

POSITIVE

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center to his home in early May due to COVID-19 concerns. His brother Greg was contacted about the recent positive cases at the center because they still are renting a room there for their 92-year-old mother. The virus already has been in the family, though, John Howard said. His brother, Paul, was hospitalized Tuesday and released Friday after being confirmed positive for COVID-19, and Greg was exposed

after being in contact with Paul. John also has a nephew in Pendleton who has COVID-19, he said. “It really impacts a family, especially when you have someone in a (high-risk) category,” John Howard said. He said his brother is on oxygen and isn’t in the clear yet. He added they have no idea where the disease was contracted. “He got it in the community. He lives by himself,” John said of his brother’s case. “(Maybe when) he was out shopping. We just

don’t know. Somehow he picked it up.” Howard added, “The virus really impacts your body strength. Our brother, it just zapped the strength right out of him. It takes (your) strength (to the point) where you could hardly raise your arm or walk” without getting tired. Howard also praised the staff at Grande Ronde Hospital. “We got a great little hospital in La Grande,” he said. “They’re on their A game. They’ve had enough time to study the virus, and communicated with other

providers to know what works and what doesn’t.” News of the cases at Grande Ronde Retirement also canceled at least one Father’s Day visit. Ted Kramer of La Grande, former editor and publisher of The Observer, whose father Dan Kramer lives at facility, said his father called him at 11 a.m. Sunday and said he would not be coming over for a Father’s Day meal, explaining Grande Ronde Retirement was under quarantine because of the cases. Ted Kramer said his father told him residents

would remain in quarantine for two weeks. During this time all residents must stay in their rooms and meals will be brought to them. Union County added five positive cases Monday, along with five more cases over the weekend — two on Saturday and three on Sunday. This boosts the county count to 263. Those were the only positives that came from about 321 test results that came back over the weekend — an infection rate of 3.1%. Overall in the county, 1,518 test results have come back, and 1,255 of them are negative, dropping the positive

rate of county tests from a peak of 22% a week ago down to 17%. Carrie Brogoitti, public health administrator for the Center for Human Development, said she wasn’t sure how many of these results were from the testing clinic at the Union County Fairgrounds last week that saw more than 560 people get tested, but added, “I would say that the majority of testing that has been done in the county was at these events, so that would be reflected in the (Oregon Health Authority) numbers.”

ZIP CODES

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No. 2: 97233 – Southeast Portland and Gresham

This area encompasses a chunk of Southeast Portland that stretches east into Gresham’s Rockwood neighborhood. It includes David Douglas High School and the blocks between Southeast 122nd and 202nd avenues. Cases here jumped by 49 in a week — to a total of 159 cases.

But there were no large outbreaks in nursing homes, churches or workplaces that would explain the elevated numbers, according to the Multnomah County Health Department.

County spokeswoman Kate Willson said in an email that the disease in this area has been spreading in “clusters” in “specific communities and families who socialize together and share households.” Willson said a high percentage of these residents were essential workers who are at higher risk of being exposed to the virus.

No. 3: 97365 – Newport

Cases here jumped by 43, to a total of 187 positive cases since the pandemic began. Seven of those 43 cases were due to a new outbreak at Local Ocean, a seafood restaurant, which closed upon learning about the positive test results. Owner Laura Anderson said in a Facebook post Sunday all of those who



Photo contributed by the Northeast Oregon Joint Information Center

A workers prepares to conduct a swab test for COVID-19 during last week’s drive-thru testing clinic at the the Union County Fairgrounds, La Grande. The 97850 ZIP code, which includes La Grande, saw the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in the state for the week of June 8-14.

tested positive were employees who worked in the kitchen. “Our service staff, those a customer would interact with, all tested negative,” Anderson wrote. Anderson added: “We will let you know when we are ready to reopen the dining room, fish market and resume take out operations.” Friday, the fish market reopened. Local Ocean only accounts for a small portion of the ZIP code’s cases. Of the 43 new cases in the area, 18 were also traced to the food processor Pacific Seafood, which shares an address with the Local Ocean restaurant. A total of 145 infections have been linked to Pacific Seafood

since early June. This ZIP code has the highest per capita rate in Oregon, at about 16 cases per 1,000 people. No. 4: 97236 – Southeast Portland This area is south of ZIP code 97233. It covers the area around Powell Butte Nature Park. The number of new cases here jumped by 41, to a total of 249 cases. Public health officials have reported no new outbreaks at workplaces or adult care facilities in this area. But the area does include a nursing home that was linked to 120 cases and 34 deaths. Public health officials, however, haven’t reported any new cases or deaths tied to the nursing home.

Like in the ZIP code 97233 just to the north, public health officials couldn’t pinpoint a large outbreak as the source of 97236’s increase in new cases. Willson, the county spokesperson, again said the jump in cases here was due to the high number of essential workers who are at greater risk of contracting the disease. Willson also said the disease was spreading among communities and families who socialize or live together.

No. 5: 97013 – Canby

New cases here grew by 34 in a week, to a total of 98 cases. An ongoing outbreak at Marquis Hope Village Post-Acute Rehab appears to be

responsible for a big portion of COVID-19 infections in this ZIP code. At least 92 cases have been linked to the facility from June 4 to June 14 and 7 people have died. But some of the 92 cases are people who live outside of Canby. They are likely employees and close contacts of residents or employees. According to data available Wednesday, 33 residents, 36 staff and apparently 23 other people have tested positive for the virus because of their connection to the facility. The outbreak at Marquis Hope Village is the second largest at a long-term care facility in the state. Only Healthcare at Foster Creek in Southeast Portland has seen more cases, 120, and more deaths, 34.

No. 6: 97838 – Hermiston

This ZIP code covers a large swath of Hermiston and some of outlying areas. Cases here increased by 24, reaching a total of 106 infections since the pandemic began. The first week of June, infections increased by 14 — so the disease has been spreading at a faster rate. It’s unclear what’s driving the higher numbers. An outbreak at Medelez Trucking, which infected 27 people, appeared to be winding down. No one had come down with symptoms during the June 8-14 reporting period.

No. 7: 97303 – Keizer

New infections jumped

by 24 here, to 110 total cases logged since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. There has been no outbreak at a workplace, organized event or long-term care facility that can explain the rise. But the Oregon Health Authority has identified six “active” workplace outbreaks in neighboring ZIP codes in Marion County. These active outbreaks have been ongoing at the Oregon State Penitentiary with 176 cases, Santiam Correctional Institution with 15 cases, Salem Hospital with 12, food processor Norpac with 11, food processor BrucePac with seven and Amazon in Aumsville with six cases.

No. 8: 97305 – Northeast of Salem

Cases here climbed by 20 in a week, bringing the total infections so far in this ZIP code to 141. This area encompasses the community of Brooks, and is just east of Keizer, across Interstate 5.

The Oregon Health Authority can’t point to a single large outbreak in this ZIP code. But neighboring ZIP codes have struggled with workplace outbreaks.

No. 9: 97031 – Hood River

This area saw cases rise by 20, to a total of 71. A major contributor to new cases is the active outbreak at Duckwall Fruit, the pear packing company. The latest weekly report identified 16 new cases. A total of 61 cases have been identified at the facility since late May.

OSP

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had previously lived in La Grande, where he was an auto salesman. The two men charged with the fatal shooting were apprehended almost two days later after a manhunt involving at least 50 people and an airplane. They were caught at 11 a.m. Oct. 20, 1931, 7 miles from Meacham, according to that day’s Observer, then named

the La Grande Evening Observer. On Oct. 19, 1931, the two men involved in the shooting, Keith Crosswhite, 19, and John Owen, 28, were with two girls, and had just watched a movie in a La Grande theater, The Observer reported. They were at the Playle Oil Station getting gas and were preparing to leave when Helms and another law enforcement officer, Lee H. Noe, signaled for the party to stay put. One of the men took out a gun

and told the police officers to put up their hands. When Helms reached for his gun, the two criminals fired at him and Noe and then drove off, leaving Helms wounded and Noe unharmed. Crosswhite and Owen, who signed full confessions within two days of being arrested, were later convicted of murder and each given life sentences. Crosswhite was pardoned in 1942, and Owen was paroled in 1950. An editorial in the Baker City Herald called

Helms a hero. “If Helms does not recover he will die for his country just as surely as any soldier who fell on the battlefields of France during the war (World War I),” wrote the Herald, then named the Baker Democrat-Herald. The editorial noted there was a great outpouring of support for Helms and this was encouraging to see. “Public feeling has not always been so. Too often a large element has secretly if not openly helped for the triumph of outlawry over

the law of the land,” the editorial stated. Society had paid a price for this attitude, the Baker City newspaper stated. “Had it (the anti-police sentiment) not been so, we would not today have organized crime leaning in our faces from so many vantage points.” The Observer described Helms, a native of Harrison, Idaho, as one of the most popular OSP troopers in the region. He had lived in La Grande for eight years before moving to Baker on Aug. 1, 1931.

Helms was a talented baseball player known for his speed, according to The Observer. A shortstop, he played for the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League in 1924 and later was a semi-pro player in La Grande. He had married Echo Hollen six years earlier in Condon, according to the Oregon State Police Memorial website. The couple had no children. Amos “Spud” Helms is buried in La Grande at Hillcrest Cemetery.

LIVING

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Two days later, she said, the Center for Human Development, La Grande, informed her the test came back positive. “One thing my former co-worker actually said was ‘How did I get you sick if you wore a mask?’” Guthrie recalled. “I said, ‘Because that’s not how masks work.’ The baffling thing is she read and signed the same memos at work that I did. How can she possibly not only not know how a mask works, but doesn’t remember what we were supposed to do when we

had symptoms, including calling in?” Guthrie has been dealing with difficulty breathing and has not been able to keep food down. Those who attended her birthday party also shared they are feeling symptomatic. “The hardest part is definitely being that I might have gotten my family sick,” Guthrie said. “I have two wonderful little boys who now have a cough. My father who is 70 and has other health complications claims to have symptoms. My best friend says she has symptoms.” Guthrie said she has found comfort in a peti-

tion she created to shut down the Lighthouse Pentecostal Church at the website www.change.org. The petition had gathered more than 700 signatures as of Monday morning. “I am so angry that people were so willing to gather despite the fact that there are others around them that can be so easily affected by this pandemic. It’s like people can die and they didn’t think of that,” Guthrie said of the church and its congregation. “This isn’t a vendetta against their religion,” Guthrie added. “I could care less about it. What I care about is the fact that

if they are so willing to be dismissive of others’ health and safety, then that makes their church a dangerous risk. I don’t want to live in a town where my safety is more at risk during a pandemic because they want to worship when they could do so at home.” Guthrie is isolating herself at home while her sons stay with their father. She said the virus has been taking a toll on her body. Her hope is that with people hearing her story, they may take the virus more seriously. “Stay safe. Only go out if you need to,” Guthrie said. “And if you have symp-

toms, please stay home. This thing is not fake. I don’t care if you think it is some weird government experiment or if you think

it was paid for by some rich dude. That doesn’t matter right now. What matters is keeping our community safe and healthy.”

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