

OUR VIEW



EO Media Group file photo
Public health officials advise Americans to wear protective masks or other face coverings in public.

Increase in cases shouldn't mean tightened restrictions

The Oregon Health Authority announced on Sunday the highest daily COVID-19 case count since the pandemic began. That alone doesn't mean Oregon needs to bring back the clampdown on gatherings and businesses.

More testing means more positive tests. More contact tracing means better monitoring of the spread.

As restrictions are eased, it's to be expected there will be some outbreaks. The restrictions were never designed to stop the spread of the virus. And easing the restrictions doesn't mean the risks are gone.

"Although the number is high today, the overall rate of infection in Oregon remains among the lowest in the United States," the Oregon Health Authority said in a statement.

Reopening is a precarious balancing act. Gov. Kate Brown has emphasized that the state's reopening plan is based on input from public health officials. And it is.

But the Portland Tribune reported state health officials wanted Brown to further delay any reopening in the state to later in May or June 1. Brown chose May 15. That was within the range of dates health officials proposed. It was near the beginning, rather than near the end.

Public health officials don't want the economy to slump or more Oregonians to be out of work. But they advocate firmly from the position of public health. The choices Gov. Brown has to make are not lives or the economy. It's lives and the economy.

So despite the easing of restrictions, it's not over. Yes, start living a life that's more normal. Help local businesses get going again. But also, maintain distancing. Wear a face covering. Wash your hands.

OUR VIEW

Pay by the mile is driving your way

Revenue to pay for roads and bridges fell off the same COVID-19 cliff that everything else did. Oregon's 36 cents per gallon fuel tax was causing problems before the pandemic as cars become more fuel efficient.

And then try to pay for roads with a fuel tax when everybody is pretty much staying home.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is trying to get Oregonians in on the conversation to fix it. It's holding an open house — online during the pandemic.

You should know or may already know that what's more than likely coming is a pay-by-the-mile tax for everybody.

A gizmo in your car will send mileage and fuel data to the state. The driver gets billed, less any fuel taxes paid at the pump. Roads get money.

The system, called OReGO, is already running. ODOT wants more people to participate to help improve it.

You can go to openhouse.oregondot.org/orego to learn more, ask questions and tell ODOT what you think.



OTHER VIEWS

Can we drop the 'World's Greatest Dad' scam?

Speaking as a father ("What — am I made of money? Go ask your mother! When you have your own roof, you can make your own rules! No, my abs aren't flabby, they're just meditating...")... No, this could go on forever. Start over. Speaking as a COLUMNIST, with a strict word limit, I agree good fathers should be loved and respected. But no dad should take for granted that they will receive obligatory World's Greatest Dad merchandise.

Seriously, they should actively DREAD such a last-minute, no-brainer gift. I mean, if the little rascals are just blowing smoke up your butt, they will become trapped in a stressful pattern of topping themselves. ("Dad, I just paid to have a whole newly discovered galaxy named after you. Yeah... Dad's Galaxy. Now, could you please co-sign for a new Prius and for... um... what I still owe the observatory?")

Conversely, if the kiddos sincerely harbor such a lofty opinion of you, they may wind up setting the bar embarrassingly low in other areas of life. ("Pop! I'm so excited! I just drove my generic car to my dorm at Generic University — home of the Fightin' Indeterminate Species or Historical



DANNY TYREE
COLUMNIST

Figure — and fell in love with your generic future daughter-in-law!")

Let's face it: Most of us don't DESERVE World's Greatest Dad paraphernalia, either because we're unmotivated, emotionally distant, stereotypically dopey or painfully struggling to seem cooler than we are.

For example, you may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if the "swear jar" threatens to wreck the currencies of the European Union, Dubai and Chuck E. Cheese.

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you drive the car over the family pet... WHILE the poor little goldfish is being given a "burial at sea" in the toilet.

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you lazily teach the art of self-defense by leaving around a cassette of Carl Douglas singing "Everybody was kung fu fighting..."

You'll receive even LESS martial arts credit if you accidentally taped over Carl Douglas with Minnie Riperton. ("Lovin' you is easy 'cause you're beautiful... La la la la...")

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you slapped the "I'm spending my children's inheritance" sticker on the stroller instead of

a Winnebago.

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you cover your forgetfulness of major milestones by lying, "The Tooth Fairy exceeded his budget while buying teeth from meth addicts."

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you ramble too long with your maxims: "A penny saved is a penny earned," "There is no 'I' in team," "If at first you don't succeed, the next vasectomy surgeon may be more competent..."

You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you keep praying for an early entrance by John Wilkes Booth as little Johnny (portraying Abe Lincoln) explains how to split rails in his school pageant.

Even "woke" fathers face an uphill battle. You may not be getting a World's Greatest Dad gift if you interrupt your child's halftime cheer-leading routine to protest the cultural appropriation inherent in the "pyramid."

Speaking as a father again, always set reasonable expectations, appreciate Father's Day and... oh, just WALK IT OFF with the REMAINING leg, for Pete's sake!

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Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

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