

The INSIDE

The Week in Review page 2



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

page 8



page 6

METRO



page 8

SPORTS



page 9

OPINION

CLASSIFIED/BIDS

pages 9-10

LOCAL NEWS



Akasha Lawrence Spence speaks before the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners last January. Spence is one of 11 Black leaders charged with guiding the allocation of a \$62 million relief fund reserved for the Black community to help individuals, families and businesses weather the financial harm caused by COVID-19. (Photo courtesy Multnomah County)

Black Community Relief

Cash grants to offset COVID-19 harms

Applications are now being taken for cash grants to help Black people, Black business owners and Black-led nonprofits throughout Oregon weather the financial harm caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The new \$62 million Oregon Cares Fund for Black Relief and Resiliency opened this week, a targeted grant program that the Oregon Legislature's Emergency Board installed last month as part of \$200 million from the federally funded CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund reserved for specific communities and sectors of the economy.

The Council of Trust, composed of 11 Black leaders from across Oregon, is charged with guiding the relief fund and overseeing the distribution which will be carried out by two nonprofits – The Contingent (previously the Portland Leadership Forum)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Sharon Gary-Smith, former executive director of the MRG Foundation, helps oversee a COVID-19 Relief Fund directed to help the Black community.

Cases Drop, but Not Enough

School closures will continue for now

(AP) — Coronavirus cases in Oregon declined as August came to a close, but in order for schools to reopen the average amount of new cases a day needs to decrease from 250 to 60, state health experts said Friday.

In order to reach that goal, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said residents will have to continue to follow and enforce current statewide COVID-19 safety mandates or else bars and restaurants may have to close and travel restrictions will be implemented.

"The good news is we're slow-



Gov. Kate Brown

ing the spread of COVID. The bad news is our infection rate is still too high for most in-person schools," Brown said last week.

"With the course we're on, meeting our goals is just going to take too long. We must do better, faster. We must work together. And we must do it now."

The Oregon Health Authority reported 259 new cases Sunday as the state's total case count rose to 26,554. The death toll was 458.

Dean Sidelinger, the state's epidemiologist, said that since July, transmission of the deadly virus has slowed. Hospitalizations also declined.

The percentage of positive tests has leveled off too — remaining at 5.4%.

"While our COVID-19 data shows we are doing better than many other states, the virus contin-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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