

# EAST OREGONIAN

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**REOPENING SCHOOLS**

## New metrics don't mean much locally

Local schools will remain closed despite state easing some standards

By ANTONIO SIERRA AND ALEX CASTLE  
*East Oregonian*

UMATILLA COUNTY — When Gov. Kate Brown announced new public health standards for schools to reopen, it allowed dozens of schools across rural Oregon to reopen their doors.

But for most schools in Umatilla County, it won't mean much in the short term.

Despite loosening some of the key statistical thresholds counties need to meet to allow their schools, Umatilla County still falls well short of that goal.

Under the new metrics, schools' reopening status will be evaluated over two-week intervals of case rates per 100,000 and test positivity rate. These rates will designate the county into one of four zones, which determine to what degree a school can open for in-person instruction.

In the green zone, all schools can reopen to students of all ages when a county records a case rate of 50 or fewer cases per 100,000 people and a test positivity rate below 5%. In the yellow zone, elementary school students can return for a hybrid instruction model when a county records a case rate of 100 or fewer cases per 100,000 people and a test positivity rate below 8%.

The orange zone is for counties to transition into preparing for in-person instruction when they've recorded 200 or fewer cases per 100,000 and a test positivity rate below 10%. When counties record rates above those figures, they'll be in the red zone where no in-person instruction is permitted.

Umatilla County case numbers have been rising steadily throughout October. From Oct. 18-31, the Oregon Health Authority reported 223 new cases of the virus, which amounts to 274.8 cases per 100,000 people. The county's test positivity rate was also recorded at 17% during those two weeks.

In order to reach the orange zone, Umatilla County would need to report fewer than 162 cases over a two-week stretch. To reach the yellow zone, that number would need to drop below roughly 122 new cases over two weeks, and then even further to roughly fewer than 60 cases to reach the green zone.

Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara has mixed feelings about the new metrics but said Nov. 2 that he felt they were "a

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# END OF AN ERA



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Alvaro Orrala inspects papers and makes adjustments as the *East Oregonian* runs off the press in Pendleton on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020.

## East Oregonian to move printing operations to Walla Walla

By BEN LONERGAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — When Nick Tinhof winds down his shift on Tuesday, Nov. 3, he realizes it will be the end of an era at the *East Oregonian*.

Election Day will mark the last time the EO's Goss and Tensor press will operate in Pendleton as the *East Oregonian* begins the process of transitioning its printing services to The Seattle Times Company-owned *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*.

"I'm just sad to see it go, I don't really know how to put it into words," said Tinhof, the *East Oregonian's* lead pressman.

Tinhof began working on the press shortly after its installation in 2013 and quickly worked his way up from replacing plates and ink to running the entire show. Tinhof credits former *East Oregonian* pressmen Bob Rasmussen, Jeff Davis and Dennis Duchek with mentoring him and helping him get up to speed on the press and its inner workings.

"It's always fun working at night, you can't go to the hardware store to get spare parts if something goes wrong," he said. "Whatever you've got in this building is what you've got to try to make it go, you've got no backup."

Tinhof is passionate about the work, carefully checking each page for color, clarity or any smudge marks as papers come off the press, ramping the press



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Pressman Nick Tinhof makes adjustments to the press during the press run on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020, at the *East Oregonian* press facility in Pendleton.

up and down and making adjustments on the fly like a conductor orchestrating the moves of a symphony.

"You're responsible for how good it looks," said Tinhof. "No matter how late it is or what goes wrong there's no just give up and go home."

In the coming weeks, the press will be dismantled and shipped to Walla Walla where it will replace the *Union-Bulletin's* aging press. There, it will print papers throughout the region, including those operated by EO Media Group, including the *East Oregonian*. In the interim, the EO Media Group newspapers and publications will be printed in Yakima at another printing facility operated by The Seattle Times Company.

"The *East Oregonian* has

had a printing press in Pendleton since 1875, so it was a difficult decision to close our production facility and move our press to Walla Walla. But, having two presses within 40 miles of each other no longer makes sense," said Kathryn Brown, EO Media Group vice president and former publisher of the *East Oregonian*.

**A proud history**

Duchek, a former *East Oregonian* pressman, first began working on the press in the early 1970s after working as a paper delivery boy for the *East Oregonian* in his youth. At that time, the *East Oregonian* was printed on a Goss Suburban press, which the company had purchased more than a

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## A difficult, however necessary, decision



ANDREW CUTLER

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

Albert Einstein once said that the world as we have created it is a process of our thinking and that it cannot be changed without changing our thinking.

Changing the way we think and do business has been key topics for the *East Oregonian* and EO Media Group in 2020 as we navigate a COVID-19 world.

The latest change is in the very product that you hold in your hands right now. Today's edition of the *East Oregonian* is the final version that will be printed in-house here in Pendleton. Starting with the Thursday, Nov. 5, issue, the printing of the *EO*, along with the *Hermiston Herald*, *La Grande Observer*, *Baker City Herald* and *Wallowa County Chieftain*, will temporarily be moved to the Seattle Times Company-owned *Yakima Herald-Republic*.

Our move to Yakima will be short-lived, however. The Tensor/Goss press that the *East Oregonian* installed in 2013 will be moved to a new home at the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, where it will serve as the press for a printing hub that will operate in a larger geographic region. The *East Oregonian* and its sister publications will then all be printed out of that facility.

It was a tough decision to move the printing to another facility, but, honestly, not making these tough decisions is what leads to news deserts popping up at an alarming rate around the country. That was something that we weren't going to allow to happen.

As we move forward, our bedrock values that focus on the reader will not change with this move. The press — an icon in the newspaper industry — doesn't represent the soul of any paper. It is an important piece, surely, as it is used to print the newspaper. What is more valuable, and what I think will linger, is the dedication and determination of our entire staff to bring you credible, relevant stories about our community

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## Good Shepherd highlights work during annual community meeting

By JADE MCDOWELL  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Health Care System's annual community meeting highlighted the ups and downs of an unusual year for the hospital and its clinics.

For many community members, this year's virtual presentation was the first opportunity to get to know Brian Sims, who took over as CEO on Oct. 1. Sims said previous CEO Dennis Burke's advocacy for rural hospitals had made him a well-known figure among hospital administrators in



Sims

other parts of the country — including Sims, who previously managed a hospital in Iowa.

"To have the opportunity to follow Dennis and lead one of the best-known critical access hospitals in the nation is one of the greatest honors of my professional life," he said.

After the state required hospitals to cancel nonemergency procedures in the spring during the pandemic's first lockdown, Sims said Good Shepherd Medical Center's patient days were down by 24% during the 2019-20 fiscal year.

However, he said outpatient visits were up by 6.3% and clinic visits, including

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Large signs at the perimeter of the Good Shepherd Health Care System campus instruct people arriving at the hospital on entrance procedures on March 23, 2020.



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