

UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF JAN. 1

Umatilla County cases: **5,640** (303 new cases this week)

Umatilla County deaths: **57** (3 new deaths reported this week)

Oregon cases: **113,909** (6,191 new cases this week)

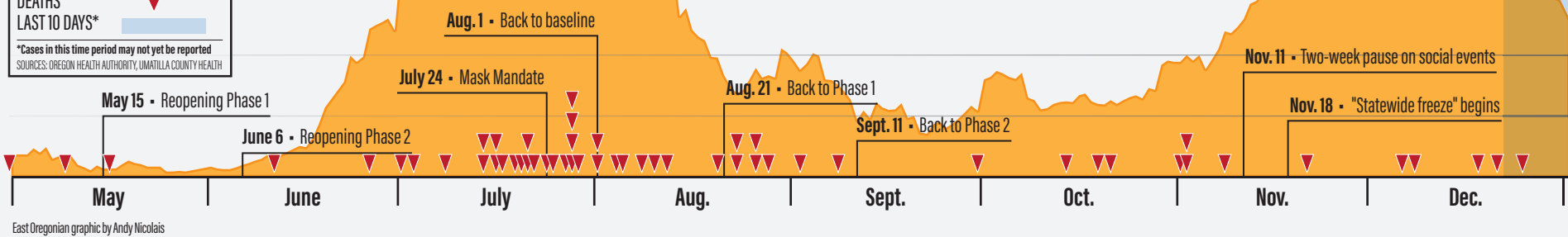
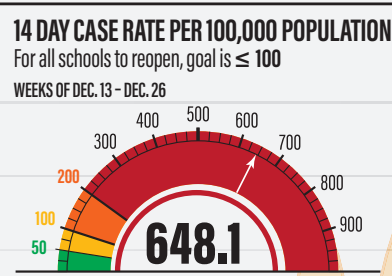
Oregon deaths: **1,477** (55 new deaths reported this week)

LEGEND
 7 DAY AVERAGE DEATHS LAST 10 DAYS*
*Cases in this time period may not yet be reported
 SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, UMATILLA COUNTY HEALTH

TEST POSITIVITY RATE
 For all schools to reopen, goal is ≤ 5
 (Number of positive tests divided by number of people tested)

Time Period	Umatilla County	Oregon
Dec. 13 - 26	12.3%	6.5%
Dec. 6 - 19	10.0%	6.8%
Nov. 29 - Dec. 12	12.2%	7.8%

Source: Oregon Health Authority. Percentages may change week to week as data is updated.



Truck crash closes Interstate 84



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Oregon Department of Transportation staff and tow truck operators work to clear the interstate at the site of a two-vehicle crash near milepost 215 on Interstate 84 westbound on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020. The crash blocked both lanes of westbound traffic and closed the interstate for more than two hours when one semitruck rear-ended another in the left lane, according to an official from the Oregon Department of Transportation. The crash, which was reported around 7:50 a.m., turned one truck sideways across the interstate, and vehicles were forced to take a detour off exit 216 and on through Pendleton before they could merge back onto I-84 westbound. No injuries or diesel spill were reported as a result of the crash, according to ODOT. The interstate was closed while the road was cleaned up and a tow truck drove in from over an hour away, according to ODOT.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Semitruck crash on I-84 kills one

PENDLETON — A single vehicle crash Thursday, Dec. 31, on Interstate 84 left one person dead, according to a press release from the Oregon State Police.

Chauncey Rife, 41, of Midvale, Utah, was eastbound on Interstate 84 near milepost 238 when his Freightliner CMV left the roadway, the release said. Investigators believe Rife possibly had a medical event before the crash.

The crash occurred shortly before 10:30 a.m.

OSP was assisted at the scene by the Umatilla Tribal Fire Department and Oregon Department of Transportation.

Turner said his change of heart was spurred by the city's lack of consistency, pointing out historic areas in town where they weren't preserved.

Activists spoke out against the stamps at December 2020 council meeting, and both opponents and proponents will get a chance to speak at the Jan. 5 public hearing.

The council meeting will be held in the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave. Visitors can either attend in-person or over Zoom through a link on the city council's digital agenda.

Umatilla County reports 57th COVID-19 death

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Health Department announced the county's 57th COVID-19 death in a Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020, press release.

The victim is a 66-year-old male who tested positive Dec. 10, 2020, and died Dec. 25, 2020, at Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston. This individual had underlying medical conditions, according to the press release.

The announcement comes as the health department reported 143 new cases on Dec. 31, bringing the county's total to 5,640 total cases reported in the county, according to the Umatilla County COVID-19 dashboard.

According to a press release, 77 of these cases are connected to outbreaks at local prisons.

Morrow County reported 10 new cases, bringing its total to 815 cases. Morrow County has had eight deaths since the pandemic started earlier this year.

Good Shepherd foundation awards grants

HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation concluded a "very successful year," the foundation reported, awarding grants and scholarships totaling nearly \$250,000 during 2020.

Over two grant cycles, in spring and fall, 21 organizations received grants for projects promoting health in area communities. According to a news release, the largest grant contribution was \$50,000 for the city of Hermiston to help rebuild the Funland Park facility. Other funding was approved for medical health devices, security locks, community fitness centers, health education programs, community gardening projects, youth activities and services, foster care supplies, health exams and eye glasses.

Twenty-two local students, attending 17 different colleges and universities and enrolled in 12 different medical disciplines, received scholarships to assist their training in the medical field.

For more information, call 541-667-3419 or email foundation@gshealth.org. Donations can be made online at gshealth.org/foundation.

—EO Media Group

Eastern Oregon representatives assigned to House committees

Committees, subcommittees will focus on a variety of issues, including wildfire recovery, COVID-19, equitable policing

East Oregonian

SALEM — Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek announced on Thursday, Dec. 31, the House committees for the upcoming 2021 legislative session, which will focus on a variety of issues, including wildfire recovery, COVID-19 response and equitable policing, according to a press release.

"Oregonians are facing crises that demand urgent action. The House is ready to lead on the issues that matter most in people's lives right now. We also need to create the space to have a focused conversation about long-term, transformational changes to modernize the people's legislature," Speaker Kotek said in the press release. "I'm grateful for the diverse perspectives that my col-



Levy



Smith

leagues will bring as we all work together to help Oregonians navigate the big challenges that lie ahead."

Among those assigned to committees were Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, and representative-elect Bobby Levy, from Echo.

Smith was assigned to seven different committees, including the Revenue Committee, Interstate 5 Bridge, the Ways and Means Committee, Ways and Means subcommittees for capital construction and general government, the Legislative Administration Committee, and the Legis-

lative Audit Committee.

Levy, who was elected in November 2020 to represent Oregon House District 58 and replace outgoing state Rep. Greg Barreto, was assigned to the Revenue Committee and the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee.

Oregon Republicans announce new caucus leadership

SALEM — House Republicans in the Oregon Legislature announced their caucus leadership for 2021 on Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020.

House Republican Leader Christine Drazan, R-Canby, will remain in her position for the 2021 Legislative Session and Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles, will serve as House Republican deputy leader.

"This leadership team represents rural, suburban and urban areas across the state, and the team's diverse backgrounds and professional experiences will serve Oregon well,"

Drazan said in a statement. "As we continue to face challenging issues amplified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and wildfire recovery efforts, Oregonians expect strong and steady leaders who will fight for their future, and that's what the House Republican Leadership team will do."

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, was listed in the announcement as an ex-officio member of the leadership team as vice chair of Ways and Means. Other members are Rep. Duane Stark, R-Grants Pass, House Republican whip; Rep. Kim Wallan, R-Medford, House Republican assistant whip; Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, House Republican assistant deputy; Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, R-Albany, House Republican assistant leader; Rep. Cedric Hayden, R-Roseburg, House Republican assistant leader; and Rep. Rick Lewis, R-Silverton, House Republican assistant leader.

ICE removes Mexican man convicted of kidnapping

Muniz-Vazquez was convicted in 2018 in Umatilla County Circuit Court

East Oregonian

PORTLAND — A Mexican man convicted of a 2018 kidnapping was removed from the country on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020, according to a press release from U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Gerardo Muniz-Vazquez, 28, was convicted on Oct. 4, 2018, in the Umatilla County Circuit Court for kidnapping and assault, and sentenced

to 34 months confinement.

ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations officers encountered Muniz-Vazquez at the Oregon Department of Corrections a month after Muniz-Vazquez's conviction and lodged an immigration detainer with the jail.

ICE lodges immigration detainers on individuals, such as Muniz-Vazquez, who have been arrested on local criminal charges and who are suspected of being removable, so that ICE can



Muniz-Vazquez

take custody of that person when he or she is released from local custody.

Muniz-Vazquez was released from the ODOC in November 2020, transferred to ICE custody and housed at the Northwest ICE Processing Center pending immigration proceedings.

"The safe and secure transfer of this convicted kidnapper is an excellent example of how law enforcement partnerships should work," said ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations Seattle Field Office Director Nathalie Asher. "By honoring ICE's immigration detainer, and safely transferring custody of this convicted criminal

alien, our law enforcement partners have prevented an at-large arrest and the unnecessary increased risk that comes along with it."

An immigration judge on Dec. 17, 2020, ordered Muniz-Vazquez removed from the United States. He was transported from the United States via an ICE Air Operations charter flight and transferred to the custody of Mexican authorities.

ICE is charged with enforcing federal immigration laws enacted by Congress. ICE officers are sworn law enforcement officers who carry out the arrest, detention and removal of aliens found to be in the United States unlawfully.