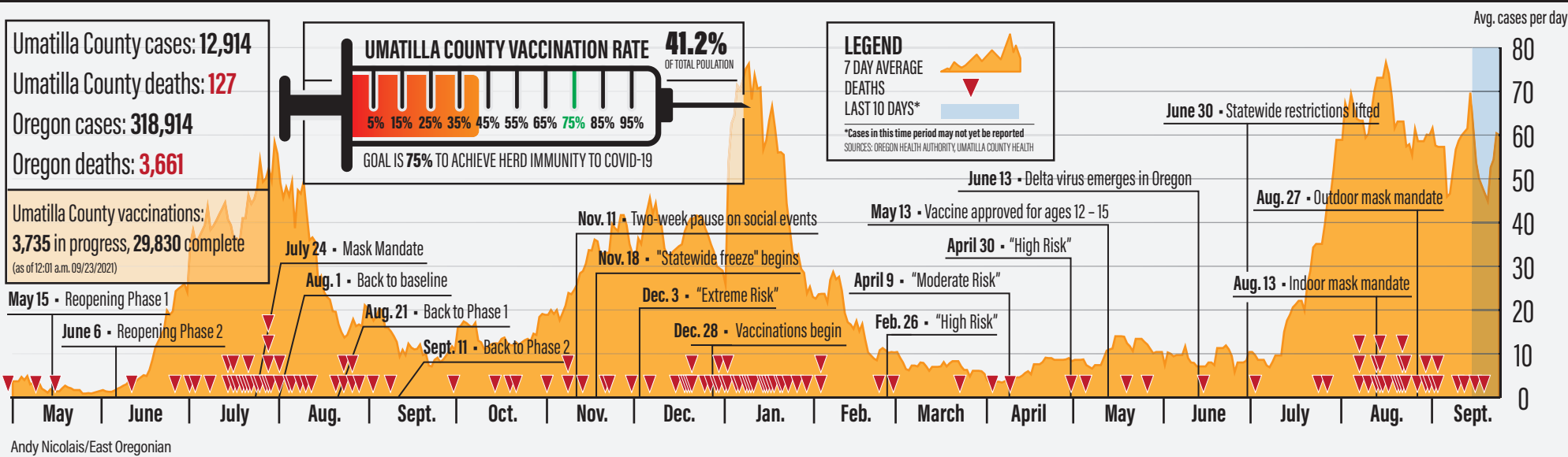


# UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF SEPT. 23



## Libraries, bookstores spotlight banned books

By ERICK PETERSON  
 East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Activities and displays around the area are promoting “Banned Book Week,” which celebrates books that some people want to keep out of the hands of school children or the rest of the public.

Banned Book Week begins Sunday, Sept. 26, and runs until Oct. 2. Pendleton Public Library director Jennifer Costley said her library has done elaborate book displays in the past, but this year, the library’s sole commemoration will be a banned-book-themed arts and crafts class for children.

Regardless, Costley said Banned Book Week is important because it helps stoke interest in reading. Attempting to ban books tends to have the opposite effect, Costley said, as people seek out the controversial material. Costley said one book in Pendleton’s collection, Alex Gino’s “George,” a book with a transgender protagonist, got more attention after some groups sought to ban it.

### Reasons vary for challenging books

When many people think of a banned book, they think of books that are forbidden or removed by an institution, or maybe even burned. Though this can be the case, Mark Rose, Hermiston Public Library director said a “banned” book has a different meaning for his library and other libraries.

People may “challenge” a book, asking for it to be removed, Rose said. Once the book is challenged, the book is “banned” regardless of whether it was removed from the library or not. It is then added to a banned book list, cautioning other libraries they might also experience a challenge or concern from their local residents.

Though people are responding negatively when they initiate a ban, the ban can end up having the opposite intended effect. A ban, then, can be a badge of honor for a book as subversive or even important.

The American Library Association released a list of the most challenged books in 2020. “George” made the list, along with “Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You” by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds, and “Something Happened in Our Town: A Child’s Story about Racial Injustice” by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard. Classics, such as “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee, also were on the top-10 list.

Some reasons for banning the books on the ALA list



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

**Arianna Strong and Kellie Lamoreaux, library aides, and Susie Sotelo, library director of the Umatilla Public Library, on Sept. 16, 2021, read pages from “The Story of Ferdinand,” a banned book. It is on display at Hush Park in Umatilla. Banned Book Week begins Sunday, Sept. 26, and runs until Oct. 2.**

include sensitive topics, profanity and even an author’s behavior.

According to the ALA, this year’s theme is “Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us.”

The Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse produces annual reports about intellectual freedom issues at libraries and schools in Oregon, including books that receive challenges. According to the OIFC’s 2021 report, patrons and library staff challenged several Dr. Seuss works, including “And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street,” “The Cat’s Quizzer” and “If I Ran the Zoo,” all for racist depictions.

The book series “Court of Thorns and Roses” by Sarah J. Maas and “Gimmie Everything You Got” by Iva-Marie Palmer were among those that received objections from parents and patrons for sexually explicit material. And according to the report, there were challenges from public school teachers against “Julián Is a Mermaid” and “The Little Library” for LGBTQ+ content.

A classic also made the OIFC’s list: A parent wanted a school library to yank William Golding’s “Lord of the Flies” due to “Occult / Satanism.”

Libraries retained the works in each case except one: A library moved the “The Great (Season One) from a “New DVD” shelf to the regular DVD section. That report noted that action was happening regardless of any challenge.

### Displays of banned books a tradition

Rose described Banned Book Weeks as a divisive topic that he has seen “create incredible problems for libraries in the past.” Still, staff at the Hermiston Public Library will select materials and items to highlight for the week. Rose said the library has been creating banned book displays since he arrived just more than five years ago.

“It’s often a tradition in libraries to create these displays at this time of year,” he said.

Most librarians, he said, have a negative opinion of bans because the bans can limit the access to information.

Susie Sotelo, Umatilla Public Library director, also stands against bans. The library placed “The Story of Ferdinand,” a banned book, in its StoryWalk displays. The StoryWalk book is changed every month, and the book will remain to the end of September.

“You can walk the trail and learn about what Banned Book Week is and you can find out why this particular story was banned,” said Sotelo. “At the end of the trail, we also have a display with other popular banned books and the option to enter to win a copy of ‘The Story of Ferdinand.’”

Sotelo said she chose “Ferdinand” as the Story-Walk book because its status as a banned book is surprising and might interest people. She said the book, about a pacifistic bull, has a nice message for children.

Still, people of varied political stripe have criticized the book and caused it to be banned.

Kathy Street, the director of the Oregon Trail Library District, oversees the Boardman, Heppner and Irrigon libraries. She said all three of her branches will each have banned book displays of the top challenged books. A majority of the displayed books, she said, will be young adult literature. They also will be a “mix of classic titles and newer writings.”

She said one of her favorite challenged and banned books is “And Tango Makes Three” by Peter Parnell, Justin Richardson and Henry Cole.

“I love it for the story of a little penguin egg being taken care of by the two male penguins who were bonded at the zoo,” she said. “I mean how sweet is that?”

The book has drawn challenges for its same-sex pairing of animals. As such, she said, it is perceived as anti-family.

“Even in the animal world there all kinds of families, and to see them reflected in books is important,” she said. “We need a broad selection for patrons to choose from. And there will always be books that someone might disagree with. But that is no reason for one person to remove it.”

And The Next Chapter Bookstore in Hermiston also plans to display banned books, such as “The Grapes of Wrath,” “1984” and “To Kill a Mockingbird.”

“It’s hard to comprehend,” said Angela Pursel, store owner, “what we as readers, as thinkers, would have missed if we hadn’t had access to this great literature.”

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Buses not bringing Haitian immigrants to Pendleton

PENDLETON — Rumors of buses bringing Haitian immigrants to the Social Security Administration office in Pendleton have no merit, according to Pendleton Mayor John Turner and Pendleton Chief of Police Charles Byram.

“The rumor was that there was a bunch of Haitians being brought up from the border,” Turner said, “and that does not appear to be true.”

Instead, migrant farm workers are coming through and making applications to see what Social Security benefits they are eligible to receive. Turner said because Pendleton has the only Social Security office that serves Northeastern Oregon, several hundred are coming through this week.

Byram said he sent an officer to investigate the situation and found everything was legal.

“What we learned is that migrant farmworkers were being bused to the Social Security office to apply for their benefits, which if they’re allowed legally in the country to work, they can do that,” Byram said. “They were doing what they were supposed to do by law.”

### Applications open for chain-up permits

PENDLETON — The Oregon Department of Transportation announced in a press release it will issue permits for those interested in chaining up commercial vehicles during the winter months along specific sections of Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon.

The department’s District

12 office in Pendleton, the District 13 office in La Grande and the District 14 office in Ontario will each issue permits, depending on the need and number of applicants. Interested parties need to contact the appropriate ODOT district office between Oct. 1 and Oct. 31 for details and application requirements. Each ODOT office will hold random drawings on Nov. 1 to determine who will receive an offer for the permits.

ODOT permit specialist Tom Lapp said, “After the drawing, those individuals selected will have one week to complete the permit application and return it to the district office.”

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation also will issue some permits for the Umatilla County area to tribal members.

Only persons who have the chain-up permits will be allowed to provide this service to truck drivers in designated chain-up areas. The permits will be valid between Nov. 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021.

For more information, contact the appropriate ODOT office as follows:

- District 12 Office, 1327 S.E. Third St., Pendleton Contact Lapp at 541-278-3450.
- District 13 Office, 3014 Island Ave., La Grande. Contact Lynn Elliott at 541-963-8407.
- District 14 Office, 1390 S.E. First St., Ontario. Contact John Eden at phone: 541-823-4016.

Information regarding permits issued by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is available from John Barkley, Danielle Broncheau or Michelle Bralgie at 541-429-7193.

—EO Media Group and wire services

**OVBC**  
 Oregon Values and Beliefs Center

You can help shape Oregon's future.

Share your opinion. Earn money.  
**Join the OVBC Panel.**  
 panel.oregonvbc.org

**Ready For a Home Loan?**

**Lee Ann Ottosen**

**HOME LOAN OFFICER | CONSTRUCTION CERTIFIED**

NMLS 277636 CALL 541-304-6112  
 LeeAnnOttosen@UmpquaBank.com  
 www.UmpquaBank.com/Lee-Ann-Ottosen

**UMPQUA BANK**  
 Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender NMLS 401867

Tobias Unruh, owner  
 600 David Eccles Rd  
 Baker City, Oregon

**ELKHORN BARN CO.**  
 Custom Barns and Storage  
 509-331-4558 • Elkhornbarns@gmail.com • 541-519-2968

**OLD HICKORY**  
 — BUILDINGS & SHEDS —