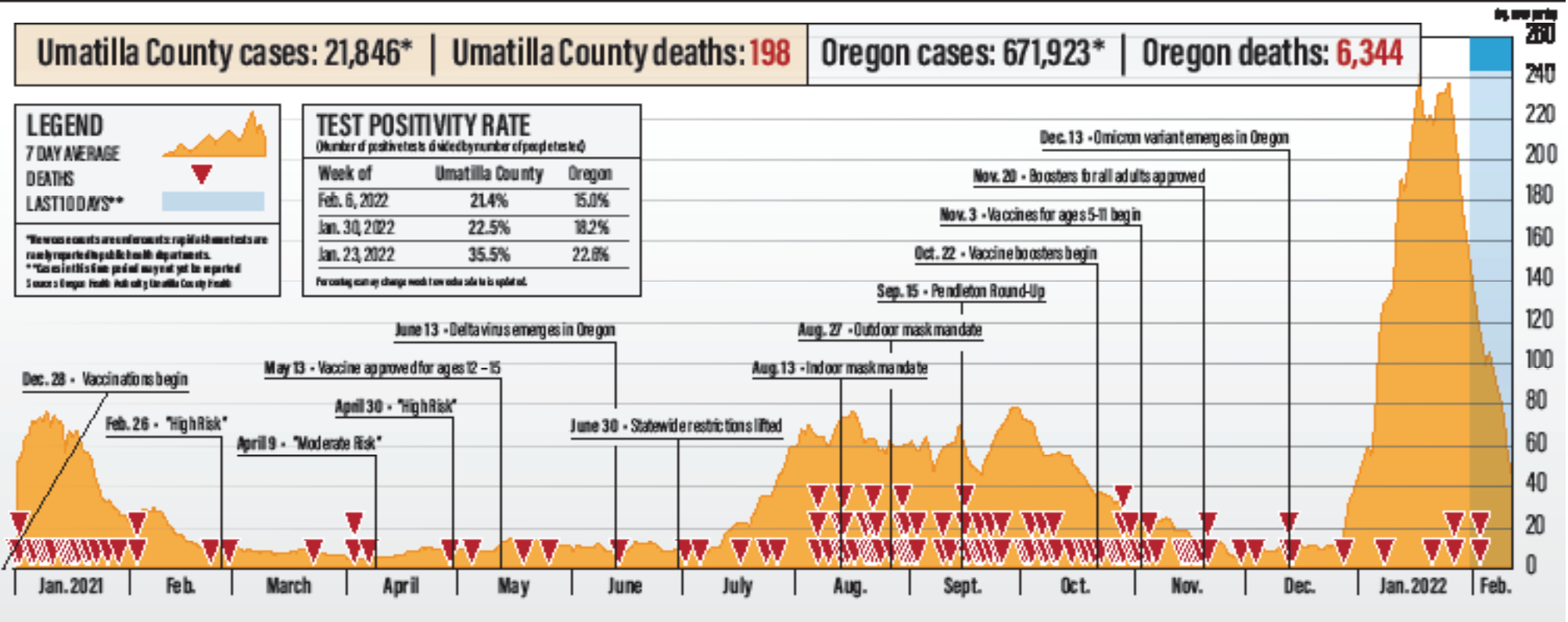


# UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF FEB. 10, 2022



Andy Nicolais/East Oregonian

The number of new reported cases of COVID-19 is dropping quickly in Umatilla County, from 788 last week to 315 this week. Due to the increasing availability of rapid home tests — which are not always reported to the county public health department — these numbers underrepresent the actual number of cases in the county. Statewide, hospitalizations are decreasing from the peak of 1,130 on Jan. 27. Oregon Health & Science University forecasts that hospitalizations will continue to decrease to pre-omicron levels by late March.

## Umatilla officer was among locals to help in Richland shooting

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

RICHLAND, Wash. — Following a deadly shooting in Richland, Washington, the Umatilla Police Department sent one of its own to help.

Lt. Keith Kennedy rushed to the scene of the shooting on Monday, Feb. 7. Two people had been shot, and one had died, at the Fred Meyer store in Richland. Officers from numerous agencies were present. Kennedy's job was to perform a "perimeter watch" as it was then unknown if the suspect remained nearby, according to the Umatilla Police Department.

"They wanted anyone who could come to come," Kylie Baker Umatilla police administrator said.

"They really didn't know at that point what the scale of this event was going to be."

Her department, Baker said, only had two or three officers on duty at the time. As one of those officers was the school resource officer, charged to look over Umatilla schools. That left Kennedy as the only person available to assist, Baker said.

"Basically, what happens from a law enforcement perspective, is once they get on scene at a major event like that, they check in with a command post," Baker said. "Whatever the most immediate need is at that time, that's what they get assigned for that event."

Kennedy's perimeter watch was

with a pair of other officers from different departments.

Baker said it is uncommon for her department to send officers to locations as far away as the Richland Fred Meyer, which is more than 40 miles away.



Kennedy

"I've worked here about 10 years, and normally that's not standard protocol," Baker said. "But normally, we don't really have five-scale events occurring in our area, fortunately. So, it doesn't happen very often, but when agencies call and say 'We need help,' if we have someone available, we'll definitely go."

Baker said there were "definitely people from other departments in this area, as well" to assist.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Hermiston silage fire still burns

HERMISTON — Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 is asking for state help to extinguish the silage fire still burning in southwest Hermiston.

The district on Thursday, Feb. 10, reported Columbia Basin Ag Management on Highway 207 scaled back efforts to extinguish the fire but were continuing to work the materials.

An inspection on Jan. 26 showed the fire mostly suppressed with a small amount of material still smoldering. Prior site visits showed employees actively working to suppress the smoldering fire with heavy equipment and water.

"It appears fire extinguishment efforts and removal of unburned materials were either minimized or ceased by the company and recent winds pushed the fire into unburned material."

The fire district reported it contacted Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and requested its assistance with a resolution for this fire. The fire district also has been in contact with the city of Hermiston throughout the monitoring of this situation with regard to the agricultural materials storage at this place of business.

The fire district posted the update on its Facebook page, and comments indicate locals want this fire out.

"The whole area stinks and air quality suffers (some days more

than others)," one commenter said. "Can we please get this thing extinguished once and for all?"

Another thanked the district for the update and added "it has been very bad the last couple mornings to the point where it's choking you out in your car."

Another described the situation as "So irritating."

### Umatilla County's COVID-19 death toll rises to 198

UMATILLA COUNTY — Umatilla County Public Health on Wednesday, Feb. 9, reported two more county residents died with COVID-19, increasing the county's death toll to 198.

The county's 197th death related to the disease is a 71-year-old man who tested positive on Dec. 3 and died Dec. 28, according to the county health department, and the 198th death is a 62-year-old man who tested positive on Jan. 4 and died Jan. 27 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston.

The report of the fatalities came a day after the county reported two other deaths related to COVID-19.

The county health department also reported the total number of cases as of Feb. 10 stood at 21,846 since the start of the pandemic.

The Oregon Health Authority as of Feb. 10 reported a total of 671,923 cases statewide including 6,344 deaths.

— EO Media Group

## Semitrailer crash spills hazardous, closes I-84

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A semitrailer crash the morning of Thursday, Feb. 10, on Interstate 84 near Pendleton shutdown the westbound freeway early into Feb. 11.

The tanker truck overturned before 6 a.m. near milepost 219, about 10 miles east of Pendleton, the Oregon Department of Transportation reported, spilling hazardous material. The hazmat team from

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 responded, and ODOT reported a hazmat transfer tanker truck had to come from Seattle.

The clean-up crews worked at the crash site into the evening.

The crash led to the closure of westbound lanes of I-84 at Exit 302 near Baker City and Exit 374 near Ontario due to backed up traffic on detour routes.

In addition, U.S. Highway 30 was closed westbound to through

traffic at Haines and Oregon Highway 245 was closed to through traffic. Oregon Highway 204, Tollgate Highway, was closed westbound between Elgin and Weston.

Only local freight and passenger vehicles were allowed on the highway with no access to I-84 for commercial vehicles.

The state transportation department a little before 3 a.m. Feb. 11 reported the westbound lanes were again open.

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