

STUDY

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COVID-19.

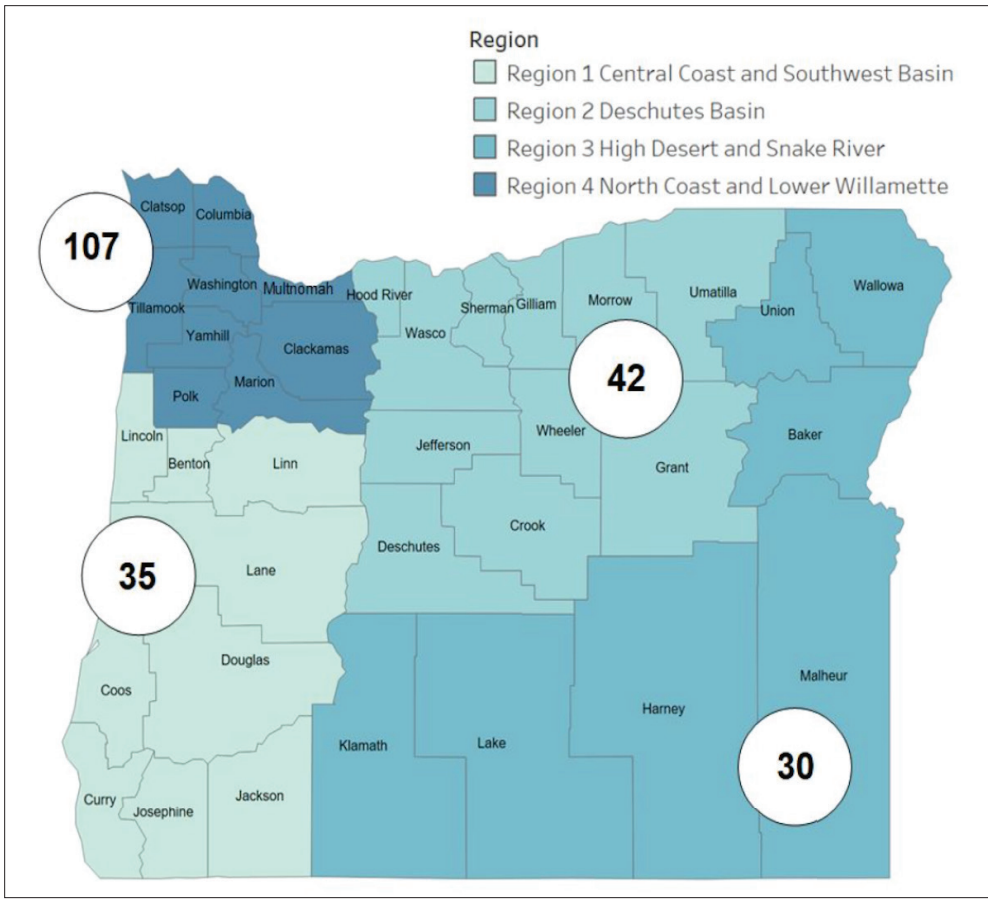
Marty Myers, general manager of Threemile Canyon Farms outside of Boardman, said Eastern Oregon staples, such as onions and potatoes, are easier to harvest while staying socially distant than hand-picked fruit crops more prevalent in other parts of the state.

Still, he said activities that might bring workers into closer proximity with each other — mainly sorting and loading potatoes into storage — have been adjusted to keep workers farther apart. Masks have been required on the farm since March, he said, and nonessential visitors are not allowed on the property. Picnic tables have been set up 6 feet apart outdoors and employees are encouraged to take breaks there instead of indoors.

Vans transporting workers are now only filled to half capacity, masks are required inside them and workers must have a temperature check before boarding the a van. Housing available to farmworkers have only two employees to a room, he said, and they have extra rooms available to quarantine anyone who is showing symptoms or has been exposed.

"In total, we've taken this thing very seriously," Myers said.

Despite the precautions,



Oregon COVID-19 Farmworker Study/Contributed Graphic

The Oregon COVID-19 Farmworker Study has surveyed more than 200 farmworkers throughout Oregon, including some in Northeast Oregon. The preliminary findings show Oregon farmworkers demonstrate a commitment to safety in the face of COVID-19 in spite of a lack of adequate safety nets and protections.

he said Threemile Canyon Farms has had 33 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Myers said contact tracing suggests those cases have mostly come from workers' personal gatherings in their off-hours, and pointed to the spike of 18 cases that happened in early July, just after Father's Day and the Fourth of July.

"In August, we turned the corner, and I think

our employees have really grasped the seriousness of this virus," he said.

At the Oregon Farmworker COVID-19 Study news conference, those who conducted the interviews for the surveys shared stories they heard from farmworkers who felt their employers were not doing enough to protect them.

Antonio Garcia of Centro Cultural, who inter-

viewed blueberry pickers in Washington County, said workers told him they could not maintain social distancing while loading blueberries onto the truck. One woman told him while the rules stated they were supposed to stay 6 feet apart while picking, people often moved closer to each other to be able to pick as quickly as they needed to.

Kathy Keese-Morales

of Unete Center for Farmworker Advocacy said some employers were placing pressure on employees to not follow recommended practices for containing the spread of the virus.

"We found people working in hemp here, especially in one case, where there was a foreman who told people if they did have symptoms of COVID, that they were not to report their symptoms to anyone and they were just supposed to stay home until they felt better," she said.

Keese-Morales surveyed farmworkers in Jackson County, and said the wildfires that tore through the county in Phoenix and Talent had burned down the homes of many farmworkers in the area, or caused them to lose running water and electricity. In one case, she said, 19 people now were living in one home together, while in another she heard of, 11 people were sharing a single hotel room.

"They're obviously unable to practice social distancing at home, so we really fear they're going to be increasing their exposure to COVID," she said.

Working outdoors in what was at times the worst air quality in the entire world also was a significant health concern on top of COVID-19, she said.

Other interviewers found that even when farmworkers were being given instructions to avoid COVID-19, those instruc-

tions weren't understood by the portion of farmworkers who speak languages other than English or Spanish.

In addition to the difficulties of being an essential worker putting in long hours, interviewers said farmworkers also are experiencing the same stressors as workers in other industries during the pandemic, including a lack of child care during distance learning.

Thirty-seven percent of farmworkers surveyed said they had lost months of work because of COVID-19, while another 39% said they had lost weeks of wages this year.

The study team included a list of recommendations with their findings. Team members said they were particularly concerned about strengthening protections for workers who blow the whistle on OSHA violations or face retaliation from employers for staying home while sick or after close contact with COVID-19. They would also like to see increased OSHA enforcement, including unannounced inspections.

Reyna Lopez of PCUN and Latinx Working Families United said they have been working on legislation to help empower workers to report violations and allow them to collectively bargain.

"It's something we've been dreaming up for a really long time and hopefully we can make it happen next year," she said.

JOBS

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Health care will account for one out of every five new jobs in Oregon by 2029.

Health care also tops the list of Oregon's fastest-growing occupations over the 10-year period. Health care occupations and

those associated with health care, including mental health, account for 13 of the 20 fastest-growing occupations from 2019-29 among occupations with at least 1,000 jobs in Oregon.

Oregon's second-fastest-growing industry will be professional and business services, which will add 33,000 new jobs (13% growth), according to the

press release. Professional and business services includes legal and architectural services, computer systems design and more.

A broad variety of career opportunities will be available across all sectors as well as all job types. One-third of all job openings will require education or training beyond high school at the typical entry-

level education. To meet more competitive education requirements, nearly half of all job openings require at least some training beyond high school.

Occupations with the most job openings, typically requiring a high school diploma or less, include retail salespersons, food preparation and serving workers and cashiers.

- At freeway exit
- Fuel
- Restaurant
- Clean bathrooms
- Convenience Store
- Interesting Gifts
- Food to go
- Bus Terminal
- Barber Shop
- Showers
- Shorepower electric
- LPG
- Dump Station
- 4 hotels adjacent
- 1 mile from downtown

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CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Electrical unit of resistance
- 4 Cash dispenser (abbr.)
- 7 Hamilton's dueling opponent
- 11 Hawaii's second-largest island
- 12 Frat letter
- 13 Memorial Day race
- 14 — of Wight
- 15 Koppel or Knight
- 16 Otherwise
- 17 Reeves of "Speed"
- 19 Health-club fixture
- 21 Double curve
- 22 Derrick or crane
- 24 Involuntary muscle spasm
- 27 Is grief-stricken
- 28 Neutral shade
- 29 Noted oracle site
- 32 More fertile
- 34 Novel thought
- 35 Casino city
- 36 Youth org.
- 37 Watermelon leftovers
- 39 "Road to —"
- 42 Aussie metropolis
- 44 Binding
- 46 Postal delivery
- 48 Chop down
- 50 Racetrack
- 51 Sound piggish
- 52 Above, to a bard
- 53 Hamlet or Ophelia
- 54 Joule fractions
- 55 Sneaky Stout

DOWN

- 1 Watering places
- 2 Kauai dances
- 3 Pose
- 4 Talented
- 5 Grad student's bane
- 6 Greedy king of myth
- 7 Well, to Yves
- 8 Open
- 9 Hwys.
- 10 Cereal grass
- 11 Spillane's — Hammer
- 18 "Yikes!" (hyph.)
- 20 Beehive St.
- 23 Kimono sash
- 25 Umbrage
- 26 Mongrel
- 27 Hot tub
- 28 Italian writer
- 29 Excavate
- 30 Mag execs
- 31 Jumping
- 32 Danger color
- 33 Part of MIT
- 35 Fix a shoe
- 37 Grad, almost
- 38 Social mores
- 39 Challenger
- 40 Pointless
- 41 Give the eye
- 43 Broad-antlered deer
- 45 "Star Wars" guru
- 46 A Stooze
- 47 Travel choice
- 49 Like some smiles

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	H	I	S	A	S	H	E	B	A	Y			
A	U	D	I	R	O	E	B	A	L	E			
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J	O	L	T	D	O	L	L	Y	U	N	T	I	L
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110 Announcements

110 Announcements

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neo-na.org

AA MEETINGS
Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm. Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAlister & Gekeler Lanes. For more info, call 541-786-1222

AL-ANON Attitude of Gratitude. Wednesdays, 12:15-1:30pm. Faith Lutheran Church, 12th & Gekeler, La Grande. 541-786-2051

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Monday, Thursday, & Friday at 8pm. Episcopal Church 2177 First St. Baker City

110 Announcements

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Leave a Message

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Goin' Straight Group Meetings:
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Episcopal Church Basement 2177 1st Street, Baker City