OREGON DPSST CRIMINAL JUSTICE CERTIFICATIONS				
Police Officer Basic	YES	YES	YES	NO
Police Officer Intermediate	YES	YES	NO	NO
Police Officer Advanced	YES	YES	NO	NO
Police Officer Supervisory	YES	YES	NO	NO
Police Officer Management	NO	YES	NO	NO
Police Officer Executive	NO	YES	NO	NO
Corrections Officer-Basic	YES	NO	NO	NO
Parole & Probation Officer-Basic	YES	NO	NO	NO
Total DPSST Training Hours	2420.80	2155.25	1213.50	NONE

To view complete training records go to Oregon Criminal Justice Information Records Inquiry System (CJIRIS)
http://www.oregon.gov/dpsst/sc/pages/iris.aspx

Look me up on Facebook: Bill Miller For Union County Sheriff Email me: billmillerforucsheriff@gmail.com

Paid for by Committee to elect Bill Miller, Sheriff. Jared Rogers - Treasurer, 73001 Palmer Junction Rd., Elgin, OR 97827

Turning 65?
We're here to help!
Joel Myer
jmyer@valleyinsurance.com

Valley
INSURANCE

1603 Washington Ave, La Grande
(541) 963-3121

Let us take the mystery out of Medicare for you!

Kathy Rienti
krienti@valleyinsurance.com