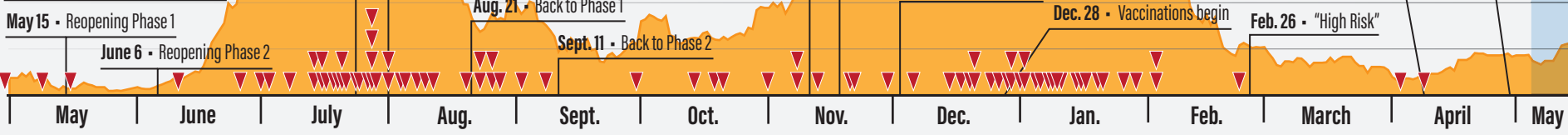


UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF MAY 14

Umatilla County cases: **8,218** (88 new cases this week)
 Umatilla County deaths: **84** (0 new deaths reported this week)
 Oregon cases: **194,542** (4,556 new cases this week)
 Oregon deaths: **2,582** (60 new deaths reported this week)

Umatilla County vaccinations: **2,921** in progress, **17,673** complete (as of 12:01 a.m. 05/14/2021)

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



East Oregonian graphic by Andy Nicolais

Wildhorse Pow Wow canceled

Vaccines scheduled after CTUIR case spike

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

MISSION — Events were canceled and vaccine clinics were scheduled this week after a sharp uptick in COVID-19 cases was reported among school children on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Hours after the CTUIR reported on Wednesday, May 12, that 14 people had tested positive for COVID-19 on the reservation over the past two weeks, with 12 cases coming from kids, tribal health officials announced that youths 12 to 18 could be vaccinated at Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center on Saturday, May 15. The clinic was announced after the federal government authorized the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine among children ages 12 to 15 earlier on May 12.

“The virus is spreading among our youth and we need to respond immediately,” said Lisa Guzman, Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center chief executive offi-

cer. “We want our students to be able to go to graduation, prom and continue with sports. Now that 12- to 15-year-olds are eligible we want to deliver the vaccine to them as soon as possible.”

A day after the case spike was announced, Wildhorse Resort & Casino announced that the annual Wildhorse Pow Wow would be canceled for the second year in a row due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The press release also said that Pow Wow Comedy, an event that features a Native American comedian each year, would be canceled.

The press release said there were multiple reasons why the three-day event, which draws between 5,000 to 7,000 people to the area each year, was canceled, after originally being scheduled for July 2-4.

The concerns included “occupancy restrictions, cleaning and maintenance of outdoor facilities, spacing of vendors and spectators, current rates of COVID diagnoses in Umatilla County and on the reservation, and most importantly, with contestants traveling from across the U.S. and Canada, risk of viral spread to the local community.”

“It takes a lot of people to run this three-day event and right now we have to do our part to keep the community safe and that means holding off until 2022,” said Wildhorse Events Manager Juliana Luke.

Although Wildhorse could theoretically hold a safe pow wow, Luke added, it would require “a lot of effort” and there are no guarantees it would be perfectly safe.

Native American pow wows have been essential traditions for tribes across North America for thousands of years. They are times where tribes “gather to celebrate cultural tradition, spirituality and competition,” often with music and dancing, the press release said.

The Wildhorse Pow Wow celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2019, when the event was last held. Each year, the event brings together dancers and drummers from across the nation to compete for prizes upward of \$90,000.

“My favorite thing about the Wildhorse Pow Wow is how it brings together families and friends from across the West,” Luke said. “Every year we look out for one another and this year we will do it from afar.”

POLICE

Man charged for allegedly disposing of body in Hermiston shooting

Charges related to shooting death of Jordan Crandall

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A Boardman man is facing charges for allegedly disposing of the body of a Hermiston man found dead of a gunshot wound outside the city in March 2020, according to Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus.

Kevin Ricardo Melendez, 26, was arrested by Hermiston police with Rachel Cruz, 26, on May 7, after reports of trespassing. Both had warrants against them.

According to Primus, the charges against Melendez, handed down in a secret indictment from a Umatilla County Grand Jury on April 29, are related to the shooting death of Jordan Crandall, 28, who was found dead next to an irrigation ditch near Alpine Drive northeast of Hermiston in March 2020.

Cruz was wanted on a separate matter, court documents show.

Melendez is not suspected of killing Crandall, Primus said, “but the crimes that are alleged come as a result of the same incident that ultimately ended the life of Jordan Crandall.”

The charges in the indictment include robbery, attempted unlawful use of a weapon, second-degree abuse of a corpse, felony conspiracy to unlawfully deliver a Schedule II controlled substance, misdemeanor menacing and third-degree theft. Melendez is also facing charges for resisting arrest on May 7.

Primus declined to provide any specific information about the charges in the indictment, but said an investigation by the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office determined Melendez was directly involved in the case.

The abuse of a corpse charge is “in this circumstance the dumping of a body and disposing of a body,” he said.

The charges detailed in the indictment say that on March 18, 2020 — the same day that Crandall’s body was found — Melendez allegedly threatened Anthony Andrade with a gun while attempting to rob him. The charges also say that Melendez allegedly intended to use the gun against Stevie Martinez while delivering fentanyl, a Schedule II controlled substance.

Primus said he did not know how Melendez knew or was connected with Andrade or Martinez, though the indictment shows that Martinez is a witness in the case.

Primus said local law enforcement and the district attorney’s office are “familiar” with Melendez from previous cases, but declined to provide specifics. Court documents show that Melendez has faced a variety of charges over the years, including first-degree manslaughter in 2011, though the charges in that case were dismissed.

Primus said he doesn’t expect Melendez to face more charges. He added that his arrest is only a part of the ongoing investigation into Crandall’s death.



Primus

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After a year of tremendous hardship, how do we rebuild a more interconnected, equitable, resilient Oregon? How do we help each other recover, rebuild, and restart our lives and businesses? How do we start listening to and considering each others’ point-of-view? How do we inject opportunity, across the state so everyone has a chance to add to the greater good? **The answer — Together.** Join us as we learn and share how to rebuild a better Oregon, for all Oregonians.



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