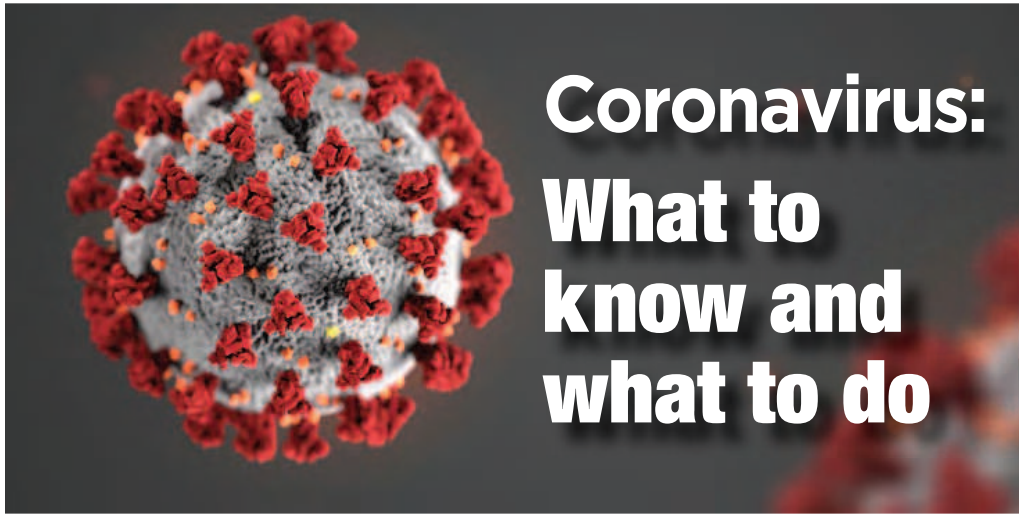


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Coronavirus: What to know and what to do

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Oregon health officials had identified three presumptive cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) at press time.

The first case of the virus in an Oregon resident was identified on Feb. 28 and two more followed. The most recent is an adult from Umatilla County and has not been linked to other cases that involved travel to other parts of the world. Preliminary reports indicate the person attended a youth bas-

ketball game at a gymnasium at Weston Middle School, 205 E. Wallace St. in Weston, Ore., on Saturday, Feb. 29.

Health officials had tested 50 Oregon patients for COVID-19 and 18 results were still pending at press time March 4.

With fears about the virus, which originated in the city of Wuhan, China, now the major topic of conversation around the world, the Oregon Health Authority is recommending the following actions:

- Cover your coughs and

sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched.

- Take care of your health

overall. Stay current on your vaccinations, including flu vaccine, eating well and exercising. All help your body stay resilient.

- Consult CDC's travel website, wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices, for any travel advisories and steps to protect yourself if you plan to travel outside of the US.

On the local level, the Salem-Keizer School district is taking additional measures to ensure healthy spaces for students.

"We are initiating additional cleaning protocols for high frequency touch points like shared surfaces and doorknobs. We know you may want to send additional wipes and sanitizers to school with your child, and at this point that is totally fine. We have to be careful about the types of products and chemicals in our schools, however, given the circumstances we have relaxed our parameters around these. Unless your child is unwell, we encourage you to send them to school," said district officials in an email to parents over the weekend.

School officials also encouraged parents to be mind-

ful of talk regarding Asian and Asian-American students.

"We ask that you and your family be mindful that bullying of students based on race, color, national origin, or disability is unacceptable in our school district," the email stated.

Updates from the district, including possible facility closures, can be found at saalem-keizer.org.

Those concerned about the spread of the virus might consider taking the following actions:

- Make certain you have an ample supply of daily medications. While a shortage is unlikely, the goal is to avoid crowds at a grocery store or pharmacy.

- Those prone to illness can stock up on hydrating drinks and items like soups and crackers.

- Talk with your workplace about telecommuting in case of an illness and have an emergency plan for the young people and elderly in your lives.

- Above all, make washing hands a habit, especially when returning to work or home from community spaces.

Delight pathway contract awarded

There is no start date yet, but a long-desired project in west Keizer is one step closer to fruition.

The Keizer City Council awarded a contract to construct a 10-foot wide asphalt pathway along the west side of Delight Street North at a meeting Monday, March 3. Gelco Construction was the winning bidder on the project with a low bid of \$149,580.

Eight contractors placed bids on the project, the highest bid was \$239,822. An engineer's estimate for the project was \$170,000.

The pathway will extend from the the north end of the Cummings Elementary School property to Chema Road North. The project includes white fog lines on both sides of Delight Street to delineate the vehicle lanes from the pathway.

Delight is a heavily used street by cars, pedestrians and riders of all sorts to access Cummings and McNary High School. A sidewalk in front of the Cummings school property will be installed by the Salem-Keizer School District when it embarks on other upgrades at the school.

The project will be funded through the city's street fund.

Keizer fire releases second wave of bonds

At their regular monthly board meeting on Tuesday Feb. 18, the Keizer Fire District Board of Directors approved the bank financing of the second series of bonds in the current strong financial market and increase the value of the bonds, while saving taxpayers money in rates, term, and interest — the first series of bonds were sold in March of 2016.

The bond funds are to buy fire trucks, ambulances and equipment.

The rates, term, and interest winning trifecta can be explained as follows; The property tax rate for the bonds was set at \$0.14 cents per 1,000 for property owners. The refinancing came in at \$0.13 cents per 1,000 as a lower tax rate for property owners. The 20-year term of the bond was reduced to 16 years of payments instead of 20 years. The interest rate is at a low 2.5% interest.

The perfect storm of market rates,

interest and investor demand for stable investments provided a startling \$1.9 million in interest savings to KFD tax payers over the length of the fire equipment bond funding while yielding \$6.3 million instead of \$5.9 million in emergency equipment for KFD.

KFD put the funds to work immediately, ordering two more ambulances, a fire truck, and a wild-land firefighting vehicle (brush truck). The timing of the orders, combined with

avoiding 2020 cost increases on equipment, yielded another \$80,000 in cost savings.

Speaking on behalf of the KFD Board of Directors, Board President Chet Patterson expressed his approval of the financial move.

"It is always a win to make good decisions, save our tax payers money and get the necessary equipment out there for our fire district to handle emergencies," Patterson said.



"This community is beautiful and the whole staff is so attentive and caring! As a family member, I always want the very best for my Mom and I know that we have found an incredible place where I know that she is happy and well-cared for. The atmosphere is engaging and respectful and it is so good to know that Mom is in such good hands. I would highly recommend this community to anyone!" — HEIDI C.



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