



THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber Cleo Ludwig

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City leaders debate control over reopenings

Mayor discusses possible compromise with the governor regarding COVID-19 restrictions on Redmond businesses

BY JACKSON HOGAN
The Bulletin
Two days before Christmas, Gov. Kate Brown announced that school reopenings as the COVID-19 pandemic continued would be decided by local authorities, not state metrics. When Redmond Mayor George Endicott heard about that decision, he wondered if a similar move could help local small businesses, particularly

restaurants, that are struggling financially due to COVID-19 regulations. “To us, that maybe opened a window that she could also recognize that it isn’t just kids that are being hurt by the long-term severe restrictions,” he said in an interview Monday. “It’s also businesses and entrepreneurs.” At Tuesday night’s Redmond City Council meeting, Endicott and city councilors were set to discuss sending

a letter to Brown, asking the governor to give communities more flexibility to allow reopenings of struggling small businesses. The City Council wasn’t quite sure what that flexibility would look like — the letter was still a draft, and Endicott expected the details to be sanded out Tuesday night. But the mayor hoped Brown will be receptive to teaming up on a compromise to help local business, while still respecting COVID-19 protections. (See the Spokesman website for results of Tuesday’s meeting). Deschutes County is marked as “ex-

treme risk” for COVID-19 by the state government. That means bars and restaurants cannot serve customers indoors, and gyms cannot allow patrons to work out indoors. Becerra’s on 6th Bistro closed in February 2020, before state regulations hit in March, due to customers panicking over COVID-19 just as it hit the U.S., said owner Moises Becerra. He’s waiting for the pandemic to die down, or regulations to loosen, before reopening his downtown restaurant. Becerra said he was happy to hear the Redmond City Council was asking Brown to make reopening busi-

nesses easier. “Finally, it’s a sign that somebody’s doing something,” he said. Becerra added that restaurants heavily emphasize cleanliness, and he doesn’t believe they’re a vector for heavily spreading COVID-19. “You tell us you can not be in a restaurant, but you can be in an airplane from here to New York, next to a stranger?” he said. Susan Robertson, co-owner of General Duffy’s Waterhole, noted that her business, an outdoor taphouse, isn’t as impacted by the COVID-19 rules. See **Business** / P5



Tom Brown/Submitted photo

REDMOND SCHOOLS

K-12 students back to in-class learning Feb. 2

District plan diverges from other area schools, including Bend-La Pine, but could be delayed if virus cases spike

BY JACKSON HOGAN
The Bulletin

Nearly 7,500 K-12 students in Redmond, Tumalo and Terrebonne will return to classrooms for the first time in more than nine months on Feb. 2, Redmond School District officials announced Friday. Superintendent Charan Cline hopes this will help those students who struggled with online distance learning throughout 2020, he said. “They haven’t progressed in their academic work, and we’re a little concerned about their social-emotional state as well,” he said. “We’re absolutely thrilled to get them back in the building.” Elementary students’ first week of in-person learning will be in a hybrid, part-online style, according to a district press release. The next week, they’ll return to a five-day-a-week schedule. Middle and high schoolers will start a two-day-a-week hybrid schedule Feb. 2 and remain on it indefinitely. This plan differs from other local school districts, such as Bend-La Pine Schools, which are staggering school reopenings by grade level. Redmond originally planned to stagger their reopening as well, but realized it would be simpler logistically to open all schools at once, Cline told The Bulletin. This announcement came about two weeks after Gov. Kate Brown ceded control of school reopenings to local school districts. Previously, the state set strict reopening standards for much of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Superintendent Charan Cline

Redmond students will return to classes a week before middle and high school students in neighboring Bend-La Pine Schools, but a week after that district’s K-3 students. Students are returning on a Tuesday because that Monday will be used as a curriculum prep day for school staff, the release stated. Redmond schools will follow state-mandated COVID-19 guidelines, including requiring face masks, social distancing and more. Students who refuse to follow these rules will be moved back into online learning, the release stated. “We don’t feel we can put either our staff members or our students at risk,” Cline said of enforcing COVID-19 rules. “If they’re going to be in the building, they’re going to need to follow the regulations.” Cline warned that if case counts among Redmond staff and students spike before Feb. 2, the reopening date could be pushed back. “We’re paying close attention to the case counts,” he said. “Please wear a mask.” ■ Reporter: 541-617-7854, jhogan@bendbulletin.com

OUR NORTHERN NEIGHBORS

ABOVE: An aerial view shows the South Madras Gateway, or “South Y,” where Jefferson County is looking for developers to invest in the property.

RIGHT: A closeup of the South Madras Gateway. “If you have a great idea that would make a project work, we are interested,” said Jeff Rasmussen, administrative officer for Jefferson County. Dean Guernsey/Bulletin photo



DEVELOPERS SOUGHT FOR MADRAS GATEWAY

BY KYLE SPURR
The Bulletin

One of the most visible properties in Madras is available for development. City and county officials are inviting developers to submit ideas for the vacant “South Y” gateway, where vehicles traveling north on U.S. Highway 97 enter a split into a one-way street through downtown Madras, the largest city in Jefferson County with nearly 6,470 residents. The 38,000-square-foot property, including a 2,000-square-foot building, is the first sight of the downtown from the south for more than 15,000 travelers each day, according to the city. The site at 813 SW Highway 97 sat vacant for five years since the Oregon

Possibilities include retail, dining or office space

Department of Transportation used the property for a highway realignment project. Jefferson County recently bought the property from ODOT for \$205,629 with the intent to sell or lease the space for immediate development. Jeff Rasmussen, administrative officer for Jefferson County, said the county is open to a broad range of possibilities for the property, including a retail, dining or office space. A meeting is scheduled Jan. 12 for interested parties and a suggested deadline

for proposals is Feb. 4. Proposals can be submitted through the project website. The county hopes to select a developer by March 24. “If you have a great idea that would make a project work, we are interested,” Rasmussen said. Nick Snead, Madras community development director, said the city is working closely with the county to find the right developer for the property. Snead said the property is suited for a restaurant, deli or a mixed-use space for multiple businesses. But Snead does not want to limit ideas. “There may be some use that we don’t know about that actually makes sense,” Snead said. See **Gateway** / P3

Spokesman Calendar

Events in and around Redmond

The Redmond Spokesman welcomes event information for its community calendar. Submissions are limited to nonprofit, free and live entertainment events. Deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday for the following Wednesday’s paper. Items are published on a space-available basis and may be edited. Contact us at news@redmondspokesman.com or fax 541-548-3203.

WEDNESDAY 1/13

12th Annual Polar Bear 5K/10K Run: The annual fundraiser for St. Thomas Academy will be held virtually. Participants can complete their race wherever and whenever they can in a socially distanced way; through Saturday; \$30; online; go.evnt.com/726769-1 or 541-548-3785.

Come Dance With Me, New Dance Class Online for 2021: Dance in your own home online with a live, interactive instructor for ages 2.5-4; 10-10:30 a.m.; \$47; online; go.evnt.com/725169-2 or 541-382-4055.

Intuitive Life Coaching: Discover exactly what is blocking you from feeling peace, happiness, and satisfaction in your life and relationships; 3-5 p.m.; registration required; online; eventbrite.com

Fitness 4 Life with Diane: This class is 20 minutes of low impact moves, 20 minutes of strength exercises designed to increase range of motion and 20 minutes of balance and flexibility; 7:45-8:45 a.m.; \$3.50; online; raprd.org or 541-548-7275.

Powercut Plus with Julane: This weightlifting class uses free weights, resistance bands and fitness balls along with great music to get you through an hour of head-to-toe muscle work. To check out equipment prior to class please email Julane Price at julane.price@raprd.org 9:15-10:15 a.m.; \$3.50; online; raprd.org or 541-548-7275.

Out of This World Book Club: Please join us for Out of This World Book Club. We will be discussing Dread Nation by Justine Ireland; 6-7 p.m.; online; go.evnt.com/722296-0 or 541-306-6564.

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