

# Counties cleared to start vaccinating all essential workers

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County Public Health announced on Wednesday, March 31, that Oregon Health Authority gave the county approval to start vaccinating people in Phase 1B Group 7 effective immediately. Morrow County was also among the counties given approval to move ahead.

The phase includes all essential frontline workers as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, everyone over the age of 16 with underlying condition considered at higher risk from COVID-19, and people in multigenerational households.

The CDC's list of frontline workers includes employees whose work requires regular contact with the



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

**Motorists wait in line for a vaccination at a Umatilla County Public Health COVID-19 mass vaccination site in Pendleton on Friday, March 26, 2021.**

public or co-workers for a prolonged period of time or within 6 feet, who are working in essential industries, such as food service, energy, construction, news media, manufacturing, law and banking.

The list of qualifying underlying health conditions includes cancer, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, dementia, diabetes, Down syndrome, heart conditions, HIV, immunocompromised state, liver



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

**A dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine awaits distribution at a Umatilla County Public Health mass vaccination site in Pendleton on Friday, March 26, 2021.**

disease, obesity, pregnancy, sickle cell disease, smoking, solid organ or blood stem cell transplant, stroke, and substance abuse disorders.

Multigenerational households are defined as households with at least three

generations living together, or individuals residing with and caring for a relative who is not their own child, such as a grandparent raising their grandchild.

The current date set for those groups to become

eligible statewide is Monday, April 5, followed by all Oregonians becoming eligible by May 1. But the state has been allowing some counties to move ahead on their schedule if they can show they have been able to "largely complete" vaccinations for the previous group.

Umatilla and Morrow counties moving ahead early means people in the new categories are eligible to schedule appointments with local pharmacies or doctors offices now, or to participate in clinics scheduled for this week. Umatilla County Public Health is holding clinics in Pendleton on Thursday, April 1 and Friday, April 2, with appointments scheduled ahead of time through [bit.ly/ucohealthcovidvaccine](https://bit.ly/ucohealthcovidvaccine). Family Health Associates is holding a clinic at Umatilla High School on April 2 from 3-7 p.m.

## Two arrested in robbery, assault, kidnapping

Pair surrendered, once officers threatened to send K-9 unit

By **BRYCE DOLE**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Police Department reported a complaint about a robbery, assault and kidnapping that began in a motel room and led a SWAT team on Tuesday, March 30, to arrest two suspects.

Tyler James Schachtsick, 32, and Whitney Ann Anderson, 26, were booked at the Umatilla County Jail on probable cause affidavits charging first-degree robbery, first-degree kidnapping, the unlawful use of a weapon, second-degree assault, first-degree theft, strangulation and menacing, according to a press release.



Anderson Schachtsick

Police began investigating a report made on Monday, March 29, by a 30-year-old man from Pendleton who said he was assaulted and robbed of money earlier that evening in a room at the Rugged Country Lodge, 1807 S.E. Court Ave. The victim alleged that four people had been involved in the incident, according to the press release.

The victim told police the alleged perpetrators then took him to an area on Highway 37 where he was dropped off. The victim then walked to a residence where emergency services were

called, the press release said.

Police learned that some of the suspects were at a residence in the 800 block of Northwest 11th Street. Police, including Pendleton Police Department SWAT, entered the home on March 30 and located two suspects in a bedroom, the press release said.

The suspects initially refused to surrender, "but once they were advised that K9 Bali was going to be deployed, the suspects surrendered without incident," the press release said.

Schachtsick is also facing charges of violating probation and failing to appear in court.

Schachtsick's bail is currently listed at \$587,500, according to the Umatilla County Jail's website. Anderson's is listed at \$545,000.

Police said two suspects remain at large, "but are not

believed to pose a risk to the general public," the press release said.

Police are encouraging anyone with information about this case to contact the Pendleton Police Department at 541-276-4411, or Dispatch at 541-966-3650.

The press release said that "no further information will be released at this time."

"Due to this investigation being ongoing," Pendleton Police Chief Charles Byram said in an email to the *East Oregonian*, "I will not be providing sound bites or in person interviews until after the conclusion of the investigation and in conjunction with the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office. Sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause, but the integrity of the investigation is my main priority due to the seriousness of the crimes involved."

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Police spot cougar in M-F at edge of city limits

MILTON-FREEWATER — City officials said three law enforcement personnel spotted a young cougar on the ridge west of the Milton-Freewater municipal golf course, just outside city limits, at about 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 30.



Boedigheimer

The cougar, spied from South Andrea Street, was not exhibiting any signs of aggression, police Chief Doug Boedigheimer said in a social media post.

Oregon State Police and Department of Fish and Wildlife officials are being asked for advice on the situation, Boedigheimer said.

Residents are cautioned to not allow their pets outside unattended, especially in the area of the sighting, which lasted several minutes.

People are also asked to make sure all household food waste is securely placed in a garbage bag, tied off and put in city refuse cans.

Any resident who has seen or is seeing a cougar is asked to call the Milton-Freewater Police Department at 541-938-5511 to report it.

### Construction blocks portion of Umatilla River Road

HERMISTON — Umatilla River Road between Northeast 11th Street and Cooney Lane outside Hermiston is closed for the next three to four weeks for construction.

Tom Fellows, public works director for Umatilla County, said the road is going through a realignment that will include general improvements and repaving, underground utility work, removing a "hump" in the road, and adding a center turn lane for drivers entering the city's Recycled Water Treatment Plant.

"We'll add a turn pocket so they can get out of the traffic flow," he said.

Fellows said the project is being paid for by a federal grant administered by the state known as an All Roads Transportation Safety Grant, which is triggered by the number of traffic crashes in an area of road, including fatal crashes.

During construction, drivers using Umatilla River Road will need to connect to the road farther north or use an alternate road between Hermiston and Umatilla.

Beginning this week, Umatilla River Road between Northeast 11th Street and Cooney Lane will be closed for up to four weeks as the Umatilla County Road Department undertakes a construction project.

This will impact travel in Northwest Hermiston and to Umatilla. Detour signs are in place and motorists are advised to use alternate routes, including Highway 395 when traveling between Hermiston and Umatilla.

### Free trees available in Hermiston for Arbor Day

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston Parks and Recreation and Hermiston Rotary Club are teaming up to donate 1,500 trees to the community for the the 35th annual Arbor Day Tree Giveaway.

Trees will be available at a drive-thru giveaway on Saturday, April 3, in the Smitty's Ace Hardware parking lot, 1845 N. First St.

The event starts at 9 a.m., and will last until all 1,500 trees are gone.

There is no limit on the number of free trees per household, but the news release states that participants are asked to "only take as many as they can comfortably plant." People are also asked to have their order ready when they arrive. An attendant will take their order, and then have someone bring the trees to their vehicle.

Available tree species are red maple, river birch, red osier dogwood, Washington hawthorn, Callery pear, little leaf linden, Japanese Zelkova and giant sequoia.

— EO Media Group

## DMV to reopen in Eastern Oregon counties in May

By **STEVEN MITCHELL**

Blue Mountain Eagle

SALEM — Department of Motor Vehicles offices in Eastern Oregon counties plan to reopen in May.



Joyce

Am y Joyce, the DMV administrator, said recently during a conference call with the Association of Oregon Counties that the DMV is reducing the number of appointment slots in most of its Eastern Oregon offices to expand to a "stand-by" model.

Joyce said the appoint-



Blue Mountain Eagle, File/Blue Mountain Eagle

**A sign at the Department of Motor Vehicles in John Day lines out instructions about accessing the DMV for in-person appointments.**

ment system with the DMV would never completely go away. She said people who come in for appointments appreciate the consistency that comes with having a scheduled time.

She said the DMV's future is a hybrid system, where they will keep appointments for some and have a "walk-up" capacity for people who do not want to make an appointment or

do not have access to the internet.

Joyce said that renewal of driver's licenses, permits and identification cards would be allowed online beginning in early May.

Joyce said the DMV expects the new feature to be available on DMV2U.Oregon.Gov in early May.

While some DMV services have previously been available online, most have been moved to appointment-only sessions at local DMV locations during the pandemic. Timely appointments can be challenging to come by due to the reduced capacity at DMV offices.

Joyce said customers had been telling the DMV they like both appointments and the ability to drop in.

## Man arrested for acting as lawyer to steal cash

By **BRYCE DOLE**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Police arrested a man last week for allegedly purporting to be the lawyer of a local business to convince employees to bring him cash, according to a press release from Pendleton Police Department Chief Charles Byram.

Police received a report at around 10:20 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, and responded to Thur's Smoke Shop on 502 S.E. 16th St. The business owner, Bryson Thurman, told police an employee had taken money from the business, the press release said.

Police would learn that, earlier in the evening, the same employee had received a phone call from someone who claimed to be Thurman's lawyer. The caller convinced the employee that Thurman needed money from the safe.

The caller directed the employee to deliver the cash from the safe to an individual waiting near Pendleton Fire

Station 1, 1455 S.E. Court Ave.

As the employee delivered the cash to the unknown individual, the real Bryson Thurman arrived on the scene and took the money from the unknown suspect, who fled in a vehicle.

Pendleton police eventually stopped the driver near Southeast Court Avenue and Goad Road, identifying the man as Silvino Mata-Abarca,

31, of Hood River, the press release said.

Mata-Abarca was taken into custody on charges of first-degree aggravated theft and was lodged in the Umatilla County Jail, according to the press release.

He was cited, given a date for court appearance in late April, and then released from the jail on Monday, March 29, when the Umatilla County District Attorney's

office said they would not be filing charges that morning, according to a spokesperson from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

The investigation is ongoing, the press release said.

# ALLELUIA!

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**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Holy Eucharist & Easter Liturgy

- 9:00 AM • April 4, 2021 -

We are resuming in-person worship with County Covid Guidelines in place.

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Sunday, April 4th 9:00am

go to <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org>

Click on Easter General Conference

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Theater seating will adhere to social distancing protocols  
Every showing \$7.50 per person (ages 0-3 still free)

Godzilla Vs. Kong (PG13)

1:20p 2:00p 4:20p  
5:00p 7:20p 8:00p

Nobody (R)

1:40p 4:40p 7:40p

Raya and the Last Dragon (PG)

1:00p 4:00p 7:00p

The Courier (PG13)

12:40p 3:40p

Chaos Walking (PG13)

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