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THURSDAY • March 4, 2021 • \$1.50 Good day to our valued subscriber Janelle Marx of Cove

Oregon
Every county to get 1-shot vaccine this week

By **GARY A. WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Every Oregon county will receive 100 doses this week of the new Johnson & Johnson single-shot COVID-19 vaccine that President Joe Biden said Tuesday, March 2, is a key part of vaccinating all Americans before summer.

“We’re now on track to have enough vaccine supply for every adult in America by the end of May,” Biden said at a press conference in Washington, D.C.

Biden likened the effort to ramp up vaccine production to the efforts of manufacturers to join together during World War II.

The key to cutting the timeline for inoculating the public is the introduction of the Johnson & Johnson one-shot vaccine. Biden announced a deal with pharmaceutical giant Merck to commit two of its manufacturing facilities to making the vaccine. Biden said he will invoke the Defense Production Act to help ready Merck’s facilities and to ensure it gets the raw ingredients for making the vaccine.

Along with increased orders of the approved two-shot Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, enough doses will be available to suppress the virus, which has killed more than 515,000 Americans over the past year, including more than 2,200 in Oregon.

Scientists with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said suppressing the virus as quickly as possible will limit the continued mutations of COVID-19, some of which have proven to be more contagious and virulent than the original virus.

In early February, the timelines for inoculating all American adults was as long as early 2022 in some estimates. Recently, the increase in Moderna and Pfizer vaccines shortened estimates to the end of summer.

Oregon will receive 34,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Every county will initially receive 100 doses to familiarize health officials with the vaccine, the first new vaccine since December.

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Alex Wittwer/The Observer

A train passes Tuesday, March 2, 2021, off Interstate 84 near Perry, the site of a proposed 250-acre quarry that would ship out 2,000 tons of material per day. Locals are taking steps to oppose the project.

ROCK FIGHT Proposal for quarry at popular scenic site has locals expressing alarms

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Locals are lining up against a proposal for a massive rock quarry near Perry and La Grande.

David Moyal of La Grande is leading the charge to block the 250-plus-acre Ponderosa Quarry Project that would operate on more than 4,700 acres where Robbs Hill Road meets Interstate 84 near the community of Perry. Locals know Robbs Hill Road as a place to pick huckleberries, Moyal said, ride bikes or just go for a beautiful drive. The quarry would end that, he said, and the effect on Perry would be drastic.

“With the dust, and noise and the pollution — it’s unenviable,” he said.

But the downside as Moyal painted it does not stop at Perry.

Interstate 84 from Pendleton to the Grande Ronde Valley is special, he said, and designated as a scenic corridor. Plunking this large mining site with a crushing facility and railroad access near the interstate and in full view of the entrance to the Grande Ronde Valley, he said, “is just an objectionable idea” with



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

The site for the proposed Ponderosa Quarry reflects in the sunglasses of David Moyal on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Moyal is a vocal opponent to the project that would sit less than a mile from the community of Perry. “With the dust, and noise and the pollution — it’s unenviable,” he said.

“absolutely no justification for doing it beyond profit.”

Application makes a comeback

James A. Smejkal of Banks submitted the application to the county on Sept. 18, 2020, then provided a pair of updates before

the end of the year. According to the site plan application, the project would create the quarry approximately 2.5 miles west of La Grande and about a mile from Perry and involve rock crushing, screening, washing and stockpiling. The project would build a railroad spur to ship aggregate across the western United

States. The Union County Planning Commission is holding a public hearing Monday, March 8, starting at 7 p.m. via teleconference to consider approving the application.

Moyal said he plans on calling in and will speak against the project, which he did back in 2018 the first time the planning commission considered the plan. The commission at that time deemed the application to be incomplete.

This time, as Moyal put it, the application is more robust — stacking up to about 400 pages. He said he was not aware the project had come back for reconsideration until Feb. 1 when he received a notice that the planning commission would consider the new application plan for the quarry in seven days. But the county postponed the meeting until March 8. That gave Moyal a month to prepare.

“So I thought, if I’m going to do anything with that, I’m going to have to do grassroots organizing,” he said.

Raising awareness

Moyal drafted flyers to raise

See, **Quarry/Page 5A**

Lostine Canyon project passes halfway point

A forwarder unloads logs to the roadside Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, to await loading onto log trucks in Lostine Canyon. The forwarder brings the cut logs from where they were felled to the roadside.

Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain



By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

LOSTINE CANYON — Despite past controversy, hard work and uncertain weather, the Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project is well underway, just past the halfway point in efforts to remove hazard and diseased trees, improve public safety and improve forest resources in the area.

“It’ll be completely dependent on what the weather

does for us,” said David Schmidt, owner of Integrated Biomass Resources in Wallowa, which successfully bid on the timber harvest portion of the stewardship contract in September 2018.

The harvest is slated to conclude Feb. 28, 2023, he said, though it could qualify for an extension.

But the logging must be done under “winter

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Tonight **43** Low
Mainly clear

Friday **51/36**
Partly sunny

CONTACT US

541-963-3161
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Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.

