

Free vaccines now available to everyone 12 and older

BY JESSICA BULLARD

All Oregonians aged 12 and over are now eligible to sign up for a free COVID-19 vaccine. In Southern Oregon, Jackson County Health and Human Services and Josephine County Public Health both offer vaccine scheduling information online and by phone.

At the Jackson County Vaccination Equity Center at the Expo, there is no cost and you don't need ID or insurance. Proof of residency is not required. Appointments are encouraged but are not required. Go to jacksoncounty.org/getvaccinated or call 211 for more information regarding scheduling vaccinations at the Expo or other Jackson County sites.

Josephine County Public Health has a COVID-19 call center to help residents schedule vaccine appointments. County residents can call 541-916-7030 from 9 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday to speak to an operator in English or Spanish. The call center can directly schedule vaccination appointments for residents at one of 12 local providers using an online form. That same form can be accessed online at co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2299.

Parental consent is required to vaccinate people under age 15; an adult

must accompany the youth during the vaccination and sign the consent documents. If a parent or guardian cannot be present, another adult can accompany the child along with written consent from the parent or guardian. Those 15 and older can independently consent to be vaccinated in Oregon.

When 70 percent of adults in Oregon receive at least one dose of an authorized COVID-19 vaccine, most pandemic-related restrictions will be lifted statewide and Oregon's economy will be able to more fully reopen, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Counties will be eligible to move to lower risk when 65 percent of county residents 16 years of age and older receive their first dose of any COVID-19 vaccine and the county submits a plan to close vaccine equity gaps. About 42 percent of Josephine County and 48 percent of Jackson County residents 16 and older had received at least one dose of vaccine as of May 23, according to the Health Authority. Updated data are available at tabsoft.co/3eVyCkA.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Something in the air: Fire and COVID-19

BY BERT ETLING

They say to fight fire with fire. Applegaters have gotten the message. This edition of the *Applegater* brings to you eight fire or fire-related articles, most focusing on the benefits of using "good fire" now to prevent a bad fire later.

Public agencies have used controlled burns for a long time. Now, Applegaters and others have joined together to form the first prescribed burn association in Oregon. Besides that front-page story—and another on a new Applegate fire engine—you can read about how one person prepared his land for the fire season (even enlisting the aid of a draft horse to haul away logs); management of roadside vegetation to ensure that potential evacuation routes stay safe; how managed fire is good not only for wildfire prevention, but also for the ecosystem; how a "forest restoration and risk reduction" project brought the governor here to check it out; what those truckloads of burned logs rumbling through the Applegate are all about; and an upcoming event where you can get more information about wildfire preparedness.

You can read more about that June 26 Wildfire Education & Community Connection Fair at the Applegate Valley Fire Department station on Upper Applegate Road on Page 3.

With all that attention you might say, "There's something in the air." We just want to make sure that if that something is smoke, it's from a good fire, not a wildfire.

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We seem to finally be getting a handle on another type of wildfire: the COVID-19 pandemic. We know how to keep that fire from spreading: by socially distancing,

wearing a mask, and getting a vaccine. Any of those three functions as a firebreak that keeps the "fire" of COVID from spreading to new people.

Governor Kate Brown has said when 70 percent of Oregon adults have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, most pandemic-related restrictions will be lifted statewide. We're already (as of May 23) at 62.9 percent statewide, but need to keep those vaccinations going in arms to get to where we need to be. The rates for Josephine and Jackson counties, however, hover in the mid-40s—that gives us lots of room for improvement.

Getting vaccinated will keep us healthy, both physically (most important) and economically. And it's easy (and free!) to do: Go to vaccines.gov, click on "Find COVID-19 vaccines," enter your zip code and mileage search radius (one, five, 10, 25, or 50 miles), and find out what your options are. If you have a preference, you can even choose which of the three vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer, or Johnson & Johnson) you'd like to find. A map with places you can get your free vaccine pops up, including such places as Bi-Mart, Sav-On, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Fred Meyer, Walmart, Costco, Safeway, and CVS, as well as many independent pharmacies. There's more Jackson and Josephine county vaccination information elsewhere on this page.

Vaccinations are the prescribed burning of medicine. Take control and stop the spread by getting your shot.

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Like what you read in this edition? To keep it coming, please take a moment to take advantage of the enclosed donation

envelope to keep the *Applegater* coming. You and your neighbors are what make this community publication possible. Thank you!

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OPINION PIECES AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinion pieces and letters to the editor represent the opinion of the author, not that of the *Applegater* or the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc. As a community-based newsmagazine, we receive diverse opinions on different topics. We honor these opinions, but object to personal attacks and reserve the right to edit accordingly. Opinion pieces and letters to the editor **must pertain to and mention the Applegate Watershed. We encourage authors to include verifiable facts to back up their arguments.**

Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published.

Anonymous letters and opinion pieces, reprinted articles, press releases, and political campaign articles will not be published. Individual letters and opinion pieces may or may not be published. All submissions will be edited for grammar and length.

Email opinion pieces and letters to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

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