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## Utility lineworkers find respite at Hitchin' Post

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

ABOVE: Utility workers from as far away as Montana were being treated to meals at Hitchin' Post.

**BY MATT RAWLINGS**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Keith Wright, owner of the Hitchin' Post north of Keizer, always admired and appreciated the service of lineworkers. For the last three years, whenever he sees a lineworker eating at his restaurant in uniform after a long day, Wright will provide

them with a free meal. After an unprecedented ice storm took out power in many homes in the area earlier this month, Portland General Electric (PGE) workers have been flooding Salem-Keizer to restore electricity in the community. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been rough

on local restaurants and small businesses, Wright has remained thankful that he has been able to stay open over the last year.

When Hitchin' Post got their power restored on Tuesday, Feb. 16, Wright wanted to do something for the lineworkers to show his gratitude.

"We have actually been very blessed during the pandemic, so we wanted to give back," Wright said.

Wright reached out to PGE and told the company that Hitchin' Post would be providing free breakfast and dinner to any lineworker starting on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Since then, the restaurant

has been hosting dozens of lineworkers at a time on their back patio for a free meal.

"This is something we wanted to do to show our thanks for what they have done to help our community," Wright said. "Without these guys, we probably wouldn't

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## Marion County moves to 'high' pandemic risk

**By ERIC A. HOWALD**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

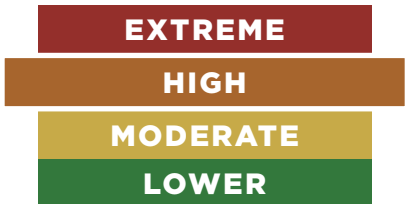
Marion County will move from extreme risk to high risk for spreading the COVID-19 pandemic Friday, Feb. 26.

"For the second time in a row, we are seeing great progress in stopping the spread of COVID-19 across Oregon and saving lives," said Gov. Kate Brown. "Oregonians continue to step up and make smart choices. While these county movements are welcome news, we must continue to take seriously health and safety measures, especially as more businesses reopen and we start to get out more. As we see infection rates going down and

vaccinations ramping up, now is not the time to let down our guard. Continue to wear your masks, keep physical distance, and avoid indoor gatherings."

The lowering of the risk level brings with it a slew of changes.

### Oregon's COVID-19 Risk Levels



On Tuesday, Feb. 23, Gov. Kate Brown announced Marion County would be lowered from 'Extreme' risk to 'High' risk, based on data from Feb. 7-20.

recommended over in-person dining.

- A closing time of 11 p.m. will remain in effect.
- Long-term care facilities can allow indoor visitation.

• Churches and funeral homes will be able to open at 25% capacity or 150 people, whichever is lower.

• Indoor and recreation and fitness facilities will be able to operate at 25% capacity or 50 people, whichever is smaller. Indoor contact sports are still prohibited.

• Entertainment business, such as theaters, concert venues, indoor aquariums and museums will also be able to open at 25% capacity or 50 people, whichever is lower.

• Offices may be opened to the public, but remote work is still recommended.

• Outdoor full-contact sports will be permitted for all ages provided organizations abide by health guidelines.

• Outdoor entertainment, such as the Oregon Zoo, Oregon Aquarium and outdoor theaters will be able to increase capacity from 50 people to 75 people.

Marion County remains among

the top counties in the state for spread of COVID-19.

As of Monday, Feb. 22, adults 70 and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. However, a rush to sign up overloaded the state's website. To make a vaccination appointment visit, go to [getvaccinated.oregon.gov](http://getvaccinated.oregon.gov) or call 1-866-698-6155 between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Oregon has now administered a total of 821,311 first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines. More than 920,000 doses of vaccine have been delivered to sites across Oregon.

More than 2,150 Oregonians have died as a result of COVID-19.

Earlier this week, Brown ordered flags to fly at half-mast to honor the passing of more than 500,000 Americans due to the coronavirus. The United States has experienced more deaths than any other country in the world and half a million is more than the total fatalities of World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War combined.



## The countdown begins

McNary quarterback Jack McCarty prepares to throw a sideline route to one of his receivers. Read about the McNary football team's return to action on Page A14.

KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings

## Councilors debate rule changes

Talks linger on when to cut mics

**By ERIC A. HOWALD**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

It was no small irony that the Keizer city council members spent most of a work session discussing how long they should be allowed to talk.

Members of the council met Monday, Feb. 22, to discuss potential revisions to the council's rules and policies, the first such update in more than a decade.

The council rules and policies set forth the standards of council conduct and define the lines between different types of council rules. Council members discussed several points of the proposed revision, but lingered in a conversation about how long each councilor should be given to discuss the other activities they are involved in during regular council meetings.

"This was a hot button for me," said Elizabeth Smith. "I monitor the social media feed while we are meeting and as soon as council reports begin the numbers drop."

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