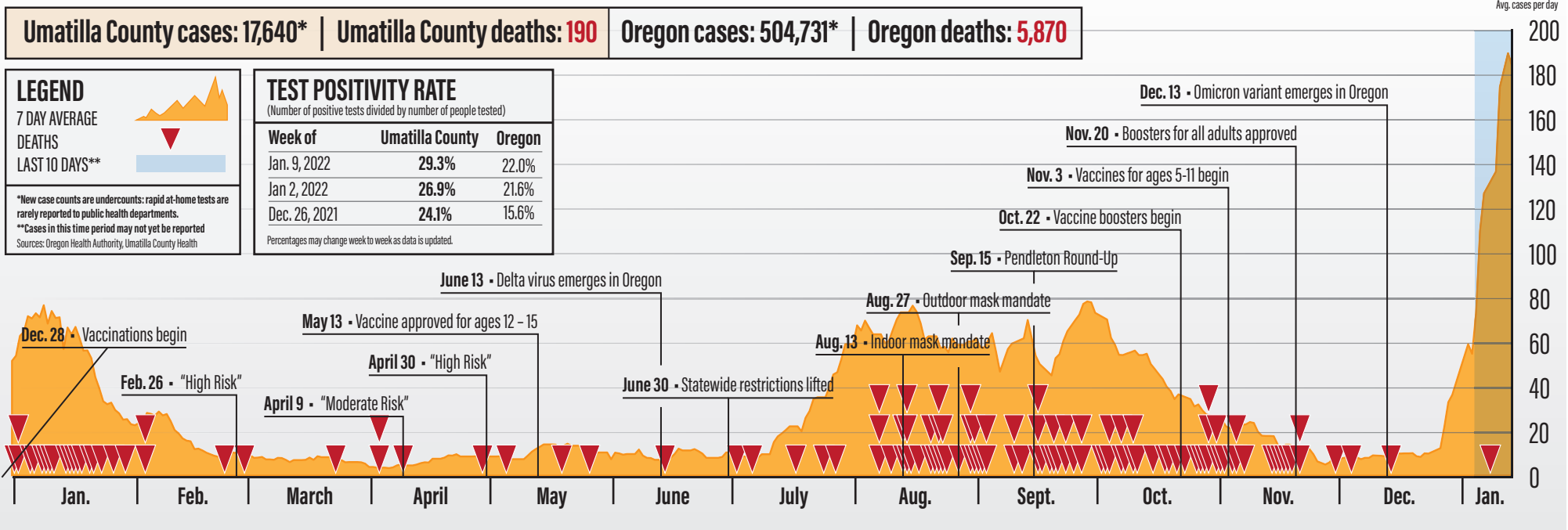


# UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF JAN. 13



Andy Nicolais/East Oregonian

With the emergence of the omicron variant, COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed in Umatilla County since the beginning of the year. On Dec. 31, 2021, the seven-day average number of new cases reported was 42. As of Jan. 13, the seven-day average was 189, with 29% of tests coming back positive. During this pandemic, spikes in hospitalizations have followed spikes in new cases, indicating a likely increase in hospitalizations in the weeks ahead.

# Hermiston police make arrest in 2015 murder

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hermiston police Thursday, Jan. 13, made an arrest for a 2015 murder of a Umatilla man.

Jose Maria Oseguera, 40, now is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on probable cause charges of second-degree murder, unlawful use of a weapon, felon in possession of a weapon and contempt of court and failure to appear.

Police arrested Oseguera for the homicide of Alonso

Madrigal. Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston in a press release stated in the evening of March 4, 2015, Madrigal, 23, was “senselessly murdered” in the parking lot of a convenience store in the 400 block of Northwest 11th Street, Hermiston.

From early in the investigation, several persons of interest were identified and for the last six-plus years, Hermiston detectives have worked on the investigation, according to Edmiston. Days after the murder,

detectives flew to California, where a vehicle involved in the homicide was located and seized.

Hermiston police detectives with Oregon State Police and the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team arrested Oseguera at about 7 p.m. in the parking lot of Walmart, 1350 N. First St., Hermiston.

At the time of his arrest, according to Edmiston, Oseguera “possessed a loaded handgun, crystal substance suspected to be

methamphetamine and a large amount of cash.”

Detectives have remained in constant contact with the family of Madrigal, Edmiston also reported, and Hermiston police told Madrigal’s family about the arrest.

Throughout this investigation, Hermiston police received assistance from the Umatilla-Morrow County Major Crime Team, the Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office, the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Office crime lab, the police depart-

ment of Huntington Park, California, and the United States Marshals Service.

And on Jan. 13 before the arrest, the Umatilla Police Department assisted while Hermiston detectives were in Umatilla.

Edmiston also stated the Hermiston Police Department’s biggest thank you perhaps needs to go to Madrigal’s family.

“They have been so incredibly patient and understanding with us as our detectives worked the

investigation,” he said in the press release. “We had all the pieces of what transpired that fateful night, we were just waiting for a break we prayed would come. Within the last couple of months, that break happened, and the DA’s office presented the information to a grand jury where an arrest warrant was eventually issued for Mr. Oseguera. It is our sincere hope that once brought to justice with a conviction, the family will have some sense of closure.”

# Ron Saager, owner of beloved M-F shoe shop, dies on Christmas Day

By MARGAUX MAXWELL

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

MILTON-FREEWATER — Ron Saager, the longtime head of Milton-Freewater’s iconic Saager’s Shoe Shop, died Christmas Day at 70 years old.

Co-owned by the Saager family and daughter Deidre Saager-Nyburg, Saager’s has been in the business of repairing and selling shoes at 613 N. Main St. for over a century.

The store always has been a family-owned and run operation, now in its fourth generation.

William Saager started the business in 1914, at the same location. “My grandpa was a man of many talents,” Ron Saager said in a 2013 interview with the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin.

William Saager was practical, innovative and self-sufficient, Ron Saager said.

“In his younger days, he’d get up in the morning and hitch up 90 head of mules to harvest wheat,” he said. “He also had a 4-acre fruit farm in Milton-Freewater.”

Ron Saager’s father, Herb Saager, bought into the business in the 1950s.

The store’s original name was Freewater Electric Shoe Store, to indicate the store had a light bulb and an electric motor that could be moved to operate machinery such as a sewing machine — an innovative technology for its time.

After spending much of his young life working as a commercial fisherman in Alaska, Ron Saager ditched



Saager

the dangerous seasonal work and moved back home to Milton-Freewater to work at the family’s shoe shop when he met his wife, Julie Hardin, in the summer of 1980.

“Working at the family’s shoe store brought Ron great joy. He loved his customers and crew, many of whom became family. He was so proud of the store, and always grateful to serve such a beautiful community,” his January obituary read.

Ron Saager, a McLoughlin High School graduate, is survived by his daughters, Deidre Nyburg and Kayla Saager; his grandchildren, Trevor, Bailee and Ruby; his youngest brother and one of his best friends, Rick Saager and family; his oldest brother, Norm Saager and family; uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Per Ron’s wishes, no public service will be held, but friends and family are welcome to share memories and photos on the Munselle-Rhodes funeral page. To leave a condolence visit munsellerhodes.com.

# Pendleton City Council incumbents make reelection decisions with deadline in sight

Campbell and McDonald intend to run again; Cambier to retire

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council has five seats up for election in May, but only one candidate has filed so far.

Prospective candidates have until March 8 to file for the May 17 election, giving incumbents and newcomers less than two months to enter their names. Voters will elect one candidate for each of Pendleton’s three wards, and thanks to an early resignation two years ago, two citywide, at-large candidates. If any of the winning candidates can’t secure more than 50%, the top two vote-getters will go to a runoff held during the Nov. 8 general election.

In a series of interviews, incumbents up for election shared their election plans for 2022.

## Ward 1 (Downtown, South Hill, Riverside)

Innes said she plans to run for a second term in May and will file her candidate paperwork to make it official in the near future.

Innes said she feels good about her first four years on the council and has enjoyed the feedback she’s gotten from constituents, even when they don’t agree with her positions.

Innes was a first time candidate when she won her seat in 2020, but she sought



Antonio Sierra, East Oregonian, File

Mayor John Turner swears in, from left to right, Councilors Linda Neuman, Carole Innes, Jake Cambier and McKennon McDonald on Jan. 8, 2019, at Pendleton City Council Chambers. Neuman said she is considering running again in 2022, and Cambier intends to retire at the end of his term. Both Innes and McDonald intend to run for new terms in May.

a spot on the city council slightly earlier.

After Councilor John Brenne died in 2018, Innes was one of two candidates the council considered to fill the seat for the remainder of the year. The council opted for Chuck LeValle, but Innes stayed in the race for the full term, winning a majority of the vote against the incumbent and a third candidate.

## Ward 2 (North Hill, Westgate, airport)

As of Monday, Jan. 10, Ward 2 Councilor McKennon McDonald was the only candidate who has filed for office.

The president of the city council, McDonald first won office in 2014 at the age of 23 by defeating former Councilor Bryan Branstetter. She then won a second term unopposed in 2018. As she

gained experience and other council members left office, McDonald went from a fresh face to its longest tenured veteran in the span of two terms.

McDonald was elected council president in 2019, a mostly ceremonial position that allows McDonald to preside over council meetings if the mayor is absent.

## Ward 3 (Southgate, Tutuilla Road, McKay Creek)

Ward 3 Councilor Linda Neuman said she’s leaning toward running for reelection but hasn’t made a final decision on seeking a second term.

Neuman was a first-time candidate when she won her first term in 2018. Neuman was originally set to vie for the seat against retired U.S. Forest Service worker

Bill Aney. But when Aney dropped out just ahead of the filing deadline, Neuman ran unopposed.

## At-large

Thanks to early resignation, both at-large seats will be up for election in 2022.

Only a few months after winning a second term on the council in 2018, Councilor Paul Chalmers announced he was leaving Pendleton and resigning from his at-large seat on the council. The remaining councilors selected Steve Campbell from a field of nine applicants to fill the remainder of Chalmers first term and serve the first half of his second.

Campbell said he plans to run to fill the last part of Chalmers’ term. He said he likes the direction the city is heading toward and wants to keep on working on issues like housing. Whoever wins Campbell’s at-large seat will have to run again in 2024 for a full, four-year term.

The other at-large seat held by Councilor Jake Cambier will see a new face when the council convenes for its first meeting in 2023.

Cambier said he intends to retire at the end of his term. If he had run again and won, Cambier said he would have been 81 by the time his next term ended and he wanted to give someone else a chance.

Cambier was appointed to his at-large seat in 2016 to fill the final two years of Councilor Al Plute’s term after the latter resigned. In 2018, he won a full term by beating retiree Rex Morehouse.

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