

COVID-19

HR County, City Council, hear COVID update Sept. 8

Hood River County Board of Commissioners has invited Hood River County City Council to the Sept. 8 work session and its report on COVID-19 conditions.

The board meets virtually at 4 p.m. The meeting will be held via Webex; the link will be available on the Board of Commissioners webpage no later than end of day Sept. 4.

See co.hood-river.or.us/agenda for details.

The county board regularly uses part of its meeting on the first Monday of the month to receive COVID-19 updates from Health Department officials and allow elected officials, in this case, the board and council, to ask questions. Health Department Director Trisha Elliott is scheduled to present updated case numbers and other pandemic information. This will give officials from both entities the chance to hear from Elliott at the same time.

Hood River and Multnomah counties have succeeded in reducing the spread of COVID-19 sufficiently enough to be removed from the statewide County Watch List, according to a statement from Gov. Kate Brown's office. Hood River County was removed from the list last week.

"We continue to see counties working diligently to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities — to the point where two more counties now come off the Watch List. I want to applaud county officials and community members in Hood River and Multnomah Counties for their efforts in curbing community spread of COVID-19," said Gov. Brown.

Counties are placed on the Watch List when COVID-19 is spreading quickly and public health officials cannot trace that spread to specific sources — creating a potentially dangerous dynamic. Specific markers of this rapid community spread include

when there is a sporadic case rate of 50 or more per 100,000 people in the last two weeks and the county has had more than five sporadic cases in the last two weeks (sporadic cases are those that cannot be traced to a source; they indicate community spread). Counties remain on the Watch List for a minimum of three weeks and until their sporadic case rates drop below these thresholds.

The County Watch List allows the state to prioritize resources to counties that are seeing the broadest spread of COVID-19, according to a press release.

To suppress the wider spread of COVID-19, Oregon Health Authority urges state residents to strictly follow public health guidance: Wear face coverings in public when unable to maintain 6 feet of distance, wash hands frequently, avoid groups (especially indoors), stay home if you're sick, work from home if possible, and answer the call if you hear from a contact tracer.

Effective Aug. 13, the governor's office issued a mask requirement order for all people in businesses with indoor spaces or outdoor spaces open to the public, and for the general public when visiting businesses and indoor and outdoor open spaces.

"Indoor spaces open to the public" include indoor spaces, whether publicly owned or privately owned. In addition to the public areas of businesses defined such spaces may include, building lobbies or common spaces, elevators, bathrooms, and buildings or meeting rooms outside of private homes where people gather for social, civic, cultural or religious purposes.

"Outdoor spaces open to the public" means outdoor spaces where at least 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained between individuals in different households."

per week, for three weeks in a row, and the test positivity rate is 5 percent or less for three weeks in a row.

That test positivity rate has been met for several weeks now. The Aug. 16 week's positivity rate was 1.4 percent and the week before it was 3.3 percent.

The larger schools are also tied to a statewide positivity rate of 5 percent or lower for three weeks in a row. Last week, the state's positivity rate was 5.1 percent.

Schools below 250 are not tied to state test positivity rates.

Dufur and South Wasco County schools in Maupin will start online learning Sept. 14. Public schools in The Dalles start online Sept. 3. St. Mary's Academy hopes to begin in-person classes as soon as Sept. 8, depending on how case counts go.

Sherman County School will begin classes online Sept. 8. Arlington School in Gilliam County will go online initially on Sept. 8. Only Condon School will be doing in-person classes, which start Sept. 8.

COVID One week awith no new cases

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community spread is observed for three weeks in a row. There already has been one week with no community spread, McDonell said.

No community spread is defined locally as having a case rate of less than 30 cases per week per 100,000 population. It also includes other factors such as hospital capacity, test availability, and recent percent of test positivity. The county is doing well on those metrics also, McDonell said.

Wasco County's case rate per 100,000 was 114 the week of Aug. 2, 37 the week of Aug. 9, and just 18 the week of Aug. 16. Total cases for those weeks were 31, 10 and five, respectively.

Wasco County schools with a student population over 250 can return to in-person learning once the case rate is at or below 10 cases per 100,000 population, which translates to about 2.5 cases

HR Saddle Club



Greta Hein of Hood River, left, talks with Susie Root at the Aug. 15 yard sale fundraiser for the Hood River Saddle Club. Organizer Helen Hansen said the event was a success, with a steady string of people, all wearing masks and practicing social distancing, at the outdoor event at Saddle Club, Belmont and Country Club roads. A total of \$2,800 was raised, first phase of an ongoing effort to raise funds for expanded fencing at the equestrian facility. Hein extended an offer to fellow horsewoman Root, who lives near the Mosier Creek Fire, to provide pasture and stable space in case her horses needed a safer place. Kirby Neumann-Rea photo

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