

DEATHS

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1.9%. There likely would be more deaths even if the numbers of cases zeroed out moving forward, and the rate has decreased as there have been more infections confirmed.

Older, more susceptible individuals were getting infected at a higher rate early in the pandemic, but younger Oregonians are swinging the pendulum the other direction and now make up a slightly higher percentage of cases than they do the state population, while those from age 60-79 have an infection rate lower than their portion of the population.

For the sake of assuming the rate would be a bit higher if the population-to-infection proportions were even, the first data set will use a 2.5% mortality rate as a baseline. This would mean, if there were no more infections than the 13,081 in Oregon, the total number of casualties would be 327.

If the number of cases

is five times higher, then the total number would be 65,405, and if 10 times higher, it would be 130,810.

Since the additional 80-90% of individuals with COVID-19 are likely not symptomatic and not succumbing to the disease, the casualty total on the baseline would not increase. This would result in the fatality rate, if the number of cases is five times higher, being at 0.5%. If it's 10 times the number of cases, then the fatality rate would be 0.25%.

Some circles have argued about how much more lethal the coronavirus is than the flu. In the last decade, the morality rate of the flu season has varied from almost 0.1% to 0.17%, according to figures from the CDC. If, in fact, COVID-19's mortality rate is 0.25%, that number is a fatality rate only 1.5 times higher than the worst flu season of the last decade, and 2.6 times higher than the most mild one.

What do those numbers mean if 10% of the state were infected?

The state has an esti-

mated 4.2 million individuals, so 10% of the population would be 420,000 cases. A fatality rate of 0.5% would mean 2,100 deaths, and a rate of 0.25% would be half that — 1,050. They are numbers that, while still high, are lower than the 2,900 or 4,000 listed earlier.

What would happen if the rate of 1.9% were applied rather than 2.5%?

Strictly for the math purposes, this would assume at 13,081 cases there were no more casualties, so the baseline freezes at 247.

If the number of cases is five times higher, the mortality rate drops to 0.38%. If it's 10 times higher, the rate is 0.191% — only double the mildest flu season of the last decade and just a touch above the worst.

If 10% of Oregonians contracted the virus, then the number of casualties is between 802 and 1,596.

How, then, does the data apply by age range to help zero in the focus on how to better protect Oregonians from COVID-19?

This will use a different data set, so the numbers will

be a little different from the previous summations. It'll take into account the current mortality rates by age and the percentage of the population those groups made up according to US Census estimates from 2018. Like the previous examples, it will assume 10% of the state has been infected.

The mortality rates at each age range, through Wednesday, are 23.82% for individuals 80 and older, 9.34% for those age 70-79, 4.07% for those age 60-69, 0.7% for people between age 50-59 and 0.13% for anyone younger than 50.

If the infection rate is 10 times higher, and the mortality rate is 10 times lower, the numbers above change to 2.4%, 0.94%, 0.4%, 0.07% and 0.01%, respectively. There would be about 42,000 known cases but 378,000 unknown or asymptomatic cases.

There would be about 945 casualties, with about 11% of the population — those who would require extra protection — making up 70% of the cases.

And the mortality rate would be 0.23%.

Four more COVID-19 cases in Union County

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Center for Human Development on Wednesday reported four more cases of COVID-19 in Union County, putting the total at 376. That comes after announcing three more cases Tuesday.

Oregon Health Authority in its weekly update late Wednesday announced another workplace outbreak in Union County, this one at RISE Group Home in La Grande, which it reported had 12 cases.

The county still is reporting two deaths. It is not giving an updated total number of recoveries after an announcement over the weekend that Oregon Health Authority, which had been making check-in calls to monitors recoveries, was ceasing those calls due to the recent jump in cases statewide.

The last reported number of recoveries in

the county was 46.

The state added 282 more cases of COVID-19 Wednesday, moving the total to 13,081, and reported four more fatalities, though it also removed one from May for an individual counted twice. That puts the statewide total at 247.

The state's rate of positive test results has steadily been increasing over the last month and moved to 4%.

Through Tuesday there were 12,406 positive tests in Oregon out of a total of 311,111 tests.

Union County's positive test rate dropped to 16.3% after 74 positive tests were listed, putting the total at 1,936.

Oregonians younger than 40 continues to drive the increase in cases as they now make up 51.69% (6,762) of all cases in the state. More than 68.3% of cases (8,947) are in individuals younger than 50.

TEACHER

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A family tragedy about a decade later changed his mind.

Ilg's brother, Jim, 10 years his junior, was paralyzed in a traffic crash. Steve Ilg responded by taking his brother, then a teenager, under his wing to help him overcome his disability. He succeeded in a big way. Jim recovered to the point that today he works as an occupational therapist.

"He helps others who are paralyzed," Steve Ilg said.

Jim Ilg didn't stop there, taking steps such as joining a wheelchair tennis circuit.

The work Steve Ilg did lifting his brother provided a measure of self-discovery.

"I found that I like working with young adults," said Ilg, who previously had served in the Air Force for nine years, including five as a reservist.

A new life track now on his horizon, Ilg enrolled at Oregon State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business and marketing with an education minor. Next he earned a master's degree in education from Western Oregon University.

One of his first teaching jobs was at Union High School, where he taught shop for about four years before his position was cut due to school budget limitations. Later Ilg landed at Central High School in Independence, where he taught auto shop and other courses for 17 years before his position was again axed because of financial issues during a time when vocational programs were being cut in school districts throughout the state.

Ilg returned to Union County in 2011 and became a welding, business and yearbook teacher at La Grande High School. He taught at La Grande High two years longer than he needed to qualify for full retirement benefits.

He was inspired to stay on because the La Grande School District made a major investment in its career technical education program. This resulted in a new CTE building with state-of-the-art equipment for welding, which Ilg taught.

"I have seen vibrant rebirth" in the school's CTE programs, Ilg said.

He noted that for the first two-thirds of his career he worked for school districts that were consistently cutting back on their CTE programs.

"It is a great honor to have these facilities," Ilg said. "Other educators are envious of what we have."

La Grande's CTE programs were able to move forward thanks to funding from a \$31.5 million bond voters approved in 2014.

Ilg credited the success

OTHERS

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John Tolan — Principal of Central Elementary School, Tolan worked 40 years for the La Grande School District.

Penny Waite — Reading teacher at Greenwood Elementary, Waite worked 19 years for the La Grande School District.

Elgin School District

Deb Horrell — Education assistant, Horrell worked 27 years for the Elgin School District.

North Powder School District

Laura Bates — Elementary school special education teacher, Bates worked one year for the North Powder School District. Bates worked as a teacher for many years before joining the North Powder School District.

Union School District

Vivian Matthews — High school English and writing teacher, Matthews worked for 31 years for the Union School District.

Rene Benner — Elementary school teacher, Benner worked for the Union School District for more than two decades.

Cove School District

Kim Tally — High school health and physical education teacher, Tally worked more than 20 years for Cove School District.

Ginger Noble — Grade school teacher, Noble worked 14 years for the Cove School District.

developing distance education programs quickly.

"Online schools need a year to develop their programs, but (Oregon's public schools) had to do it in two weeks," Ilg said. "I don't know if people understand the magnitude of the adjustments that needed to be made."

This transition turned the world upside down not only for educators but also students. Ilg said some LHS students adapted well to it but others did not. It was surprising to see who succeeded and who struggled.

"Some top honor students were overwhelmed, but some C and D students took to it like fish to water. They loved it," he said.

The spring closure of the high school put a particularly large amount of pressure on Ilg because he also

was the yearbook teacher. The spring shutdown meant he had to do much of the work needed to complete the school's 2020 yearbook. He said a number of students stepped up to provide major assistance, including student editor Riana Scott.

"She was one of the most outstanding editors I had in nine years," Ilg said.

Ilg said yearbook was among his favorite classes to teach. Because of the amount of discussion involved, the class gave him a glimpse of students he normally did not see.

"You get to know kids on a different level, a more personal level," the teacher said.

Ilg may be retired, but he is far from idle. He now devotes much of his time to doing major maintenance work on his par-

ents' farm in Silverton and helping his mother and father with other tasks. He plans to make return trips to La Grande where he has a home, which his daughter Katie soon will move into with her newborn son, Ilg's first grandchild.

Ilg said he believes he is retiring at a good point, noting his younger colleagues have more energy than he does.

"It is my time," the retiring educator said.

Larry Morrison, a retired La Grande High School science teacher who often substituted for Ilg, credited him with making a big difference in the lives of his students.

"He is very caring," Morrison said. "He has a huge heart. He always did a lot of extra things to help his students."

of the upgrades to the two superintendents the school district has had during his tenure, Larry Glaze, who retired in 2017, and Superintendent George Mendoza. Ilg described both as approachable and supportive of CTE.

Ilg also lauded Scott Carpenter, the school district's director of educational programs, who previously was the high school's assistant principal, with playing a major role in getting the CTE

upgrades in place.

"Scott did 90% of the (organizational) work," Ilg said.

Sadly, La Grande High's CTE facilities, like all the school district's buildings, have been free of students since mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All classes in Oregon's public schools were taught via distance education in March, April and May as a result. Ilg said this put enormous stress on school districts tasked by the state with

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