



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Boxes of the influenza vaccine sit in storage on Friday at Saint Anthony Hospital in Pendleton awaiting Monday's free drive-thru flu shot clinic at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Local health organizations advocate for flu shots

By BEN LONERGAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Flu shots offer residents a way to protect themselves during the fast approaching flu season, according to local health organizations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that individuals should aim to get the vaccination before the end of October in an effort to build up an immunity before the start of flu season.

Tracy Wart, an infection prevention nurse at Saint Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, advises that those who are able to get a flu shot should try to get one sooner rather than later because it typically takes at least two or three weeks after the vaccination for the body to build up an immunity.

“We didn’t start to see the flu pop up until mid-December last year, but Washington is starting to see a few cases already,” said Wart. “There are some predictions that we’ll have a really bad year this year.”

Wart says that predictions for the flu season are generally developed by monitoring cases in Australia where the flu season is typically July through September.

Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara said while the Umatilla County flu season typically

peaks around January or February, it is still a great time to get the vaccine.

“It helps you and it helps your community,” said Fiumara of the vaccine. “We’re putting these out there because we believe in them and the good they can do.”

While some people fear the vaccine will make them sick with the flu, Wart said the influenza vaccine no longer carries the live virus and one cannot get the flu from the vaccine. Despite this, Wart said that people may experience some soreness or feel feverish as a result of the vaccine building immunity in the body.

According to the CDC, the flu vaccine significantly reduces a child’s possibility of dying from influenza. In addition to vaccinations, the CDC recommends taking additional steps to combat influenza through frequent hand washing and properly covering one’s mouth and nose when they sneeze or cough.

In an effort to get the vaccine to more people, Saint Anthony Hospital will be hosting a free drive-thru immunization clinic for those 18 and older on Monday, Oct. 14 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center. The drive-thru clinic allows visitors to stay in the comfort of their car and receive a vaccination quickly and easily. Wart

says that there are roughly 750 doses available and advises that people not wait for the last minute if possible.

“Last year, we ran out about 45 minutes before the end of the day,” Wart said. “I really want to make sure that people get there if they can.”

In addition to Monday’s clinic in Pendleton, the Walla Walla VA Clinic, Good Shepherd Health Care System and Umatilla County Public Health will be hosting similar events in the coming days.

The Walla Walla VA Clinic will host a drive-thru flu shot clinic for area veterans on Oct. 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, Washington.

Good Shepherd Health Care System will host two clinics, the first as a part of its annual Community Meeting and Health Fair on Oct. 30 from 5-6 p.m. at Hermiston High School. The second clinic, which will have a higher number of vaccines available, will take place at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston on Nov. 16 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the conference rooms No. 1 and No. 2.

Umatilla County Public Health will host a drive-thru clinic open to all ages at Gib Olinger Elementary School in Milton-Freewater on Nov. 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Council to consider tax abatement for Amazon

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council will consider a tax abatement agreement with Amazon on Monday.

The city and Umatilla County are joint partners in a long-term Rural Enterprise Zone, which under state statute allows them to exempt certain types of businesses locating or expanding in the zone from property taxes for seven to 15 years.

Lamb Weston used the zone to get a 15-year exemption on its \$250 million expansion, in exchange for \$15 million in payments directly to the county and city.

The resolution on the table Monday authorizes the city to enter into an agreement with Amazon if it is willing to invest \$200 million into the zone, pay

employees there at least 130% of the average wage in Umatilla County and pay “the required fees to the zone over the term of the agreement.”

The council will also consider voting to vacate the Southeast 10th Street right-of-way between East Penney Avenue and East Feedville Road. According to a memo from city planning director Clint Spencer, the street is an undeveloped right-of-way through a field, not used for vehicle travel.

He said a developer hopes to build a “large” project there but would need to build over the right-of-way to make it fit.

Also on the agenda is an update to the street portion of the city’s Capital Improvement Plan, which was adopted a year before the water and sewer portions. The update suggested by the infrastruc-

ture committee would plan for no capital projects for streets in the 2023-24 fiscal year in order to accrue more money for larger projects in succeeding years. It would also expand a project in the unfunded list of projects in the appendices, extending the length of Gettman Road proposed for paving.

City staff will also present a report Monday on possible incentives the city could use to encourage more housing growth. The report notes that tax credits and low-interest loans are “generally not available” for market-rate housing, but lists several state and federal incentives that could help attract more low-income housing.

The city council meets Monday at 7 p.m. at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St. The full agenda packet can be found online at hermiston.or.us/meetings.

New city manager takes the reins

Ben Burgener replaces former city manager Blair Larsen, who resigned in May

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Stanfield has a city manager once again.

Ben Burgener started the job about three weeks ago, and said he was excited to be chosen to help the city in its next chapter.

“This is the perfect spot, with a lot of opportunity,” he said. “Stanfield is primed for growth.”

Burgener has an undergraduate degree in recreational management and a master’s in public administration from Brigham Young

University. He most recently served as a city administrator in Ada, Minnesota.



Burgener

Burgener was born and raised in Utah, but said he was drawn to the Stanfield job because he had previously spent some time living in Corvallis and was interested in returning to Oregon. His wife and three daughters moved to Stanfield with him.

He was busy Friday livestreaming the grand opening of Mama Bear’s Quilt Shop on the city’s Facebook page. Burgener said he hopes to be able to help Stanfield attract new economic development, particularly on the land just south of Interstate 84, which the

city recently brought into its urban growth boundary.

“It’s a great spot, and being able to develop that will be fun,” he said.

He said an Oregon Department of Transportation project to revamp Main Street should help revitalize downtown, and he also hopes to see more housing projects come into Stanfield. He plans to use his expertise in recreational management to develop new parks and recreation offerings in town.

Burgener replaced former city manager Blair Larsen, who resigned in May to take a job in Sweet Home. He said he hopes people will feel welcome to give their input as he gets settled into the new job.

“I have an open door policy,” he said. “I’d love to talk to people about their ideas.”

BRIEFLY

Algae toxins identified in the Willow Creek Reservoir

MORROW COUNTY — Harmful algae blooms and toxins have been found in the Willow Creek Reservoir, according to a recreational advisory issued Friday by the Oregon Health Authority.

The health authority said that cyanobacteria blooms and cyanotoxins were found to be present in the reservoir in an amount that is above guideline values for human exposure.

Symptoms from exposure to cyanotoxins include stomach cramping, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. The OHA said that more serious symptoms like numbness, dizziness and shortness of breath may require medical attention.

People should avoid swimming and high-speed water activities in the lake where blooms were identified.

According to the OHA, the toxins cannot be removed by filtering, boiling or treating the water, so drinking the water is not advised. Those who might draw in-home water from the area should use an alternative source.

People are discouraged from allowing children and pets like dogs in the water. Dogs may consume the toxins by licking their fur or nearby rocks and plants.

Fish from the area should have all fat, skin and organs removed and be rinsed with clean water before freezing or preparation. The OHA said that boating is safe as long as boaters maintain slower speeds to reduce water spray, which could be inhaled.

Willow Creek Reservoir is about 48 miles south of Hermiston.

Hermiston business woman enters Umatilla County commissioner race

HERMISTON — Business owner Patricia Maier of Hermiston has joined the race for the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners.

Maier is the first woman to enter the contest for the Position 3 seat on the county board and filed her candidacy paperwork Thursday. She joins Dan Dorran, Mark Gomolski and Jonathan Lopez, all of Hermiston, in the race to succeed Commissioner Bill Elfering.

Maier is the owner and operator of the limited liability company I-A Construction & Fire. According to her filing, she has a background that includes working as an administrator for Northwest Pipeline, former director of United Way of Umatilla and Morrow Counties and working in Butler County, Kansas, as an assistant to the superintendent of schools.

Elfering, also of Hermiston, said he anticipates the field of candidates will grow by the filing deadline of March 10, 2020. He also said he has no plans to endorse any candidates for the time being. Rather, he said, he and the public should have the opportunity to hear from all the candidates about what they want to do as commissioner.

City set to contribute \$65,000 to vets memorial

PENDLETON — At a meeting Tuesday, the Pendleton City Council will spend much of its time discussing grants, on both the giving and receiving end.

The council will be asked by its arts committee to approve a \$65,000 grant to help establish the Pendleton Veterans Memo-

rial Park near the corner of Highway 11 and Southeast Court Avenue.

The project is a collaboration between the city and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 922, which has already purchased some of the materials for the main attraction that will feature a medallion for each branch of the military and a to-be-determined centerpiece art installation.

With the total cost of the project set at \$123,753, committee Chairman Charles Denight wrote in a report that the rest would be covered by a state grant and a VFW fundraising campaign.

With the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range in the midst of a seven-figure industrial expansion, and the city is looking to recoup some of the costs through a grant.

Staff is recommending that the council allow Business Oregon to designate the range’s expansion a Regionally Specific Industrial Site.

The designation will allow the city to apply for a 50% income tax reimbursement from the state for each job created on the site, up to \$20 million.

The expansion will be paid for in part by a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The council will also vote to accept the grant at the meeting.

The council meeting will be held Tuesday at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

City to hold public meetings on street funding

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton is still considering its funding options for street repair and improvement and wants to hear from the public about what they should do.

After spending the past few months presenting options to various community groups, the city will hold a series of public meetings across the city.

The meetings will be held on Monday at the Pendleton

Convention Center, Oct. 21 at the Sherwood Heights Elementary School gym, and Oct. 28 at the Washington Elementary School gym.

Eastern Oregon mayors, managers resume seats on boards

SALEM — Two mayors and two city managers from Eastern Oregon again take seats on statewide association boards.

The Oregon Mayors Association and the Oregon City/County Management Association selected officers and board members for 2020 during their annual business meetings at the League of Oregon Cities 94th Annual Conference in Bend.

Weston’s Jennifer Spurgeon and Elgin’s Allan Duffy resumed their roles as members of the board of directors for the Oregon Mayors Association. Likewise, Pendleton City Manager Robb Corbett and Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist take seats again on the board for the City/County Management Association.

The two associations are affiliate organizations of the League of Oregon Cities.

— East Oregonian staff

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10/11-10/13
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
Showing Wednesday @ 12p
13 Ghosts

Gemini Man (PG13) 1:20p* 4:10p 7:00p 9:40p
The Addams Family (PG) 2D 2:20p* 4:30p 6:40p 3D 12:10p* 8:50p
Joker (R) 1:30p* 4:20p 7:10p 9:50p
Abominable (PG) 12:20p* 2:30p* 4:40p 6:50p 9:00p
Rambo: Last Blood (R) 12:30p* 2:40p* 4:50p 7:20p 9:30p

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WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO

10/14
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
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13 Ghosts

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GET YOUR
FLU SHOT

FREE Drive-Thru
Flu Shot Clinic

October 14
2PM to 6PM
Pendleton Convention Center
Parking Lot

Flu shot drive through clinic
for people ages 18 and older

We will have both low and high dose vaccine available, and we are limited to the first 750 people.

For more info call
541-278-3262

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