

COVID-19

Continued from Page 1A

risk,” Brogoitti said. “It’s hard to literally change how you interact with people. It doesn’t happen quickly and doesn’t happen easily. Gatherings are a place where people should be cautious and where we should work to maintain our distance.”

Brogoitti acknowledged what is most difficult is changing the behaviors and traditions people are used to. She said people are used to interacting in one

way, and to interject new behaviors and ask people to change the way they do things, like touching and talking, can be difficult. These can be interactions in school, in the workplace and out in public. However, the best tool, Brogoitti said, people have in fighting against the spread of COVID-19 is to physically distance.

“Our goal is to keep the spread as low as possible, and if there is something we can do as a community we will try to do it,” Brogoitti said.

Rumors about the

new cases have spread through the community, including that the people with COVID-19 were at a church or protest. Brogoitti said speculating on where someone caught the disease misses the point.

“We lose sight of the bigger picture when we focus on one event,” Brogoitti said. “Is it possible a person at an event had it and spread it? Absolutely, but it could have been any setting.”

There is a possibility, with a large increase in cases, the county may go back to Phase 1. According

to Brogoitti, it would be the Oregon Health Authority’s and the governor’s offices that would make that call based on indicators measuring case numbers and rates. At this time, the county remains in Phase 2 of reopening.

Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics on Friday announced it is now requiring all patients, employees and visitors to wear a mask at all of its locations. The “mask requirement has come due to an increase in community-contracted cases of coronavirus,” according

to a press release from the hospital.

As long as there are enough masks in supply, the hospital will give disposable masks to patients and visitors who do not have one. People may wear their own masks or face coverings as long as they do not have any respiratory symptoms. If someone arrives to a Grande Ronde Hospital facility with symptoms, staff will provide proper face coverings.

The hospital built up its supply of personal protective equipment and disposable loop masks and mon-

itors their amounts, the press release said.

“In addition, due to the generosity of our own community, we have already been able to distribute hundreds of donated cloth face coverings to many of our employees and patients,” according to the release. “We have been and will continue to be good stewards of these crucial supplies.”

This new policy will be in effect until further notice as the hospital, county and state continue to monitor cases locally.

Continued from Page 1A

MEALS

place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Volunteer drivers now must leave lunches and dinners on doorsteps of homes. Volunteer drivers used to talk with the seniors on their routes as a means of lessening social isolation.

“Often Meals on Wheels drivers are the only people some seniors see all day,” Gleeson said.

Peggy Lanman, a Meals on Wheels driver, wishes she could talk more extensively with the people she delivers to.

“I miss that part of it,” Lanman said.

She started delivering meals two years ago after retiring as a teacher at Imbler Elementary School. Lanman said she had wanted to do this after seeing how much Meals on Wheels meant to her grandmother.

Recipients of Meals on Wheels are encouraged to make a \$4.75 donation.

The increase in demand for Meals on Wheels is not the only reason the food service staff at the Union County Senior Center is hopping more than ever. The center on March 17 began offering midday grab-and-go meal service for seniors and all residents. The statewide prohibition on large gatherings meant the senior center had to cancel its midday sit-down meal service. The takeout service became the replacement for the congregate meals.



Staff photo by Dick Mason
Jean Redd, a member of the food service staff at the Union County Senior Center, prepares meals Tuesday. The center’s takeout lunch service offers meals to go in place of dining on site.

Grab-and-go drew 10 people the first day, but since then its popularity has soared and it now sometimes draws more than 100 people during the noon hour. People 60 and older are asked to make a \$3 donation for each meal, while those younger than

60 pay \$5. The number of people coming for grab-and-go meals is substantially more than the number who came to eat in the dining hall at the Union County Senior Center. Gleeson said the center is providing 1,200-1,400 takeout meals each

month, substantially more than the 800-1,000 sit-down meals per month.

Gleeson attributes the increase to more seniors in their early 60s coming for grab-and-go meals.

“We are getting more younger seniors coming now,” she said.

A number of people coming to the grab-and-go use it as a means to reach out to others, including Al Weathermon of Island City. Weathermon said he will sometimes get up to seven additional meals that he distributes to seniors in his neighborhood who are

RULES

Continued from Page 1A

looking at a way to present something to the governor and staff. These areas can’t all be treated the same. Guidance for one area doesn’t work for another.

“Our call a week ago with (the Oregon Health Authority), we were told those things. It set people’s teeth on edge.”

She also said the state was going against its own claim that all decisions would be science-based, and pointed to the effectiveness of face coverings — which is still in dispute

— as an example.

“We were told the state made only decisions based on science. But on this particular issue it was based on theory,” she said.

Lake County Commissioner Mark Albertson coordinated the meeting via email, in which he referenced a conference from last week that seemed to indicate a double standard.

“Today in a conference call with the AOC the OHA director stated that he wanted to protect the protesters and they didn’t have to follow the guidelines that we do!” he said in an email timestamped

just before 3 p.m. June 5 that was sent to more than 45 Eastern and Central Oregon commissioners. “You can request the transcript from the AOC if you don’t believe me. In other words you can protest but we can’t go to church, you can protest but can’t go to a ball game, you can protest but you can’t have a fair or rodeo. This is absolute insanity and now the OHA tells you if you can go to work or dinner with your friends.”

Anderes also referenced the conference call, noting “they talked about not tracing demonstrators but were going to hold

everyone else to a (different) standard.”

The Union County commissioner said there was discussion about the state continuing to hold what he said was about \$1.62 billion in CARES Act funding.

“As of today, there has not been any money distributed to counties, cities and special districts, which is really a concern,” he said. “We are racking up some bills that are COVID-related.”

Roberts noted the commissioners discussed their concerns about their constituents, how there “didn’t seem to be any consistency

whatsoever” in what came from the state.

“There were just lots of things that did not equate to rural Oregon,” she said, pointing to the lower percentage of cases in the rural parts of the state compared to others. “We’re not naive enough to think the virus won’t find us but we’re prepared to meet the challenge. Our local hospitals and authorities are ready.”

She added the state should be ready to help if called upon, but “until then we feel we need to be able to make the decisions.”

Roberts said a “compilation of those things we

as commissioners out here feel need to be addressed or let our public know we are working on” will be sent out next week.

Roberts also countered reporting about the meeting being secretive.

“We weren’t private,” he said. “We went into a restaurant and had lunch. I think the concept was we could have had a phone call among us. We chose to meet in public and in person, and the press was there.”

NUMBERS

Continued from Page 1A

gets sick with COVID-19 symptoms.

•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 COVID-19. 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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Gerry Montgomery

90 years old on June 14th -Flag Day

Gerry is truly a gift to the community.

Some brief information about her! She has been volunteering at the Union County Senior Center for the last 20 years. Prior to COVID-19 and when this is all over with: She is currently the Volunteer Coordinator five days a week where she schedules volunteer groups to serve lunch and assist with catering jobs that help support the center. She is also the coordinator of the weekly Bingo Games for the center as well. She teaches water aerobics at Grande Ronde Athletic Club and a stretching class.

She stays very active and enjoys all volunteer commitments that help keep her feeling young at the age of 90. If you ask her she will say "Staying so active has really been a blessing for my health and wellbeing."

Happy Birthday Gerry! We Love you Mike, Carmen & Ashley