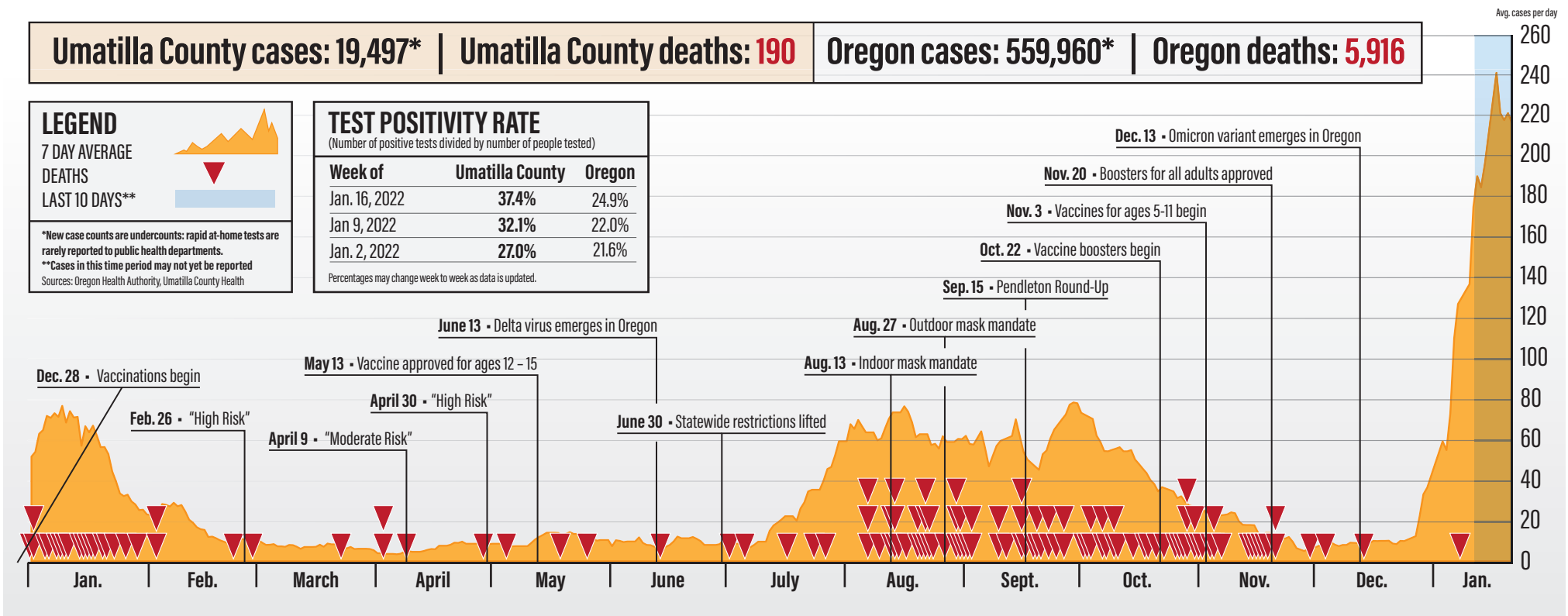


# UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF JAN. 21, 2022

Umatilla County cases: 19,497\* | Umatilla County deaths: 190 | Oregon cases: 559,960\* | Oregon deaths: 5,916



In the last seven days, Umatilla County Health reported 1,608 new COVID-19 cases, an all-time high. The previous high-case-count record was the last week of September 2021, with 546 cases reported in a seven-day period. The test positivity rate of 37.4% this week is the highest ever, indicating COVID-19 is circulating widely in the area.

## Harris Park to get new bridge

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Harris Park is getting a new crossing bridge.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners at its meeting Wednesday, Jan. 19, approved a contract for Harry Johnson Plumbing & Excavation Inc. to install the structure at the county park near Milton-Freewater. The Walla Walla company was the low bidder at \$600,397.50, beating out six competitors. The project includes \$27,600 for bridge removal and \$39,000 for the installation of a prefabricated steel bridge.

County Public Works Director Tom Fellows told the board the funding is coming through the state's bridge program. The county "writes the check," he said, and the state reimburses all but 10.2%.

The county also could receive money for the bridge from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. If that funding comes through, Fellows said, the county would funnel the money into the state's bridge program.

The county board also approved the creation of two new specialist positions in the county's CARE Program to work with

Umatilla County Community Justice.

The funding for the specialists comes from the state's Justice Reinvestment Program, the state's effort to provide counties with funds for crime prevention and treatment services with the goal of cutting down on Oregon's prison growth. The county's share of the state program for the 2021-23 biennium is \$342,000.

Umatilla County Justice and the CARE Program have entered into an agreement for services related to Justice Reinvestment. Under the deal, the CARE program will provide two specialists to work with the county's corrections clients to help with their needs.

In a related move, the board approved the creation of administrative position in CAREs to assist its director, Jenni Galloway. She told the board in the meeting that some of the Justice Reinvestment money will help cover the cost of the position.

In other business, the board approved a payment of \$22,600 to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, Hermiston, for renting bleachers for the 2021 county fair and for parking management for the 2019 and 2021 fairs.

## Pilot Rock has new mayor for rest of 2022

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — The Pilot Rock City Council appointed one of its own to fulfill the rest of former Mayor Virginia Carnes' term.

Carnes died Jan. 8 at the age of 77. She was in the last year of the four-year term. City recorder Teri Bacus reported the council at its

meeting Tuesday, Jan. 18, selected Councilor Randy Gawith to serve as the interim mayor for the rest of 2022.

Gawith came on the council in August 2021 as an appointment to fill a vacancy, Bacus said. He is retired and drives a school bus.

The council also elected Councilor Raymond Doherty as council president.

Gawith's appointment means there is a vacancy on

the council. Bacus said the city will advertise that in time for applicants to apply by Feb. 9 so the council can elect a new member at its Feb. 15 meeting.

The council also held a hearing on the closing out of the Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation Program the city participated in since 2018.

Pilot Rock, Pendleton,

Adams and unincorporated areas of Umatilla County formed a consortium to apply for the \$400,000 federal grant to upgrade homes to suitable living environments.

Bacus said the grant aided 31 people in 14 households, helping to cover the cost of replacing old heaters, for example.

"It helped a lot of seniors," she said. "Most of them were seniors."

## New signal cabinets dot downtown



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

A new traffic signal cabinet sits at the intersection of South Main Street and Southeast Emigrant Avenue in downtown Pendleton on Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022. The Oregon Department of Transportation recently upgraded the signal cabinets and corresponding traffic signals as a part of its paving project on Interstate 84 from Meacham to Kamela. The \$54 million project will upgrade 10 miles of I-84 as well as provide traffic signal upgrades along state routes in or near the cities of Hermiston, Pendleton, Umatilla, Stanfield and Milton-Freewater. ODOT anticipates wrapping up the signal work later this spring with freeway improvements finishing in the fall.

## LOCAL BRIEFS

### Rockfall closes Highway 730 east of Umatilla

UMATILLA — A rockfall and an unstable slope Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 19, shutdown U.S. Highway 730 on the Washington side of the border.

The incident closed the highway in both directions between the Oregon state line and Wallula Junction (13 miles south of Pasco). The Washington State Department of Transportation did not have an estimated time for reopening.

For update conditions in Oregon, check TripCheck.com or call 511/800-977-6368. Outside Oregon, call 503-588-2941. For Washington Department of Transportation updates, visit wsdot.com/travel/real-time/map.

—EO Media Group

HERMISTON ♦ 2021

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