



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Maj. DeWayne Halstad of the Salvation Army in Pendleton receives his flu shot Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021, during a vaccination clinic at the Salvation Army.

Supplies:

Continued from Page A1

For Gregg Carter, the hospital outreach program and other services at the Salvation Army, the hospital's program have been a welcome resource throughout the warmer months. Carter, who has lived on the streets of Pendleton for the last five years, received his COVID-19 vaccine from the St. Anthony outreach program, has eaten lunch at the Salvation Army regularly and even had a tooth pulled by another

outreach program earlier in the year. "It's been nice and handy," he said. Carter picked up a sleeping bag at the Nov. 3 event and looked over the selection of winter clothes to see if he needed anything else. "I've got pretty good gear," he said. While Carter said he feels ready for the winter, he picked up the extra sleeping bag to help line his and break the cold on "sub-zero nights." In the event weather gets too extreme, Carter said he has lined up a few people to spend the night with if the cold gets to him. "I'm on the (Umatilla River) —

I've got a tree — and when I wake up in the morning my sleeping bag and backpack come with me," he said. "I go to sleep when I get there and I get up and go when I wake up." Carter said he mostly likes to keep to himself and be outdoors but he comes to pick up lunch at the Salvation Army most days. He said he had often thought about living on the streets after his time in the armed forces and a career as a woodworker and caregiver, but when the Great Recession hit in the late 2000s Carter's thoughts became reality. "It's where I wanted to be," he said. Maj. DeWayne Halstad, of the

Salvation Army, said having St. Anthony and other resources at the Pendleton Corps have been convenient for those coming to the daily lunch program. "People like it, and it's convenient," he said. "They know that they bring supplies." While Wednesday was the final outreach day for the St. Anthony program, the Salvation Army will continue to offer meals Monday through Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Sundays 2-3 p.m. Meals are to-go, however picnic tables are available on site to dine outdoors.

Strain:

Continued from Page A1

Fiumara said providers' capacity struggles can't be entirely attributed to Bi-Mart dropping its pharmacies. He said Pendleton Family Medicine suspended vaccinations after dealing with staffing shortages while the Rite-Aid in Hermiston has struggled with the demand for pharmacy services in general. But even if the effects of the Bi-Mart pharmacy closures are temporary, Pendleton and Hermiston will have to endure the rest of the pandemic with one less vaccination site. In Pendleton, Bi-Mart's narrowing its scope of services means there are only three commercial pharmacies left in the area. St. Anthony Hospital's pharmacy only serves inpatients while Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center only provides medication to Yellowhawk-eligible patients, which are restricted to people with American Indian blood or Native descent. In a county where less than half of residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the public health department has largely ceded vaccination duties to pharmacies and other medical providers after organizing mass vaccination drives early



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Pendleton Bi-Mart pharmacy will close its doors Monday, Nov. 10, 2021.

in the year. Umatilla County Public Health briefly revived the format late last week to distribute booster shots, but Fiumara said the goal was to provide some relief to medical providers preparing to deal with newly eligible vaccine recipients. On Tuesday, Nov. 2, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended expanding the Pfizer vaccine's eligibility to 5 to 11-year-olds. The Oregon Health Authority announced that the state could follow with its own orders as soon

as Wednesday, Nov. 3. In Umatilla County, Fiumara said he expects most school-aged children to get their vaccines in a pediatric setting after parents discuss their options with a doctor. Fiumara doesn't anticipate vaccinating children in a drive thru clinic like the county has several times before for adults. "It would be slow and messy," he said. Even with the vaccine drives mostly over, Umatilla County Public Health has been vaccinating students

at Pendleton High School and Sunridge Middle School through its school-based health center program. At a presentation to the Pendleton School Board, Alisha Lundgren, public health's deputy director, presented modest COVID-19 vaccination numbers so far — 21 at Sunridge and 15 at the high school. Despite the vaccine eligibility expansion, Fiumara said Umatilla County Public Health is incapable of offering vaccines to elementary school students on a

daily basis due to funding. Instead, the department is reaching out to schools to set up by-appointment clinics at certain dates and times in the future. Fiumara didn't think there will be the same level of pent-up demand there was when the vaccine first debuted for adults. "I think it's going to be more of a slow burn," he said. Not every medical provider is capable of providing vaccines to children either. Only the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for children younger than 18, and Emily Smith, a spokesperson for St. Anthony, wrote in an email that the hospital only carries Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is taking a different tack. Aaron Hines, the interim CEO of Yellowhawk, said the clinic tentatively plans to hold a vaccination drive Nov. 13 specifically for 5- to 12-year-olds. Hines said Yellowhawk wanted to do the drive to get ahead of the holiday season, when families from different households tend to gather. Hines said the initial plan is to only offer the COVID-19 vaccine to tribal members, but if supply exceeds demand, Yellowhawk may open eligibility to other groups.

Shots:

Continued from Page A1

Locals on both days packed the parking lot at Pendleton Convention Center for a drive-thru clinic. Several people who received boosters at the Oct. 29 clinic there said they sought out the extra protection because they know people personally who have been severely infected or have died from COVID-19. Fiumara confirmed that was a trend among patients who wanted boosters. "It's unfortunate that that seems to be the biggest driver," he said. "Because we don't want them all to have that story."

Death toll rises

The county health department on Nov. 2 reported two new COVID-19 deaths. That brings the county's death toll to 155 since the pandemic started. One of the victims, who fought COVID-19 for two-and-a-half months, was just 29 years old, health officials reported. The county's 154th victim is a 29-year-old man who tested positive on Aug. 3 and died Oct. 21 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. He had unspecified underlying health conditions. The county's 155th victim is a 79-year-old man who tested positive Oct. 29 and died Oct. 29 at Good Shepherd. He had unspecified underlying health conditions. Nearly 30 Umatilla County residents who contracted COVID-19 have died since the beginning of September.

Positive signs among cases, vaccinations

Fiumara said the high rate of immunization rates coupled with falling infection rates has him feeling cautiously optimistic. For more than a month, case counts have declined on-average. As of Tuesday, Nov. 2, the county was reporting just 24 cases per day. That's the lowest daily total since mid-July, and marks the fifth consecutive week of declines. Last week, the county reported 182 COVID-19 cases. During the week ending Oct. 1, the county reported 510 cases. Fiumara said the low totals would have placed the county close to the high risk categories in recent months. "We're in a good place compared to where we've been," Fiumara said. And with vaccine eligibility likely coming soon for youths over the age of 5, Fiumara said his optimism is only growing, but residents should continue to protect themselves against. He said, "We're not out of this yet." The county has reported 14,727 confirmed and presumptive cases since the pandemic started.

Sams:

Continued from Page A1

But Sams' confirmation also received positive statements from Sen. John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican and the ranking member of the committee, and Sen. Steve Daines, Republican from Montana. "I too share support for Mr. Sams for the national parks leader," Daines said. "We passed the Great American Outdoors Act. We have a wonderful opportunity now to move forward with implementation of addressing that maintenance backlog." After the committee vote, Wyden sent out a statement reiterating his support for Sams while urging the Senate to "move quickly and decisively" to confirm him. Democrats have the barest of majorities in the Senate — a 50-member caucus

plus Vice President Kamala Harris. Presidential appointees aren't subject to the filibuster during confirmation votes, but Democrats would need all their members to stick together if Republicans widely opposed Sams. But that doesn't appear to be the case. Sams earned affirmative votes from the seven Republicans present at the meeting. The vote followed a hearing in October, where Sams addressed senator questions about his lack of experience in national parks, his views on the service's staffing shortage and what he would do to address infrastructure issues at certain parks and sites. Back home in Mission, the CTUIR put out a statement after the committee vote, noting the historic nature of Sams becoming the first American Indian to lead the National Park Service and suggesting the pending

confirmation was the culmination of a lifetime of work. "Tribal elders have been preparing Chuck for this type of work his entire life," CTUIR Board of Trustees Chair Kat Brigham said in a statement. "From a young age, he learned he has a responsibility to take care of the land for our children's children." According to the High Country News, tribal leaders from across Indian Country aren't just looking at Sams as a symbolic victory but also as an opportunity to improve relations between the park service and tribal governments. Several national parks were created by encroaching on indigenous land and removing its inhabitants, and tribal leaders hope Sams will work with them to establish co-management agreements that give tribes greater say in the park service's decision making process.

BRAGGIN' RIGHTS
HUNTING PHOTO CONTEST

1st Place Winner:
John and William Smith, Echo

2nd Place Winner:
Austin Carlson, Pendleton

3rd Place Winner:
Chris Draper, Baker City

Thank you to everyone who submitted photos of their big capture and congratulations to our winners — You've certainly earned Braggin' Rights!