

# THE OBSERVER

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**COVID-19**

## Case counts slow in some parts of Eastern Oregon

By GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Eastern Oregon showed a mixed set of results under the latest weekly COVID-19 risk level numbers released by the Oregon Health Authority on Monday, May 10.

Because of the wide difference in population, a smaller county's numbers can often show wide swings based on small samples. OHA has often put counties in lower levels than the statistics might indicate because of underlying information.

Umatilla County — categorized as a large county — dropped nearly 10 points to 136.2 cases per 100,000, a rate that would rank it as moderate risk.

The only downside was an uptick in the percent of positive cases to 5.5% in the new reporting period, up from 5% reported last week.

Baker County's statistics were trending down but remained high compared to other areas in the state. The county showed a decline in cases to 47 and a drop in cases per 100,000 to 277.9 from 360.7 in the previous report. The positive infection rate is 9%, down from 10.6% in the last report.

Union County held the line for the most part on cases. It showed a small uptick in positive test rates, to 2.7% from 2%, but its case numbers were almost identical to the last reporting period.

Cases and rates are up in Wallowa and Gilliam counties, but the small population leaves their risk level status to be announced May 11 more up in the air than other counties in the region.

Grant County, a hot spot in recent weeks, showed an overall decline in cases, but reported positive cases were up to 10% — twice the level that OHA says is needed to keep cases from rebounding sharply.

The official announcement on any changes in risk levels — and restrictions in each county — will not be announced by Gov. Kate Brown until Tuesday, May 11.

But some of the numbers showed clear indicators of what to expect.

Overall, they show a slight decline COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks, compared to last week's report.

The state reported 10,755 new cases over the two-week period,

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# Classics on stage



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Grant Turner (right) looks on during a rehearsal of Anton Chekhov's "The Bear: A Joke in One Act, or The Boor," on Sunday, May 9, 2021. Turner, who serves as the associate artistic director of the Elgin Opera House, says the theater plans to construct an outdoor stage this summer to host Shakespeare plays.

## A touch of the Bard in the evening

Outdoor production set of Shakespeare's 'The Comedy of Errors'

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

ELGIN — Shakespeare said all the world's a stage, and locals will have the opportunity this summer in Elgin to see the curtains rise on the poet and playwright's works.

An outdoor, 30-foot stage north of the Elgin Opera House and south of the Elgin Train Depot is set to be assembled. It will serve as the site of summer evening Shakespeare performances, said Grant Turner, the associate artistic director of the Elgin Opera House.

The evening performances, Turner said, may become known as "Shakespeare at Sunset."

"We want to create something which will be a destination," Turner said.

Island City Elementary School is donating the stage, and set-up work, which will involve the connecting of four platforms, starts soon.

The outdoor site will lack seating. Instead, audience members will watch from the greenery of the adjoining lawn.

The first production on the stage will be

### ELGIN OPERA HOUSE PERFORMANCES

- "The Bear: A Joke in One Act, or The Boor" and "The Proposal" — May 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29. Performances start at 7:30 p.m.
- "The Comedy of Errors" — July 23-24, July 30-31, Aug. 6-7 in Elgin and Aug. 13-14 in La Grande. Times to be announced later.
- For information on purchasing tickets, call 541-663-6324 or visit the Elgin Opera House's website, [elginopera-house.com](http://elginopera-house.com).

Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors," with performance July 23-24, July 30-31 and Aug. 6-7. But the final performances of Aug. 13-14 will shift to La Grande, where Max Square will serve as the stage. The Elgin Opera House will announce performance times later.

"The Comedy of Errors" is about the misadventures of two sets of identical twins. It was one of Shakespeare's shortest works and one of his earliest, for it was first performed 1594.

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## Chekhov plays offer challenge

Local actors play opposites at Elgin Opera House production

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

ELGIN — The art of role reversal takes the stage this month at the Elgin Opera House.

Union County actors Victoria Ingram, Caiti Burke and Cody Wyld Flower are featured in "Love Is a Scandal: An Evening of Anton Chekhov One Acts" beginning this weekend, performing two one-act plays by the Russian playwright — "The Bear: A Joke in One Act, or The Boor" and "The Proposal."

"The Boor" is about two people who hate each other but fall in love, and "The Proposal" is about two people about to get married who find they can't stand each other. The same actors portray the opposite characters in the two plays.

"It is a challenge every actor enjoys," director Grant Turner said. "You don't want to do the same thing over and over."

Flower said "The Boor" calls for particularly intense acting.

"I hope I am dripping with sweat afterward, otherwise something will be wrong," he said.

Chekhov wrote both one-act plays in the late 1880s. "The Boor" premiered on stage in 1888, and "The Proposal" was first performed in 1890.

Prior to each of the live one-act productions at the Elgin Opera House, a three-minute recording by renowned English actor Michael Pennington will be played. Pennington will be heard reading passages of Chekhov short stories that are similar to the two plays. The readings are meant to help set the mood for the performances.

Social distancing rules will be in effect for the productions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means the capacity for each production will be 70 people in the Elgin Opera House's theater, which can seat 250.

Flower said he is looking forward to performing again before a live audience after

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## Search for missing woman ends with recovery of body

The Observer

MEACHAM — The search in the Meacham area for a missing Idaho woman ended Saturday afternoon, May 8, with the recovery of her body.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in a press release reported searchers at approximately 1 p.m. notified the incident command post of finding the body of Deborah "Deb" Hendrichs on the east side of Interstate 84 south of Meacham near milepost 238.

Hendrichs, 56, of Star, Idaho, went missing Jan. 11 at about 5 p.m. just outside Meacham, where her car, a black Toyota RAV4, ran out of gas at a bridge entrance.

The effort on Saturday involved numerous agencies and organizations, including sheriff's office personnel from Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Gilliam and Grant counties, Oregon State Police, Delmar Aerospace Corporation and others.

Early on in the search, according to the press release, K-9 teams located a wallet and other items matching those in the search plan. The wallet contained identification belonging to Hen-



Umatilla County Sheriff's Office/Contributed Photo

Personnel from numerous Eastern Oregon sheriff's offices and other organizations meet for a briefing Saturday morning, May 8, 2021, near Meacham before beginning the search for Deborah Hendrichs, 56, of Star, Idaho, who has been missing since Jan. 11. The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office a little after 4 p.m. the same day reported searchers found Hendrichs' body.

drichs. A team of law enforcement officers then secured that scene while drone and K-9 teams worked nearby areas.

"Shortly afterward, the call came in that a body had been found by a K-9 team," the press release stated. "At that time, all search teams were notified

to return to incident command post. Family members have been notified."

Oregon State Police, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and other searchers responded to the scene for recovery of the body.

"This operation involved

detailed planning and execution, which resulted in a successful end to help bring closure for the family and loved ones," the press release said. "We would like to express our sincere condolences to the family of Deb Hendrichs. It has been our privilege to help bring her home."

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**WEATHER** Full forecast on the back of B section

	<b>Tonight</b> 43 LOW Partly cloudy		<b>Wednesday</b> 78/48 Mostly cloudy
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**CONTACT US**

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Email story ideas to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com).  
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THURSDAY

NURSING PROGRAM AND TELEHEALTH

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