

Reopening Columbia County from COVID-19

On Thursday, May 14 Oregon Governor Kate Brown announced a limited reopening in 31 of Oregon's 36 counties, including Columbia and Clatsop counties, beginning May 15.

33 of Oregon's 36 counties applied to reopen under Phase I; only Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties did not apply. Counties that were denied reopening were Marion and Polk.

In Phase I, counties can begin the limited reopening of the following sectors under specific safety guidelines:

- Restaurants, bars, and other such establishments for dine-in service until 10:00 pm
- Personal services businesses
- All retail businesses, including malls and shopping centers
- Gyms and other fitness facilities
- Local gatherings of up to 25 people

Restaurants, bars, and brewpub businesses must determine and enforce maximum occupancy to maintain the 6-foot spacing of physical distancing. Servers will need to wear facial coverings, customer self-service at buffets, salad bars and beverage dispensers is prohibited, and thorough cleaning and sanitizing between customer groups will be required. On-site consumption of food and beverages, including alcohol must end by 10:00 pm.

Personal Care services like barbers, beauty salons, non-medical massage therapists, and tattoo artists will be by appointment only and the provider will need to record the client information, date, and time of appointment in case there is need for contact tracing. This data may be destroyed after 60 days. Cleaning, sanitizing, face coverings as appropriate and clean capes and smocks will be needed for

each client.

Counties must remain in Phase I for at least 21 days before becoming eligible to advance to Phase II. If counties begin to see significant increases in COVID-19 cases or community spread, the Oregon Health Authority will work with local public health officials to evaluate what actions should be taken. Significant growth in COVID-19 spread could necessitate a county moving back from Phase I to a stay-home status. More details on Phases II and III are forthcoming.

The Governor also announced that large gatherings such as conventions, festivals, and major concerts and live audience sporting events will need to be cancelled at least through September. Restarting events of this size will require a reliable treatment or prevention, like a vaccine, which is many months off. Further guidance on large events will be provided in the coming months.

Many Oregon State parks have been reopened for day use only, including the Banks-Vernonia State Trail; overnight camping remains closed. Stub Stewart State Park remains closed at this time.

Changes related to childcare, summer camps and summer schools were also announced.

- Childcare is open under certain restrictions, with priority placements for children of health care workers, first responders, and frontline workers.
- Overnight camps are not permitted. Day camps are open with restrictions, including maximum stable groups of 10 or fewer children.
- For summer school, limited in-person, small group instruction and/or summer programming is allowed, with certain restrictions.

Counties that were allowed to reopen had to meet the following criteria:

Lake Reopens for Fishing



- Show a decline in COVID-19 or have fewer than 5 hospitalizations
- Have sufficient COVID-19 testing and contact tracing capability
- Establish plans for the isolation and quarantine of new cases
- Have the hospital capacity to handle any surge in COVID-19 cases
- Have enough personal protective equipment for health care workers

According to Columbia County's application the county has sufficient testing sites dispersed throughout its geographic area, including underserved communities:

1. **OHSU Scappoose Clinic** and in-home. 20 per day and can scale up.
2. **Legacy St. Helens Clinic** and limited in-home testing for 8,000 Legacy clients.
3. **Columbia Health Services in St. Helens Clinic** and in-home testing in cooperation with Columbia County Public Health. 5 per day.
4. **Mist-Brikenfeld EMS** In-home testing in cooperation with Columbia County Public Health.
5. **Adventist-Vernonia Clinic** rapid testing.
6. **Community Health Center of Clatskanie Clinic** testing.

Based on the state's formula, Columbia County will need 8 contact

continued on page 3

The Vernonia City Council met by phone in a Special Meeting on May 18, 2020, following the reopening of Columbia County. Council voted to reopen fishing and restrooms at Vernonia Lake, excluding the floating docks, beginning May 20.

City Administrator Josette Mitchell told the Council she plans to keep City Hall closed until Phase II, which she said was what most other cities in Columbia County are doing. She also said the City is moving toward opening camping at Nehalem River and Anderson parks, along with primitive camping at Vernonia Lake, on June 1. The Vernonia Library is also working toward reopening on June 1.

Citizens wishing to honor Memorial Day will be able to do so through a Silent Service at the Memorial Cemetery. The City has prepared materials that people can use to hold a service on their own. Flags and veterans crosses will be in place.

The Vernonia Intercultural Society has decided against holding the 4th of July gathering, but a fireworks permit has been obtained.

Council asked staff to initiate plans for them to hold their June 1, 2020 City Council Meeting in person at the Scout Cabin, but continue to allow the public to access the meeting by phone.

inside

6 the mystery of mountain lions

9 cz trail logging equipment

10 wildland fire drill



Early May 19 Election Results

Vernonia voters approve VRFPD levy, County Jail Levy Renewed, Two County Commissioner races head to November run-off

The following are unofficial election results for the Tuesday, May 19 election, reported on Wednesday morning as *Vernonia's Voice* was going to print:

- Voters in Vernonia passed the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District's Measure 5-279, a five-year levy for training and operations. The levy received 54% yes votes.
- There was no decision for Columbia County Commissioners as no candidate in either race for Position 1 and Position 3 received a majority of the vote.

Both races will head to a run-off in the November 3 election. For Position 1, incumbent Margaret Magruder, with 37.1% of the vote, will face Brandee Dudzic, who received 24.7% of the vote and narrowly defeated Wayne Mayo with 23.9%. In the race for Position 3 Casey Garrett received 43% of the vote and will face Alex Tardif, who received 40.6% of the vote while defending his seat.

- Columbia County voters approved Measure 5-281, a renewal for four years of the county jail operating levy after receiving 58.8% yes votes. The approved levy continues a tax rate of \$0.5797/\$1,000 of assessed value.
- The race for Judge of the Columbia County Circuit Court, 19th District, Position 3 will also head to a run-off between Michael Clarke, who received

42% of the vote, and incumbent Jenefer Grant who received 41.2%.

- At the State level, Democratic State Representative Brad Witt ran unopposed for his District 31 seat and will face Republican challenger Brian Stout in November, who easily won his primary with 86%.
- U.S. Representative Suzanne Bonamici easily won her Democratic primary for her U.S. Congressional 1st District seat, receiving 85% of the vote against three challengers, and will face Republican Christopher Christensen in the November election, who received 57% of the vote.

Voter turnout in Columbia County was 48.1%, while statewide participation was 42.1%.