



CORONAVIRUS

Most new cases in single day brings state tally to 114

By SHANE DIXON KAVANAUGH
The Oregonian/OregonLive

SALEM — The Oregon Health Authority on Friday reported more than two dozen new cases of the novel coronavirus across nine counties, bringing the number of confirmed COVID-19 patients in the state to 114 as testing dramatically expanded.

Residents from Clackamas (4), Deschutes (2), Grant (1), Linn (1), Marion (4), Multnomah (5), Union (1), Washington (6) and Yamhill (2) counties tested positive for the virus in the last 24 hours, state health officials said.

During that time, nearly 700 new people were tested for coronavirus — more than double the 300 who underwent tests the previous day, according to figures published on the health

authority's website.

As of a week ago, a total of 524 Oregonians had been tested for the virus. Since then, the availability of state testing outside the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory has ramped up substantially, with private labs, such as Quest and LabCorp and hospitals like Providence Health & Services in Portland increasing capacity.

Still, many Oregonians who have exhibited corona-

virus symptoms — such as fever, dry cough and trouble breathing — remain unable to be tested because of limited supplies.

There are now known coronavirus cases linked to 16 of Oregon's 36 counties: 31 in Washington County; 19 in Linn County; 17 in Marion County; 12 in Multnomah County; 10 in Clackamas County; eight in Deschutes County; four in Yamhill County; two each in Ben-

ton, Jackson, Lane and Umatilla counties, and; one each in Douglas, Grant, Klamath, Polk and Union counties.

People older than 55 account for 66 of the confirmed cases in Oregon, 34 are between 35 and 54, six are between 25 and 34, four are between 18 and 24 and four others are under 17, state figures show.

Three people — two men in their 70s and a woman in her 60s — have died from the

virus in Oregon. All of them, who have not been publicly identified, had underlying medical conditions, state health officials said.

In the last day, 674 more people have tested negative for coronavirus, while another 433 are awaiting results, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

To date, 2,550 people in Oregon have undergone testing, up from 1,854 on Thursday.

Oregon drivers get 'grace period'

By MEERAH POWELL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Transportation announced Friday that local law enforcement officers will exercise discretion in their enforcement of driver licenses, vehicle registrations and trip permits that expire during the COVID-19 state of emergency declared by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

The Oregon State Police, Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police and Oregon State Sheriffs' Association have all agreed to support this "grace period" for enforcing any expired vehicle documentation, according to ODOT.

"During this current public health emergency, times are hard enough," Oregon State Police Superintendent Travis Hampton said in a statement. "The added stress of driving without a valid license or registration is one barrier we can eliminate. Our mission is to protect, not unnecessarily penalize, Oregonians."

The grace period is in place to reduce the need for Oregonians to visit a DMV office during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

Although Oregon DMV offices mostly remain open, they are following guide-



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Although Oregon DMV offices, such as the office in Hermiston, mostly remain open, they are following guidelines, including restricting customers in offices to 10 people or fewer at a time. Some offices may also need to close due to staffing shortages, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

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Therefore, all Oregonians should be calling their local offices ahead of time if they are planning to visit the DMV.

This grace period is especially helpful for people living in the Portland metro area and in Medford, where vehicles must be inspected by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality before renewing registration.

The Oregon DEQ has suspended vehicle emissions testing, ODOT said, so people in those areas are not currently able to renew their vehicle registrations.

Most other Oregonians can still renew vehicle registration through the mail or online.

"Even if your tags just expired, you can renew online and print the receipt to take in your car as proof of registration," ODOT said.

Many other DMV services are available online through the DMV's website and through mail.

Vote by mail saves May primary

By JEFF MAPES
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — While some states are postponing their primary elections, Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno announced on Thursday that the state's May 19 primary will proceed as scheduled.

"Because Oregon votes by mail we do not have to be concerned about social distancing issues at polling places that so many other states are struggling with," Clarno's office said in a statement.

At least five states have delayed primaries because of the coronavirus pan-

demic. Those states — Georgia, Connecticut, Ohio, Louisiana and Kentucky — all rely heavily on Election Day voting at polling places. That means millions of would-be voters, as well as often elderly election workers, could face health risks and contribute to the spread of the disease.

Marion County Clerk Bill Burgess, president of the association that represents local election officials in Oregon, said the epidemic will require changes in staffing and procedures to protect workers. He said this could slow the release of voting results on election night.

Mail voting is gaining a

new flurry of support as a result of the pandemic. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, who has pushed for years for the national adoption of all-mail balloting, is now sponsoring a bill requiring all voters to be offered the option to receive a ballot by mail in November. The measure would provide \$500 million to states to help them do so.

Oregonians have until April 28 to register to vote. That's the same deadline for changing their party registration. In Oregon, only registered Democrats or Republicans can vote in their respective primaries. For more information, go to Oregonvotes.org.

Eviction moratorium, REAL ID extension

Associated Press

SALEM — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Friday that during the coronavirus outbreak she wants a statewide eviction moratorium, to suspend enforcement on expired automobile tabs and driver licenses and has asked the federal government for a one-year extension for compliance to the REAL ID act.

She also said during a

media briefing that she was not at this time enacting more stringent social distancing requirements like those imposed by California and New York this week. Brown has already ordered a six-week statewide school closure, a ban on gatherings of more than 25 people and shutdown of bar and restaurant operations other than takeout and delivery for at least four weeks.

Brown did, however, say she was evaluating the situation daily.

"For me, the bottom line is that if there is evidence that Oregonians are not complying with the aggressive measures in place I will have to take more aggressive action," she said. "I am encouraging and urging Oregonians to stay home. I want to say don't travel for spring break, stay home."

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