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Oregon to nearly double vaccine eligibility

By GARY A. WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Over 1 million more people will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccines in the next two upcoming eligibility phases, state officials said on Tuesday, March 16. The groups to be added on March 29 and May 1 will nearly double the number of people eligible for vaccination. Like most

states, Oregon is already struggling with the gap between vaccine eligibility and availability. To date, there has only been enough vaccine available to inoculate less than half of the approximately 1.36 million Oregonians already eligible. There are an estimated 2.8 million adults in Oregon out of a population of just under 4.3 million. The numbers for the next

eligibility groups have not been announced, but were provided by the Oregon Health Authority in response to a query by EO Media Group. OHA Director Pat Allen was scheduled to testify on the status of the state's vaccination program on Wednesday, March 18, before the House Subcommittee on COVID-19. The last change to the eligibility list was on March 1, when everyone

age 65 and older was approved to get vaccinated. On March 29, eligibility will be extended to an estimated 530,000 more people, according to OHA. The group includes those 45 and older with medical conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness or death, pregnant women 16 and older, and homeless people. On May 1, an estimated 550,000 more people will be eligible. The

minimum age for those with medical conditions will be extended to those 16 and older. It also includes essential workers as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and members of multi-generational households. The final two groups are everyone else 45 and older on June 1 and everyone 16 and older on July 1.

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Emily Muller-Cary, an orchestra and high school choir teacher with the Pendleton School District, leads an online class from her office at Pendleton High School on March 10, 2021.

Encore performances

Pandemic forces music classes to adapt to online learning

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — One year ago, Pendleton School District band teacher Andy Cary was practicing with his students for a concert that would never take place. “We had a rehearsal on stage and I realized this may be the concert we get, for whoever is walking by in the hall,” he said. He was right — school in Oregon ended abruptly the next day. About two-thirds of students in the state have not set foot in a classroom since. As teachers have worked to adapt to “comprehensive distance learning” in the year since, music classes have presented unique difficulties as teachers have had to move away

from classes centered around rehearsing music together and instead focus on students sending in recordings or discussing music theory. “It’s definitely been a challenge,” Cary said.

ingly called the resulting mess of sounds “terrifying.” The video chat technology and simple Chromebook microphones are not capable of properly blending together so many separate voices or instruments

Cary’s wife, Emily Muller-Cary, teaches orchestra and high school choir for the district. She said they did test out the idea of students singing together over Google Classroom, but laugh-

well enough. Now I can only hear three strings of your instrument, so turn to your left more,” she said. Cary-Muller said while students have missed performing and spending as much time as they used to playing or singing music in class, some have enjoyed the time they have been able to spend this year on music theory and discussing the history and culture behind the music they listen to or perform. She said she will probably keep some of those elements even after school returns to “normal.” She said she will likely continue to offer the practice software that includes fingering charts and other help students have said they like. “Having a platform for kids

from so many places, she said. It can even be hard to get the technology to cooperate to listen to a single student live. “It’s a lot of ‘Back up three steps. No, now I can’t hear you

“I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING BACK TO A TIME WHEN I CAN SIT DOWN AND MAKE MUSIC WITH THE KIDS AGAIN.”
— Sean McClanahan, Hermiston High School band teacher

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UMATILLA COUNTY

Courts to provide text message service

New service aims to reduce failing to appear in court charges

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County and Morrow County circuit courts are launching a new service providing individuals scheduled to appear in court the option of receiving text-message notifications, according to a press release from the Oregon Judicial Department.



Blaine

The new service will go live with all eligible case categories on Monday, March 22. The text service is intended to improve communication with individuals involved in a scheduled case, including defendants, petitioners and respondents. “Text messaging doesn’t replace official court hearing notices,” said Roy Blaine, trial court administrator for Morrow County and Umatilla County circuit courts, “but it does allow parties who opt in to receive text message reminders and hearing updates. It’s one more way the courts are putting technology to work to improve access to justice.” The service is also an effort to reduce the number of charges of failing to appear in court, which Blaine said has increased during the pandemic. “Lots of people, especially in this time and environment, have other things come up and forget that they need to be in court,” he said. “Sometimes they’re sick and need to call us to let us know that they can’t come to court or whatever it is. This is a reminder that the event is coming up and you need to be ready for it.” Blaine said that he believes fewer people are appearing for their

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Ready for takeoff

Nevada company launches drone school at UAS range

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It’s not an easy time to open a school of any sort right now, but an unmanned aerial systems company is making a go at it. For the past few months, DelMar Aerospace Corp., a Nevada-based UAS company, has been running two-week drone courses, training small classes of people on the basics of operating unmanned vehicles. Among their goals is to help locals gain the requisite skills to start working in Pendleton’s burgeoning UAS industry.

Stanley Springer, DelMar’s chief operating officer, said his company went from being acquainted with Pendleton to running a school in it in a very short period of time. “I didn’t know Pendleton existed until July of last year,” he said. The idea for a drone school originated with the Volatus Group, a startup founded by two industry veterans who were looking to fill a niche. Springer said Volatus eventually drew the attention of DelMar, which felt like UAS training aligned with their business model. In January, DelMar acquired Volatus. Although the Pendleton UAS Range now supports dozens of jobs among the drone companies that test



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

A Pendleton UAS Range logo adorns the door of the range’s Mission Control and Innovation Center in Pendleton on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

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