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Measles virus as contagious as it gets

Recent outbreak a reminder that herd immunity protects the unvaccinated

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Most baby boomers remember the measles.

Those itchy spots appearing everywhere, even inside the mouth. Runny nose. Watery red eyes. Fever as high as 104 degrees.

There was no escape from measles, one of the most contagious viruses out there. Spread by cough-

ing and sneezing, the virus can remain airborne or on surfaces for up to two hours. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90 percent of unvaccinated people who are exposed will come down with the measles. And everybody was unvaccinated back then. Most children got measles and endured several days of misery. While the majority emerged unscathed, occasionally serious complications arose, such as pneumonia, deafness, brain infections and even death.

When a vaccine emerged in the 1960s, getting measles was no longer a given. It resurged again in the 1980s, but by the year 2000, mea-

sles was considered eliminated in the U.S. because there hadn't been a case for 12 months straight.

Now measles is back. Three outbreaks in New York and New Jersey last year brought many of the country's almost 350 cases. The disease ebbed and flowed over the last decade.

Recently, 35 cases popped up in Washington's Clark County, which includes Vancouver, across the Columbia River from Portland. At least 31 of the victims had not been vaccinated. So far, Oregon has had only one case linked to the outbreak, but health officials are on

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Vaccination rates in Umatilla and Morrow counties remain high, minimizing the possibility of a local measles outbreak.

Ruby reds ready for the stage



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Joy Love Breshears dons the ruby red slippers during a dress rehearsal for the Hermiston High School production of "The Wizard of Oz" on Monday in Hermiston. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the release of the classic movie "The Wizard of Oz" starring Judy Garland in 1939. The Hermiston High School production of "The Wizard of Oz" opens on Friday, Feb. 1, at the Hermiston High School Auditorium.

Local districts buck trend for Latino grads

Latino graduates drive growth in overall rate

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Across the past five years, the Umatilla School District has had one of the starkest turnarounds in the region.

Umatilla went from graduating 67 percent of its students in 2013-2014 to 84.1 percent in 2017-2018.

One of the largest contributors to Umatilla's rise was the white-Latino achievement gap, which went from 11 points in 2016-2017 to two points the following school year.

Advancements in Hispanic graduation rates were felt in districts across Umatilla and Morrow counties where the Latino student population was 45 percent or higher, leading to an uptick in the overall rate in many school systems.

Umatilla Superintendent Heidi Sipe said the work of closing the gaps started in elementary school, where the district has a native language literacy program.

Instead of solely focusing on English, native Spanish speakers are taught literacy skills in their first language. Once these students start reading in English, Sipe said they should have the tools to sound out the words, even if the comprehension isn't there yet.

Sipe uses an example of trying to teach kids the word "apple," which doesn't have meaning to a Spanish speaker.

"That's not an apple to that student," she said. "It's a manzana."

Beyond the native language literacy program, Sipe spotlighted other longstanding initiatives, like its after-school program and encouraging high school students to get their

2018 GRADUATION RATES

District	Latino	Overall
Umatilla	83.3%	84.2%
Hermiston	70.7%	75.7%
Milton-Freewater	83.6%	82.8%
Morrow County	86%	82.9%
Stanfield	90.9%	76.9%

OREGON'S GRADUATION RATE FOR HISPANIC AND LATINO STUDENTS WAS NEARLY 5.5 POINTS BELOW THE WHITE GRADUATION RATE LAST YEAR.

associate's degrees, which has seen equal achievement between white and Latino students over the past two years.

Acknowledging that there's a cultural divide between the community's Latinos and its majority white staff, Umatilla has also hired community liaisons who are bilingual. Sipe said one of the liaisons would be hosting a tamale feed on Friday as a way to reach out to the community.

Umatilla and other nearby school districts' success in graduating Hispanic students is in defiance of state trends.

Although it experienced modest growth in 2017-2018, Oregon's Hispanic/Latino graduation rate was

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Hermiston sets course for \$39M in infrastructure

Additional \$300,000 a year coming from franchise fees

By JADE MCDOWELL EAST
OREGONIAN

The Hermiston City Council doesn't think very many people will read this article.

The council commented Monday that the joint capital improvement plan they adopted would not make waves in the press the way some city council meetings do. But the document — which creates a coordinated game plan for accomplishing a multimillion dollar list of water, sewer and street improvements over the next five years — is one of the most important things they will accomplish during their career on the

council, Mayor David Drozmann said.

He said the last thing he wants is for Hermiston to become "the next Flint, Michigan" and experience a public health crisis due to failing infrastructure.

"Infrastructure is not the super sexy thing everyone wants to talk about, but it's so important," councilor Roy Barron added.

The public works capital improvement plan schedules out about \$19 million in projects over the next five to six years, with an additional \$20 million in projects listed in the appendices to be used as funding becomes available. The city hopes to update the plan every two years.

"We want an inventory, instead of just reacting to when things

break," assistant city manager Mark Morgan said.

Morgan said the city has created capital improvement plans in the past for various departments, but putting everything together in one coordinated document would increase efficiency. The plan schedules a major water line replacement under North First Place the same year as a major road improvement project on North First Place, for example, to prevent contractors from tearing up work that the city had just completed.

Streets

The city is getting an additional \$300,000 per year for street projects from an increase in franchise fees (paid for by cable and internet companies using the city's right-of-way for their equipment) it enacted

in late 2017.

It is also getting about \$200,000 per year from the legislature's 2017 transportation package, set to increase to \$350,000 over the next five years. The North First Place project, which will widen and improve the road parallel to Highway 395 in the hopes of drawing more local traffic off the highway, will be paid for by a \$4.5 million earmark in the transportation package.

The city has already accepted a bid for the first road project on the plan, which will replace a box culvert on South First Street that is falling apart and is too narrow to support increasing traffic south of town. In the next year the city also plans

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