

FIRES

Continued from Page 1A

cut 17 percent of their current budgets. It's a baseline for discussions with the Legislature on how to save some areas from the chopping block while deepening cuts in other areas or increasing revenue. The result would be hammered out when Brown calls on lawmakers to return to Salem to deal with the crisis.

Evans said he has no timetable for when that might be.

"I don't know when and if there will be a special session," Evans said.

Andrew Phelps, director of the Oregon Office of



Observer file photo

Firefighters with the Oregon Department of Forestry training in June 2017. Fire crews this year will have to take on blazes while not spreading the coronavirus.

Emergency Management, said the coronavirus was the longest, biggest and most expensive disaster in state history. Because the pandemic hit every state

and almost every nation, the usual network of shared resources between governments collapsed under the unprecedented demand. Phelps said that even if

Online

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a vaccine is found within the next year, the recovery from the damage wrought on the health and economy of the state will likely last through the end of the decade.

"Hopefully this is a once in a lifetime event," he said. "This will be the largest natural disaster to hit Oregon by a factor of 10."

The virus will still be circulating through the state population as the summer fire season starts. Doug Grafe, fire pro-

tection chief of the Oregon Department of Forestry, said COVID-19 was shaping the way the state will fight blazes. The key will be early fire suppression to hold down the number of crews that have to be deployed.

"We have to be aggressive on the initial attack," Grafe said. "We have to keep large fires off the landscape."

Grafe said that likely won't be easy with about 90 % of the state in drought condition and a hot summer forecasted.

Smokey conditions as in past summers would aggravate the breathing problems of those who are struggling with COVID-19's attack on their lungs.

JUDGE

Continued from Page 1A

injunction, the lawsuit could proceed to trial in Baker County Circuit Court.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit, led by Elkhorn Baptist Church of Baker City and represented by Salem attorney Ray Hacke of the Pacific Justice Institute, which defends religious freedom, argue that Brown, by invoking in her executive orders a state law dealing with public health emergencies, is subject to that law's 28-day limit on such emergencies.

By that measure the executive orders ended in early April, and the plaintiffs contend the governor no longer has the legal authority to restrict a variety of activities, such as the current 25-person limit on public gatherings, including church services. Shirtcliff agreed with the plaintiffs and cited the 28-day limit in his May 18 decision granting the preliminary injunction.

Brown's attorneys, meanwhile, argue that the governor's executive orders are not subject to the 28-day limit in that law because her initial declaration of an emergency related to the coronavirus was under a different law — a general emergency statute that has no time limit.

Brown has since extended the emergency declaration to July 6.

Kevin Mannix, a Salem attorney and former state legislator who represents a group of intervenors who support the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, issued a statement about Shirtcliff's letter.

"I am pleased that Judge Shirtcliff chose to stand by his original decision, which I firmly believe is strongly supported by proper analysis of the statutes," Mannix wrote. "We will now have the opportunity to fully engage with the Governor's representatives in front of the Supreme Court."

FOOD

Continued from Page 1A

morning. Then at 8 a.m. she begins distributing the boxes just outside the senior center's main entrance to people who have called ahead to arrange pickup.

Much of the food provided by Harvest Share, just as it was before the pandemic, is donated by Safeway, Market Place Fresh Foods, the Oroweat warehouse in La Grande and the Oregon Food Bank. Most of the items are tasty but nearing their expiration dates. Many are collected each morning by Andrea's husband, Steve Konopacky, and Thomas Houck, who are members of the Community Connection of Northeast Oregon's regional food bank staff.

Andrea Konopacky said the demand for food has increased significantly in the past three months, since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the state to shut down many businesses and put countless people out of work.

"We are busy, busy," she said. "People are so happy to have food."

Items provided in food boxes Wednesday include peanut butter, cereal, pancake mix, rice, canned fruit and vegetables and fresh produce. Konopacky, as she does all weekdays, also brings out milk, eggs and fruit juice to those who request it. Konopacky once greeted many people coming to Harvest Share with hugs, but that is no longer possible because of social distancing rules. That does not

prevent her from playful give-and-take with those she greets.

"I have fun with them. We have a good time," she said.

Those who came for food Tuesday included Rod Zollman of La Grande who arrived with his 6-month-old Yorkshire terrier named Meghan. Konopacky embraced the tiny dog while holding it in her hands with plastic gloves. The dog was one many she greets each day while making Harvest Share distributions. Each time she picks up a pet she must afterward put on a new pair of gloves.

"I go through so many gloves. I love pets," she said.

The food boxes are meant to last for about two days. Some come every day for new boxes and for good reason.

"They are giving (their food) to shut-ins," Konopacky said.

She said running Harvest Share is more work now that it was before because so many food boxes need to be assembled and they contain heavy items like canned goods. Still, Konopacky doesn't seem to mind.

"I love what I do. I love helping people," Konopacky said.

Konopacky said that in working as a volunteer for Harvest Share she is following the lead of her Polish grandparents who raised her from the time she was 9 months old. She said people often came to their door asking for food and her grandparents never let anyone leave empty-handed.

"They instilled that (the importance of reaching out to others) in me," Konopacky said.

COVID

Continued from Page 1A

state's economy. The number also is encouraging due to the fact the average is decreasing even as the number of coronavirus tests in Oregon is on the rise. The nine highest totals of tests administered in the state have all come since May 8. OHA reported Wednesday that the weekly number of tests last week was up 5% over the previous week, with more than 17,000 tests administered, while the number of positive cases last dropped more than 25% for the second week in a row.

The 14-day average also has been on a steady decline.

That tally actually peaked on April 9 at 71.8 cases. It held at near 70 for a few days before breaking below 60 and bottoming out at 53.7 on April 28. New infections saw another rise, and the average peaked at 69.7 on May 16 before dropping again. The 14-day average hit 43.5 Tuesday, the lowest since March 31 when it was at 44.6, then ticked up to 44.4 Wednesday. The last time it was below 40 was March 30.

Five of the lowest daily positive counts since late March also have come in the

last 11 days, which accounts for the drop in the average daily case total, with the lowest number at 11 on May 17. That's followed by 16 cases on the 21st, 18 cases on the 26th, 22 cases on the 25th and 24 cases on the 23rd. Prior to that, Oregon had not seen a day with fewer than 30 cases since March 24, when there were 18 new confirmations.

Monday's and Tuesday's combined total of 40 was the lowest consecutive-day tally since March 19 and 20, and it was the first time with consecutive days with fewer than 25 cases since March 21 and 22.

Currently, 1,981 individuals statewide are listed as having recovered from the illness. It has claimed the lives of 148 people, and 1,909 cases are listed as active.

Union County, which has seen six cases, currently has just one active case. Wallowa County has two cases, one of which is active.

Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Marion counties — the four hardest-hit counties in Oregon — currently account for 83.5% of all active cases in the state. Twenty counties currently have five or fewer active cases, and 23 counties have 10 or fewer.

LA GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETED PATHWAY



Industrial Arts- Black

*Westin Blake
Tristan Eggert
Stanley Hurd
Ethan Johnson
Ashton Morwood
Trevor Powers
Craig Romine

Medical- White

Zoe Adamson
Lindsay Adkins
Victoria Bechtel
Alexandra Brock
Julie Chandler
Jaiden Hafer
Felicity Houston
Jacie Howton
Justin Jenner
*Kristal Jensen
Rachael Keniry
Alexander Larvik
Renna Martinez
Kaleb Myer
Cuahutemoc Rivas
Alyssa Schelin
Jayce Seavert
Karsen Williams
*Kenzie Williams

Natural Resources-

Forest Green

James Burnell
Isaak Carson
Craig Romine
*Zachary Wiggins

Performing Arts-

Kelly Green

Victoria Bechtel
Molly Chadwick
Julie Chandler
Joseph Davidson
Sarah Durfee
Aubrey Fields
Portia Hayden
*Corinne Hines
Jacob Huntsman
Brooklyn Hutchins
*Christopher Kirby
Alexander Larvik
Cooper Markham
Reilly Morris
Lian Moy
Audrianna Neustel
Michael O'Rourke
Lillian Parker-Halstead
Katie Perry
Katie Rolf

Savannah Shorts
Cameron Snider
Maia Vandervlugt
John VanderZanden
Brixtin Walker

Visual Arts- Light Blue

Mykyla Baker
McKinzie Beaudry Roe
Josie Bornstedt
Tori Bowen
*Alexyss Chamberlain
Haily DeHart
Amanda Gelowicz
Felicity Houston
Ashton Morwood
Lian Moy
Lillian Parker-Halstead
Brittany Robles Jimenez
Maia Vandervlugt
Savannah Walsh
Karsen Williams
Camryn Willson

* Received Scholarship

LHS LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP/RECIPIENTS

Addleman Family Scholarship & Raymond K. Addleman Scholarship

Westin Blake
Brooklyn Hutchins
Molly Chadwick
Lian Moy
Ashley Rasmussen
Josie Bornstedt

Anderson Perry & Associates, Inc.

Brooklyn Hutchins

The Bank of Eastern Oregon

Brooklyn Hutchins

Dr Martinez - Brace Face Scholarship

Carpet One Floor and Home

La Grande High School Class of 1958

La Grande High School Class of 1961

Katie Perry
Corrine Hines

La Grande High School Class of 1962

Josie Bornstedt

DeWuhs-Keckritz Educational Trust

Lara Insko
Nicholas Duvernay
Katie Perry
Molly Chadwick
Julie Chandler,
Rachael Keniry
Kristal Jensen

Edward W. & Marian C. Brog Foundation

Markham Cooper
Jacie Howton
Brittany Robles
Cameron Snyder

Island City Lions Club Memorial Scholarship

Josie Bornstedt
Jacie Howton
Jayce Seavert
Kiara Hayes-Smith
Aspyn Wallender
Camryn Wilson

La Grande Lions Club - The Annual Dale Wyatt Scholarship

Josie Bornstedt
Savannah Shorts

La Grande Rotary Noon Club- Scholar/Athlete Scholarship

Nathan Reed
Lara Insko

La Grande Presbyterian Church Scholarship

Lara Insko
James Thurman

La Grande High School Tiger Booster Club

Loveland Funeral Chapel

Kiara Hayes-Smith

Mid Columbia Bus Company

Corrine Hines
Ashley Rasmussen

Northeast Oregon Board of Realtors

Scholarship

Jacie Howton

OTEC (Oregon Trail Electric Co-op)

Old West Federal Credit Union

Oregon Hunters Association

Zachary Wiggins
Riana Scott
Savannah Shorts
Logan Paustian

Graduating High School Student and the

OTEC-EOU Rural Scholarship

Keith Oswald
Brittany Robles
Julie Chandler
Lara Insko
Katie Perry
Blaine Shaw
Nathan Reed, OTEC/EOU
Josie Bornstedt, OTEC/EOU

The La Grande Education Foundaton - Ruth

Crousee Kilby & Riveria Scholarship

Adrianna Neustel
Aubrey Fields
Katie Perry

Soroptimist of La Grande- Union County High School Scholarship

Kristal Jensen
Katie Perry
Sophia Madsen
Josie Bornstedt

Union County Sheriff's Office

Union county 4-H Leaders Association

Scholarship[

Union County P.E.O. Tri-Chapter

Carolyn Castro

Valley Insurance

National Wildlife Turkey Federation

Eastern Oregon Women for Agriculture

We Paint La Grande, LLC

Hayden Robinson
Gabe Shukle

Unon County Farm Bureau

Dale Wyatt Memorial Athlete Award

Nathan Reed
Gabe Shukle

Arnie Hallmark Outstanding Senior

Athlete Award

Jayce Seavert
Kenzie Williams