

CASES

Continued from Page 1A

accounted for. The largest percentage increase within a group was in 10-19 year olds, which shot up from 682 cases through June to 1,854 cases in July. That increase was 172%, and the group made up 12.3% of all new cases. Youth under age 10 increased from 332 cases through June to 798 cases through July, a jump of 140%. They make up 4.3% of all cases in Oregon. While each age range under 50 saw its count more than double, the percentage

JULY COVID-19 CASES IN OREGON

• The numbers of cases by age group in July, according to a breakdown of data from Oregon Health Authority. Numbers may not be exact due to individuals whose age was not available at the time data was collected.

| Age group | July cases | Percent of July cases |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| 0-9       | 466        | 4.87%                 |
| 10-19     | 1,172      | 12.27%                |
| 20-29     | 2,247      | 23.50%                |
| 30-39     | 1,680      | 17.57%                |
| 40-49     | 1,617      | 16.91%                |
| 50-59     | 1,063      | 11.11%                |
| 60-69     | 652        | 6.82%                 |
| 70-79     | 393        | 4.11%                 |
| 80+       | 256        | 2.68%                 |
| Total     | 9,561      | 100%                  |

of infections has continued to drop for those 50 and older — an age group that has seen all but nine of the

322 deaths in the state. The numbers break down as follows: •50-59 year olds (2,351

total cases) accounted for 11.1% of cases in July (1,063) down from 14.4% through June and from its overall percentage of 12.7%. •60-69 (1,532 cases) made up 6.8% of cases in July (652) after accounting for 9.9% through June and 8.3% overall. •70-79 (939 cases) saw just 4.1% of the month's cases (393), down from 6.1% through June and 5.1% overall. •And those 80 and older (638 cases), the hardest-hit group in terms of mortality rate, saw just 256 new cases in July, just 2.7% of the month's total, which has

helped drag its overall total down to 3.5%. Through the five months of the pandemic, individuals under age 50, which according to 2018 census data make up about 63.6% of the state's population, were responsible for 70.3% of the state's cases. The oldest three demographics in Oregon Health Authority data, which have made up 91.3% of those who have died with COVID-19, make up 23.5% of the population, but now have just 16.8% of cases in Oregon, and 13.6% in July. Through June, they made up 20.2% of all cases. Each age group 50 and under has a higher per-

centage of cases relative to its portion of the population, while the 50-59 group is right at its population ratio. The state's rate of positive cases, which through June was 3.51%, has bumped up to 4.35%. More than 160,000 test results came back in July, with the number of positive tests at 9,015 for a monthly positive percentage of 5.6%. There were 114 deaths attributed to COVID-19 during July. The 1.19% mortality rate in the month took Oregon's overall rate down from 2.33% to 1.74%. Oregon has tested about 9.5% of its population.

VIRTUAL

Continued from Page 1A

OTEC's service area. Those videos are a key part of OTEC's emphasis on promoting the four-county region both as a vacation destination and a desirable place to live, work and own a business, Gettle said. Although OTEC started the video campaign about a year before the coronavirus pandemic began, Gettle said she believes there is a fortuitous aspect to the coincidental timing. With many businesses in the region suffering from the dramatic decline in tourism — one of the top three industries in each of the four counties — Gettle said OTEC was poised to unveil the promotional videos with a goal of helping to revive the industry. She understands that attracting hordes of tourists isn't necessarily desirable now, with the pandemic continuing to spread. But Gettle said OTEC officials are glad the videos were ready. "We're just happy that we had already started this project and could deploy it to help our communities," she said. "We really think our virtual tours are going to be an important piece for attracting visitors once everything opens up. We're hoping that it's going to give people a taste of the beauty and amenities that our region offers so that they'll plan their next vacation here."

Gettle is optimistic that OTEC's promotional videos also will entice people to consider the region as a place to live and work. The videos, in addition to taking viewers to outdoor recreation spots such as Phillips Reservoir and Anthony Lakes, also include tours of local businesses. Gettle said she's read stories during the pandemic predicting the upheaval could provoke a migration from large cities to rural areas, in particular among workers who can telecommute. "There's a greater ability for people to work from home," she said. Gettle said she believes OTEC's four counties, with their relatively low cost of living and outdoor amenities, could prove attractive to workers, or business owners, who want to move. "We're going to be positioned really well," she said. "With the videos we're putting our best foot forward."

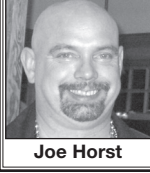
Gettle said the four county-specific videos cost \$6,000 each.



The most valuable and respected source of local news, advertising and information for our communities.

eomediagroup.com

**La GRANDE**  
**AUTO REPAIR**  
**975-2000**  
www.lagrandeautorepair.com



**MOST  
ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY  
AVAILABLE**  
ACDelcoTSS

SCHOOLS

Continued from Page 1A

"We miss our students, staff and families working together and seeing each other in person," Mendoza said. The superintendent said not being able to have in-person classes at the start of the school is discouraging because of the hard work staff did this summer in an attempt to achieve this goal. "It is very frustrating," Mendoza said. The superintendent said he believes the earliest the school district will be able to provide on-site instruction would be Oct. 5. But by then, he said, COVID-19 rates may have fallen to the point that state metrics would make it possible for the school district to offer in-person instruction to students in kindergarten through third grade and special needs students at all grade levels.

Other districts prep for online teaching

Other Union County school districts that have plans in place to reopen include Cove, set to reopen on Aug. 31. Cove Superintendent Earl Pettit said this district plans to offer on-site instruction to all students plus distance education for those who have issues which would prevent them from coming to school. Pettit knows future changes in state directives could make it impossible to offer on site instruction. "We fully expect things to change," Pettit said. "We are in a wait-and-see mode." The Cove School District as a result has a distance education plan ready for all students if state rule changes make on-site instruction impossible. "We can flip a switch and go fully online," he said. Pettit said he is worried the concentration on COVID-19 is keeping educators throughout the state from giving their full attention to student performance and the overall health of students. He said nationwide the number of students of high school age who are dying from sui-



Observer file photo

A lone janitor works in this March photo at the end of an empty hall at La Grande High School. Those halls will remain empty a while longer as La Grande schools move to teaching online for fall term.

cide and drug overdoses is up dramatically. He said the increase alone is more than the number of teenagers who are dying from COVID-19. Pettit said this is why schools need to get students back in classrooms. The ever-changing rules involving the virus and social distancing and education has prompted the Imbler School District to delay its opening a week to Monday, Aug. 31. Imbler Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell said this is in hopes that after an extra week the COVID-19 pandemic may subside to the point her school district has a better chance to offer on-site instruction. Key elements of Imbler's reopening plan include students attending school on-site Monday through Friday with half days on Fridays for students identified as needing additional support and on-line learning for all other students. Students in grades 7-12 would stay in cohorts each day. While elementary classes will be fairly traditional, sixth- through 12th-grade classes will be a combination of traditional classes and online classes. **North Powder waits for changes** The North Powder School District's plans for reopening are on hold as school officials wait to see if there are further

rule changes. Superintendent Lance Dixon said he believes there is a chance the state may change its COVID-19 metrics to assist small school districts, such as North Powder, to open for on-site education. One element of the state's COVID-19 metrics that bothers Dixon is they apply to school districts based on the prevalence of the virus in counties and in Oregon overall. This means a high number

of cases of the virus in other parts of their county can hurt a school district's ability to reopen in a community with no or a low number of COVID-19 cases. Dixon said this is not fair, stating that in Baker County, for example, the Baker School District's number of COVID-19 cases should have no affect on the Huntington School District, which is 44 miles southeast of Baker City.

Dixon hopes North Powder can provide on-site education but realizes this may not be possible, which is why the district has a distance education program ready as a supplement or backup. The North Powder superintendent said the state's continuing changes regarding COVID-19 rules and education make it difficult to plan. Dixon said, though, it is important to maintain an optimistic attitude. "You have to keep moving forward or you will give up," Dixon said. Dixon is not a fan of distance education, noting students taking online classes have a hard time getting to know their classmates and teachers. "I didn't get into education 30 years ago to teach students over a computer," he said, "but that is the reality and what we have to do." He noted two of his children who attend the North Powder School District did not like taking distance education classes last spring, when all schools in the state began offering online learning programs. He said they want to get back to attending school in traditional fashion.



Quality Steel Roofing & Siding Products Since 1982

**Manufacturing Zee & Cee Purlins In-House Custom Cut Exact Lengths**



**DELIVERY AVAILABLE**

**40 Year Full Paint Warranty • WeatherX Paint System**

**ONTARIO**  
**541-889-4214**  
**1460 N. Verde Dr.**  
**Toll Free 1-866-887-8335**

**BOISE**  
**208-336-7505**  
**6619 S. Supply Way**  
**Toll Free 1-888-717-8335**

**WWW.TREASUREVALLEYSTEEL.COM**

