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EAST OREGONIAN

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Brown: Feds conduct 'mass deception'

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said increased vaccine shipments will not arrive next week

By COURTNEY SHERWOOD
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon is taking a step back in its effort to vaccinate older residents of the state, after learning that its push to rapidly accelerate COVID-19 vaccinations

has been derailed by what Gov. Kate Brown called "mass deception" on the part of the Trump administration.

Instead of allowing teachers and all Oregonians older than 65 to start receiving vaccinations later this month as previously announced, the state on Friday, Jan. 15, adjusted its plans for the next phase of vaccine doses to prioritize teachers and other education workers starting on the week of Jan. 25, and people 80 and older starting on Feb. 8.

The effort that has already been

underway with health care, long-term care and vulnerable populations will not change, Brown said.

"Across the state, we continue to vaccinate Oregon's front-line health-care workers, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers, long-term care residents and staff and more," she said in a press conference Jan. 15.

She used the event to emphasize the state's effort to pivot after learning it will receive fewer doses

than expected.

The governor had announced that news earlier Jan. 15: "States will not be receiving increased shipments of vaccines from the national stockpile next week, because there is no federal reserve of doses," Brown said on Twitter.

"I am demanding answers from the Trump Administration. I am shocked and appalled that they have set an expectation on which they could not deliver, with such grave consequences," she continued. "This

is a deception on a national scale. Oregon's seniors, teachers, all of us, were depending on the promise of Oregon's share of the federal reserve of vaccines being released to us."

The governor's early morning tweets were among the first news of a major setback for vaccination efforts across the country, and came less than a day after the Oregon Health Authority said it had achieved its goal of administering 12,000 COVID-19

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VETERANS

Hermiston organization's future cloudy

VFW Post 4750 officials say post needs new members to survive

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The new post commander for Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4750 is concerned about the post's future if it doesn't get more members.

In a recent email to community members, Harold Roberts warned that the Hermiston post has "barely enough members to hold all the positions of the post" and is in need of increased participation.

"VFW members serve and support the community it would be a great loss to the community if this post were to fold its flag for the last time and close its doors for good," the email stated.

Roberts told the *East Oregonian* that VFW Post 4750 lost participation in recent years as it faced difficulties that includes clashes between some "strong personalities" and the post's former quartermaster being charged in February 2020 for embezzlement of thousands of dollars. The issues caused the state chapter to step in and put them on probation, but Roberts said the state's assistance, including reorganization of the post, has put those problems behind them.

On Feb. 4, they will have their first meeting run by local leadership

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EO SPOTLIGHT



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Blue Mountain Community College Nursing Program Director Laurie Post, second from right, leads a class of students at the college's Pendleton campus on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. The school's nursing program is one of the few programs allowed to utilize in-person education for lab activities.

A rough stretch BMCC looking ahead after rough 2020

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Going into 2020, Cesar Ruiz thought Blue Mountain Community College was the right fit for him.

A basketball standout at Hermiston High School, Ruiz, 19, had spent a year across the river at Columbia Basin College in Pasco, Washington, before deciding that going to school closer to home was

the best step for him and his family.

And then everything shut down.

The Northwest Athletic Conference canceled the basketball season, depriving Ruiz of the chance to display his skills in front of coaches for four-year schools. When Ruiz would log into class in Zoom, some classes would only feature a handful of students.

2020 proved to be a challenging year for all local governments, but BMCC seemed to run into an especially bad spate of bad news.

"We shut down right at spring break last year," BMCC President Dennis Bailey-Fougner said in an interview. "It hasn't been the same since."

Enrollment fell as most classes transferred to an online format. The college was forced to make budget cuts that led to significant layoffs. The threat of more layoffs became real when the Oregon Department of Corrections announced it was ending its contract with BMCC

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City considering grant program for eateries

Proposal would help cover local restaurants' expenses for six months

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — As the pandemic stretches into 2021, Pendleton's elected leaders are considering more drastic measures to preserve the city's restaurant industry.

At a Tuesday, Jan. 12, city council workshop, Economic Development Director Steve Chrisman and Pendleton Chamber of Commerce CEO Cheri Rosenberg explained why the city should help cover local restaurants' expenses for the next six months.

The pair painted a dire picture of the industry, where owners fear permanent restaurant closures as Umatilla County yo-yos in and out of shutdowns.

Chrisman said businesses can't continue to stay shut down while

staying viable.

"It's approaching cruel and unusual treatment of an entrepreneur who has put in his blood, sweat and tears," he said.

The basic concept of the "Restaurant and Bar Pandemic Relief Program" would be to help cover restaurants' monthly expenses for the next half year to keep restaurants afloat during the second year of the pandemic while acknowledging there were still important details, like cost and eligibil-

ity, that still needed to be worked out.

Early estimates at the total cost of the program ranged from \$300,000 to \$600,000, sums that would be significantly larger than the city's previous rounds of COVID-19 relief efforts, which mostly consisted of one-off grants.

The proposal looked to source funding from the Pendleton Development Commission, but urban renewal

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COVID-19 NUMBERS IN UMATILLA COUNTY

TOTALS FOR WEEK ENDING 1/16/2021



RISK LEVEL HIGH	NEW WEEKLY CASES 890	TOTAL CASE GOAL 80	OR LESS OVER 2 WEEKS	POSITIVE TEST RATE 19.1%	POSITIVE TEST GOAL 5%
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