

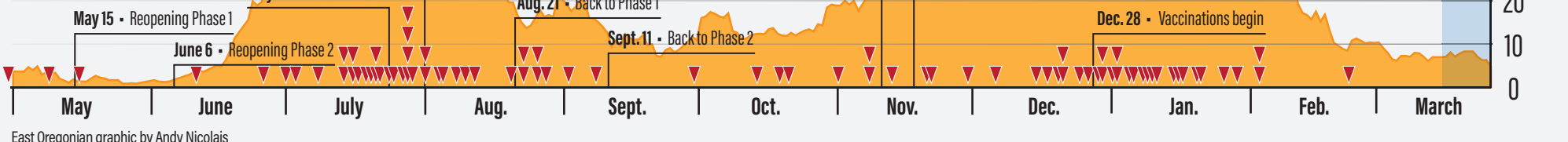
UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF MARCH 26

Umatilla County cases: **7,850** (42 new cases this week)
 Umatilla County deaths: **82** (0 new deaths reported this week)
 Oregon cases: **163,295** (2,301 new cases this week)
 Oregon deaths: **2,373** (16 new deaths reported this week)

Umatilla County vaccinations: **5,827** in progress, **7,653** complete (as of 12:01 a.m. 3/26/2021)

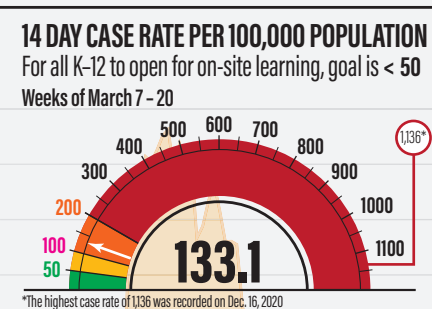
LEGEND
 7 DAY AVERAGE DEATHS LAST 10 DAYS*

*Cases in this time period may not yet be reported
 SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, UMATILLA COUNTY HEALTH



TEST POSITIVITY RATE		
For all K-12 to open for on-site learning, goal is < 5% (Number of positive tests divided by number of people tested)		
Time Period	Umatilla County	Oregon
March 7 - 20	4.6%	3.3%
Feb. 28 - March 13	4.7%	3.2%
Feb. 21 - March 6	5.1%	3.2%

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



Website connects consumers to fresh Oregon-grown food

La Grande Observer

PORTLAND — Finding locally grown fresh foods in Oregon just became easier.

Oregon Taste, a public service project of nonprofit James Beard Public Market, announced the launch of OregonTaste.com, a searchable online directory of the state's locally grown fresh food.

The website allows area consumers to connect to

Oregon's local fresh foods and food businesses, providing a reliable source for information on Oregon food, food products, food systems programs and food events.

The directory initially is focusing on Oregon's local producers that sell fresh foods directly to consumers. Listings include sellers of fresh, local and direct-to-consumer food, as well as information on farmers, fishers, ranchers, roadside stands, u-pick fields,

farmers markets and orchards.

The directory, so far, lists 11 ag-related businesses in Eastern Oregon, including Bellinger Farms and Gourmet Shoppe in Hermiston, Evergreen Family Farm in La Grande, Almosta Farm in Cove and Mountain Beef in Enterprise.

Consumers can search the directory for fresh food producers across the state, find specific food products, link to a producer's website and learn

how to connect with producers and their products. In collaboration with Oregon Farmers Markets Association, the website also provides consumers links to the websites of farmers markets across Oregon.

Lori Warner, development director for Oregon Taste, said in the press release the COVID-19 pandemic revealed how much local food systems matter.

"The idea for Oregon Taste

was born out of this increased need to connect Oregonians to more local farms and the foods they create," she stated.

Oregon Taste also soon plans to expand the directory to include links to food products manufactured or processed in Oregon; wine, beer, spirits and other beverages created in the state; and listings of local food events. Future plans include listings of the state's food-related nonprofits, agencies and food organizations.

As a public service project, the directory is free to consumers, as well as local farmers and sellers who want to appear in the directory.

Organizations statewide are collaborating with James Beard Public Market to help connect consumers to Oregon-grown foods, including the Oregon Farmers Markets Association, Travel Oregon Food Trail Program and the High Desert Food and Farm Alliance.

The difficult road to recovery from addiction

Treatment center helps Darrell 'Pete' Rollins turn life around

By JADE MCDOWELL
 East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When Darrell "Pete" Rollins entered inpatient treatment for addiction at Eastern Oregon Recovery Center in Pendleton, he didn't think anything counselors there had to teach him would work.

"I packed my stuff every day for the first 30 days, wanting to leave," the Hermiston man said.

One day, he said, he broke the rules of the center and was asked to give up his cell-phone for a week. He asked for time to think about it and called his adult son, hoping his son would be outraged on his behalf and come and get him. Instead, his son asked him if he had really broken the rules, and when he said yes, told him he needed to own up to his mistake. So he handed over his phone, and in the process, decided to embrace the recovery program instead of resisting it.

"When I gave up my phone, that was the best thing I ever did," he said.

There were still setbacks, after that. He almost left when his younger brother was killed in a motorcycle accident, before deciding his brother would have cared more about him getting clean than attending his funeral. But Rollins graduated from the recovery center in February and said he hasn't used drugs since.

He's thrilled. He says he's happier, healthier and has a better relationship with his children. He enjoys more activities, and has a steady job.

"I wish I had done this 35 years ago," he said. "The world has opened up to me."

He has a lot of people to thank — his child's pediatrician, to whom he confided his drug problem. His primary care physician. The people at Umatilla County Human Services, who helped get



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Darrell "Pete" Rollins poses with his Eastern Oregon Recovery Center certificate of completion for a portrait at McKenzie Park in Hermiston on Tuesday, March 23, 2021.

RECOVERY RESOURCES

- Umatilla County Human Services:** 541-564-9390
- Eastern Oregon Detoxification Center:** 541-278-2558
- Eastern Oregon Recovery Center:** 541-278-2558 ext. 102
- Power House Residential Drug Treatment Center:** 541-567-2593
- New Horizons:** 541-289-0190
- Grande Ronde Recovery Center:** 541-663-4104
- National Substance Abuse and Mental Health hotline:** 1-800-662-4357

him into treatment and have supported him in the outpatient phase. His probation officer. Those who attend Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with him. His boss at Bud Rich Potato, who held his job for him while he was in treatment. He said he couldn't have done it without his children, either.

"I'm really fortunate my kids never turned their back on me," he said. "That was my support."

He also credits the staff at Eastern Oregon Recovery Center for their help. He said they managed to "teach an old dog new tricks" and could see through his excuses and get to the heart of the problem.

"I couldn't believe the love and compassion they had for someone like me," he said.

While staff can't talk about individual patients' treatment, employees of EORC can talk about the facility in general. Eastern Oregon Recovery Center began as Eastern Oregon Alcoholism Foundation in 1960. The overarching organization includes the 36-bed

inpatient treatment center for men and women, the Eastern Oregon Detoxification Center and transitional housing. Located in Pendleton, it serves people throughout the state who are seeking treatment for addiction.

Kati Jokinen, clinical supervisor for the recovery center, said connecting people to a network of supportive people and to community resources for after they leave the center is crucial. They work with human services, Lifeways and other organizations to help "set people up for success" beyond the inpatient treatment phase.

"We do what we can to make sure their needs are met," she said.

She and other staff said the pandemic has made some of that network-building more difficult. Family and friends have to video chat instead of visit in person to protect

patients from COVID-19 exposure, for example, which doesn't always have the same effect as in-person interactions.

Eryn Griffin, nursing superintendent at the detoxification center, said she saw people come through her doors last year who said a significant factor in their relapse was that NA and AA meetings and other support groups had stopped suddenly in the spring, and took a while to get going again virtually or in small groups outdoors.

"The isolation definitely played a huge role in a lot of peoples' relapse," she said.

Jokinen agreed, and said she was also concerned that the latest stimulus checks the federal government is paying out will prove too much of a temptation for some people to use the money to feed their addictions.

Darren Cole, executive director, said he can't emphasize enough that if people want to overcome addiction, or want their loved ones to overcome addiction, they have to understand that having a support system during and after treatment is critical.

The road to recovery isn't easy, but Jokinen pointed out that's something EORC staff know well — many of them are in recovery themselves, and know exactly what it takes.

Rollins hopes to be one of those people someday. Once he reaches two years of sobriety, he hopes to work in addiction recovery in some way, perhaps as a motivational speaker.

For now, he's focused on his newfound outlook on life.

"I got my self respect back, and my life back and my health back," he said.

LOCAL BRIEFING

District awards bid for new elementary school

HERMISTON — Kirby Nagelhout Construction will build both of Hermiston's new elementary school buildings.

The Hermiston School District previously announced the contractor had been awarded the bid to build the new, larger Rocky Heights Elementary School, and this week also awarded the bid for construction of Loma Vista Elementary School, which is planned for East Theater Lane.

According to the news release, Kirby Nagelhout, which is headquartered in Bend and has offices in Pendleton, was the apparent low bid on the Loma Vista project, at \$22,579,000. The new elementary school will be 73,500 square feet and serve about 600 students.

Groundbreaking events for both elementary school projects will take place on April 13. Construction is expected to conclude in summer 2022.

Hermiston plans airport project

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston is planning a \$2 million renovation project at the Hermiston Municipal Airport.

The project will reconstruct the "apron" where planes can park after landing on the runway. According to City Manager Mark Morgan, the Federal Aviation Administration has awarded the city a grant to cover 90% of the cost, and a \$150,000 grant from the state will help cover

most of the rest of the local match of \$200,000.

According to the city, in 2014 the Oregon Department of Aviation evaluated the apron, which is more than 30 years old, and rated sections "poor" and "failing." The airport's taxiway was also in poor shape, and a 2016 project rebuilt the taxiway.

Construction on the apron is expected to begin in July and take about 90 days to complete.

Commercial Tire now employee owned

HERMISTON — Commercial Tire announced last week that the company is now 100% employee owned.

The tire company has 45 locations across the Pacific Northwest, including a Hermiston store. It has moved to an employee stock ownership plan business model, which allows employees to accrue stock over time from an employee retirement trust.

According to a news release, research has shown the business model is associated with improved employee performance and job stability.

"Selling the company could create unwanted change and instability for the people we care about," Bob Schwenkfelder, founder and CEO of Commercial Tire, said in a news release. "This transition is about leaving a legacy for our employees and in our communities that will have a lasting, positive impact."

—EO Media Group

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WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO
 3/26-4/1
 Cineplex Show Times
 Theater seating will adhere to social distancing protocols
 Every showing \$7.50 per person (ages 0-3 still free)

Nobody (R)
 1:40p 4:40p 7:40p

The Courier (PG13)
 2:00p 5:00p 8:00p

Raya and the Last Dragon (PG)
 1:00p 4:00p 7:00p

Nomadland (R)
 4:20p

Chaos Walking (PG-13)
 7:20p

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