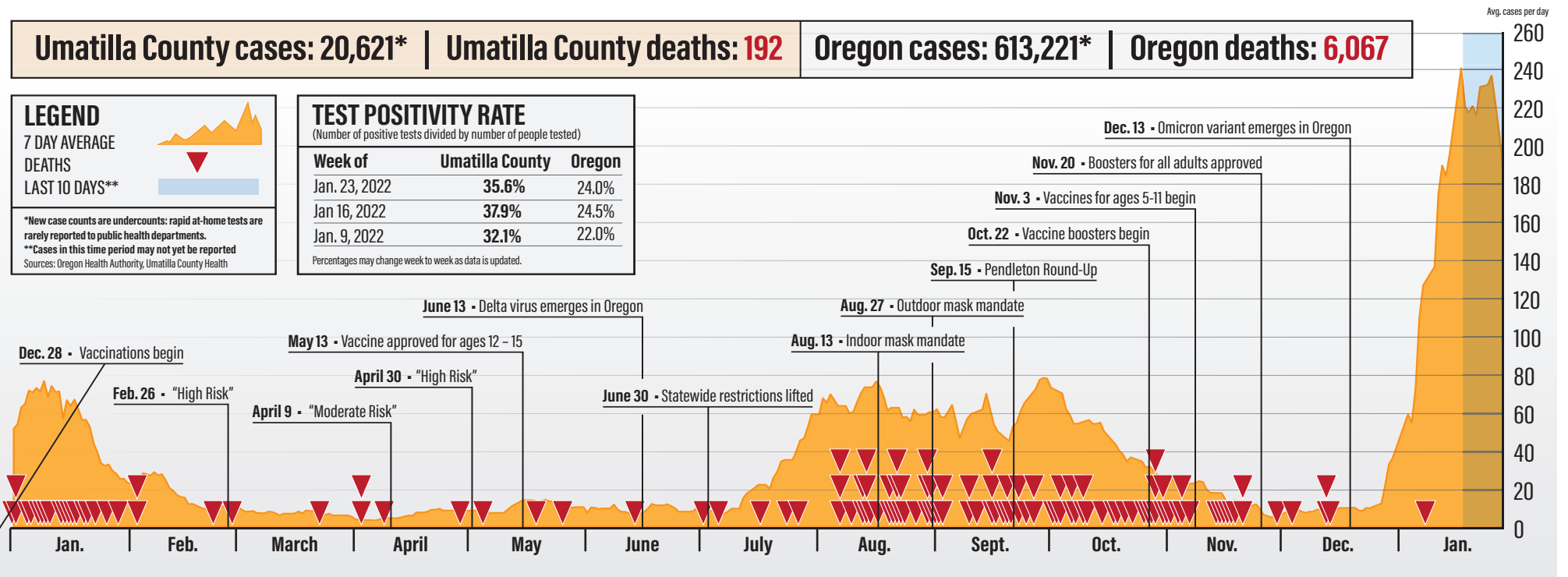


UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF JAN. 27, 2022



Andy Nicolais/East Oregonian

Umatilla County Public Health in the last seven days reported 1,124 new COVID-19 cases. The seven-day average of new cases dropped after peaking at 240 on Jan. 17 down to 206 on Jan. 27. The county's test positivity rate fell from a record high last week of 37.4% to 35.6% this week, which still indicates COVID-19 is circulating widely in the area.

Community mourns passing of former principal, NFL player

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — When the word went out about the death of a former Hermiston High School administrator, many people expressed their sorrow.

Philip "Buzz" Brazeau Jr. died Jan. 12 at the age of 72. Locals are talking about the man they describe as both a "giant personality" and an "intellectual."

"Buzz was more than just a great administrator," Tricia Mooney, Hermiston School District superintendent, said. "He was a great human. The Hermiston School District and our community are fortunate that we had the opportunity to have Buzz on our team. His legacy is in the lives he touched and the people he impacted. We are all better because of him."

According to the Hermiston School District, Brazeau was employed as a Hermiston High School assistant principal 2004-07 and principal 2007-12, and he was the 2011-12 Hermiston School District Administrator of the Year.

Outside of Hermiston, he was known as a football player for Washington State University, the Los Angeles Rams, the Green Bay Packers and the Portland Storm. After his football days, he worked as a teacher, a coach and a school administrator at different school districts.

His obituary praises him as a family man, a loving husband to wife Kathy, and a beloved father, uncle and grandfather.

Umatilla County Commissioner Dan Dorrان is among those who said they grieve over Brazeau's death. Dorrان was at Brazeau's memorial service, which was Jan. 22 in Salem. Dorrان said he considered Brazeau a "really good friend."

Dorrان said the memorial service was heart-felt. Several people were there, he said, and they spoke of their disappointment about the man's death. Based upon the outpouring of emotion from funeral attendees, Dorrان said it was obvious how people felt about the



East Oregonian, File

Former Hermiston Principal Buzz Brazeau gives a hug to senior quarterback Faafauala Ena after the Bulldogs on Nov. 7, 2009, held on to beat Pendleton on its home home field. Brazeau died Jan. 12, 2022. He was 72.

former principal: They loved him, Dorrان said.

The two worked together on several projects, Dorrان said. In addition, Brazeau was principal when Dorrان's children were students at the high school. They also attended church together, he said. As

such, their families got to know each other well.

"If you knew Buzz, you had a friend," Dorrان said. "You always came away from him a little smarter, a little kinder, with a little different view of the world after every conversation with him."

He was an intellectual as well as a bigger-than-life personality, Dorrان said.

Over at Hermiston High School, Principal Tom Spoo expressed many of the same feelings and insights. He

worked in the school district alongside Brazeau and described him as a smart and powerful individual.

Spoo said he was an agricultural science teacher at the school when Brazeau began working as the assistant principal. When Brazeau became principal, Spoo took the job as assistant principal. The pair worked together for four years before Spoo left to be principal of Armand Larive Middle School.

As co-workers, they spoke daily and constantly, Spoo said. Both morning people, the pair frequently met early in the day. Still at work into the evening on some days, they had multiple conversations throughout work hours.

Spoo said they did not always agree with one another, but he always felt impressed with Brazeau. The former principal, according to Spoo, always put students first.

He credited Spoo for an excellent and impressive attitude toward students. Spoo also holds young people in

high regard, just like his old boss, he said. Still, Brazeau had a special way about him that made him different, he said.

"He was a big, old teddy bear," Spoo said. "That is, until you got him fired up. Then he'd turn into a grizzly bear."

Spoo said the old bear would get very excitable while watching his school's teams play sports. At games, Spoo recalled, Brazeau would lead fans in cheers, which endeared him to the students.

"I think a lot of kids saw him as a grandfather, in some regards," Spoo said.

As for Spoo, he said he saw Brazeau as both a mentor and a friend.

The commissioner and the principal said they are not alone in missing Brazeau. His impact was felt by a generation of people not only through the high school but also through Brazeau's community service. He served on boards for the Umatilla County Fair and the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

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