



# Hood River News

With plastic bags and social distancing ...

## Sat. Market now outside

Page A9

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## Publisher Chelsea Marr purchases Eagle's Gorge publications

Eagle Newspapers Inc., has sold its Gorge publications to Publisher Chelsea Marr.

The publications include The Dalles Chronicle, Hood River News, White Salmon Enterprise, The Gorge Magazine and Mid-Columbia Directory. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

Marr has been publisher of the Gorge properties since 2013. She has been employed by Eagle since 1995. Eagle owner Denny Smith said it was important to him that the newspapers continue running under the leadership of someone who is involved in the community. "Chelsea is the right person to keep these

newspapers going," Smith said. "Newspapers have gone through a lot of change in the past 20 years. I hope people realize how valuable a local newspaper is to a community.

"As our communities work their way through COVID-19, local news organizations will continue to play a vital role in providing

factual and timely information," Smith said. "Chelsea understands this role."

Eagle President Joe Petshow said now, more than ever, communities need independent newspapers — in print and online — that are

See NEW OWNER, page A9

## More COVID-19 cases confirmed in Hood River, Wasco counties

By EMILY FITZGERALD  
News staff writer

Hood River County has confirmed its second case of COVID-19, and an additional two cases have been confirmed in Wasco County, bringing the countywide total up to five. Statewide, as of publication Monday afternoon, there are 548 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Oregon — 13 of which resulted in a fatality.

No identifying information was released for the Hood River patient or the two additional Wasco County cases, other than all three are self-isolating at home.

"Hood River County Health Department is taking this very seriously and we have notified the close contacts of the infected person, and there have been minimal contacts in our community," said the Hood River County Health Department in a press release. "... There may be additional and unidentified cases in our community. Please stay home, stay safe, and maintain social distancing. As we have seen in other communities throughout the state, more cases will likely be identified in the coming weeks."

The Wasco County Health Department confirmed that infection appears to be via community transmission.

Wasco, Sherman and Gilliam counties have launched a Unified Command to coordinate plans, supplies and resources for the three counties. They are posting updates and information at wascoshermangilliam-covid-19.com. Residents can also call

211 for info.

Hood River County has activated their respective Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is responsible for planning, preparing, responding to, and aiding community recovery from disasters. Updates and info are being posted at getreadygorge.com. Residents can also call the public info call-in line, English at 541-299-8022, Spanish at 541-299-8023.

Hood River County School District principals, teachers and staff are back to work — mostly virtually — this week as they plan to launch supplementary instruction for students April 6.

"There are still many factors in the air for us right now as we develop our plans including our ability to provide internet services to families who will need it and how to distribute technology devices to our students," reads a statement on the district website. "As you can imagine, most internet hotspots are on backorder and this could delay our starting date for those who may utilize instruction through technology." More information is expected to be sent out to parents April 3, and the district is updating its website, hoodriver.k12.or.us.

Following Gov. Kate Brown's "Stay Home, Save Lives" executive order last week, recreation sites statewide — including parks and open areas owned by the City or Port of Hood River, all Army-Corps campgrounds, and Hood River County Forest stag-

See COVID-19, page A10



## GETTING READY

Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea

Businesses throughout the Gorge are striving to get through the COVID-19 crisis as well as making upgrades or rebuilding, with the hope of renewed business this spring. Jim's Market owners Paco and Sylvia Magana, right, stand between the new building and the old pumps, as their new store on Dee Highway near Parkdale is under construction at its same location after last year's fire. Paco's Tacos food truck is open; the new store should be up and running by late May. Above, a crew welds and paints the frame of a new sunshield awning at Mike's Ice Cream, looking ahead to opening for its 36th season on Oak Street, as soon as possible under current restrictions, said co-owner Cecily Diffin.



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

## PPE DONATION DRIVE

Dr. Andy Olson accepts donations of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) from Melanie Quigley, center, and Jennifer Kaden, Monday in front of the County Building, in a new campaign that started March 27 under the aegis of the County Health Department. The donation request is in response to the shortage of PPE by medical providers and others, due to COVID concerns. The program accepts any PPE equipment, but need is highest for masks, gowns, and gloves. Respirators and N95 masks are the most protective masks for first responders. The program is accepting used and new masks and other equipment Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 1-2 p.m., at the County building, on Sixth and State streets. Olson said the first donation day drew about 15 people, some with small amounts, other with boxes and bins. Several orchardists brought volumes of masks, according to Olson. Donations will be accepted on the exterior of the building to limit exposure indoors and practice safe distancing.

## Volunteers in Action revamps programs, continues to serve

By TRISHA WALKER  
News staff writer

"If you would have told me two or three months ago that we'd have to invent a new program model and implement it in a week's worth of time, I would have said you were crazy," said Volunteers in Action Program Coordinator Britta Willson March 25.

But that's exactly what she's had to do.

VIA, a program of Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital that serves seniors, veterans, those living below the Federal Poverty Limit and those who are isolated and vulnerable, has been modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm feeling like this is going to be long-term, considering how things are going," she said. "Right now, we're doing a pilot program — I just came up with the model last week and we're implementing it this week, to troubleshoot and see how things go."

All in-person visits with clients

have been canceled, as has transportation. Instead, volunteers are checking in with clients via weekly phone calls and grocery runs.

She has partnered with The Next Door, Inc., and is running the program in a fashion similar to NDI. As a way to avoid contact, volunteers purchase groceries on account; clients will get invoiced for the expenses at a later time.

Volunteers then leave the groceries at the client's front door. As of now, there hasn't been much of a demand for grocery visits, but Willson sees that changing as client's supplies of food begin to deplete.

Her next task: Working out details needed for prescription pick up.

"The next big thing will be prescriptions because starting next month, people will need prescriptions refilled," she said.

Willson said that, as she began looking at changes to the program, she thought it would simply serve existing VIA clients.

"I thought it would be a huge, overwhelming need from our own

people," she said. But she's been able to expand the service to include home health and hospice patients and, thanks to an increase in volunteers, is looking to further open the service to anyone who is over the age of 60 or has some kind of condition that makes going out into public dangerous.

"I am getting a lot of interested new volunteers because people are on furlough or are unemployed and are looking for some way to feel useful to the community," Willson said. "As long as I continue to get more volunteers, we can serve more and more people this way."

However, the service can only be provided based on the number of volunteers, so "if we max that out, we'll implement a waitlist," she added.

The volunteer onboard process has been streamlined: Because volunteers are not meeting face-to-face with clients, only basic contact information and a background check are required. There is also an orientation with Will-

See SERVING, page A10

### INSIDE

- Cascade Observations..... **A2**
- Classifieds ..... **A11**
- Entertainment ..... **A3**
- Legal Notices ..... **A10**
- Obituaries ..... **A6**
- Opinion ..... **A4**
- Roots and Branches ..... **A2**

- Senior Resources..... **A15**
- Yesteryears ..... **A7**

*"The fights against the coronavirus and the climate crisis go hand-in-hand." — Peter Cornelson, Earth Week, A8*

### BRIEFS

#### Cohousing meets online

Every Sunday in April at 2 p.m., Adams Creek Cohousing will meet via Zoom. To attend, contact Friends@AdamsCreek-Cohousing.com or www.AdamsCreekCohousing.com.

#### Closures continue

The Hood River Art Club is suspending further meetings due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Hood River Democrats has canceled its April 9 meeting. Until further notice, Lyle Lions Mon-

day night meetings and first Saturday pancake breakfasts are canceled until further notice, as are the Tuesday Senior Lunches. Lyle Lions' annual visit by the Easter Bunny has also been canceled.

