

# EAST OREGONIAN

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**COVID-19**

## Masks in school again?

OHA recommends mask mandates return to schools where infection rates are high

By ERICK PETERSON and JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — Oregon's COVID-19 case rate is rising again, and that has state health and education officials worried.

The state issued a health advisory Friday, May 13, effective through Aug. 31, recommending that schools require face masks again in counties where the federally-defined risk level is high. No Oregon counties have reached this level yet, but six are classified as medium. These six, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting, are Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Columbia, Benton and Deschutes counties.

The other 30 counties in the state, including Umatilla and Morrow counties, are low, according to federal ratings, which are based on hospitalization data.

The state's warning comes amid rising coronavirus cases, a previously predicted bump brought on by the highly infectious omicron BA.2 subvariant and the lifting of mask restrictions. Hospitalizations are rising, too, and are predicted to peak at around 320 within about a month.

According to OHA data, pediatric COVID-19 cases have been increasing since the middle of March, similar to cases statewide. Hospitalizations remain low but are on the rise. Health officials have called it "a mild virus" in most cases.

The advisory also recommends that schools monitor for high absentee rates and notify their local public health authority if absences reach a certain level, or if they see an "unusual spread of disease."

ODE said schools leaders should tell their county health officials if absences exceed certain benchmarks, such as if absences reach 30% or more, with at least 10 students or staff absent at the school level, and if classroom absences reach 20% or more, with at least three students or staff absent.

### Schools have learned from past 2 years

InterMountain Education Service District Superintendent Mark Mulvihill said the state advisory was "a heads up that COVID is creeping up in some Oregon counties. It is a bit in our area as well."

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Firefighter Josh Hoeft with the Umatilla Tribal Fire Department secures a catch pole around the neck of Azra as he works to rescue her Thursday, May 12, 2022, from a ledge on Cabbage Hill about 9 miles east of Pendleton. Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation/Contributed Photo

# LUCKY DOG

## Rescuers save 3-year-old Anatolian shepherd on a cliff near Pendleton

By PHIL WRIGHT  
*East Oregonian*

**P**ENDLETON — Azra had been missing for three days when her owner got the call Thursday, May 12, that someone found her.

Carol Morgan said she received a call from Robin Berheim, an Oregon Department of Transportation supervisor in Pendleton, after an ODOT employee spotted the 3-year-old Anatolian shepherd a couple of miles from her home on the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton.

Berheim asked if the dog had a choke chain around her neck. Morgan said she answered was yes and Berheim, reported just where Azra was:

"She's trapped on a cliff going up Cabbage Hill."

### Azra goes missing

"I got her when she was a puppy," Morgan said.

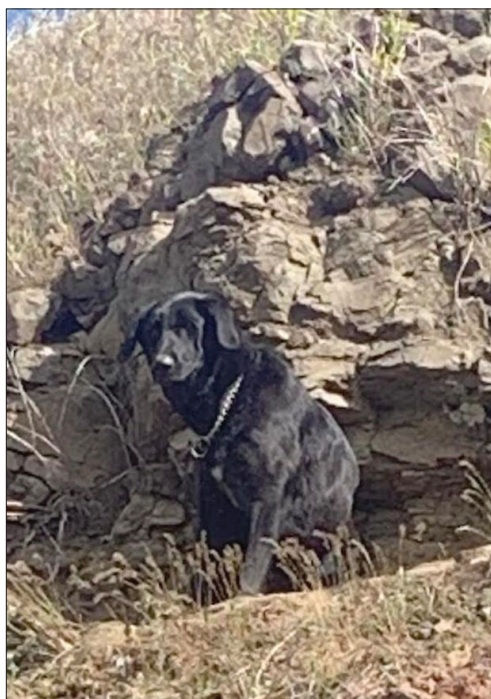
And she was the runt of the litter. Morgan said Anatolian shepherds are big dogs. Azra's sister weighs 120 pounds, but Azra tips the scales closer to 70.

"I train dogs off and on for fun, been doing it over 40 years," she said, and when she lived in Colorado she fostered and retrained dogs for adoption.

Morgan said she usually walked her dogs in the morning.

"That's my exercise, I'm a senior now," she said.

She explained she recently injured a leg and foot, preventing her from those morning



Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation/Contributed Photo

Azra, a 3-year-old Anatolian shepherd, stands Thursday, May 12, 2022, on a ledge overlooking Interstate 84 on Cabbage Hill near Pendleton. Rescuers saved the dog that morning.

walks, so she let out the dogs on their own.

"And they always would come back at 10 a.m. so they could eat breakfast," Morgan said. She let the dogs out Monday morning, and her other dog returned but not Azra, and the other dog was acting off.

"She was like something was wrong," Morgan said, "so I knew something was wrong right away."

Morgan said she waited another hour,

and Azra still did not return. While Morgan said she was unable to search for Azra, her husband, David Morgan, did.

"Every spare moment, every free time he had, he was looking for her," she said, even going door to door in the area.

"Every place he could go, he went," she said.

David Morgan had a friend, Tim Melter, who came over from Milton-Freewater to help look for Azra, she said, and another of her husband's close friends, John Lancaster, put the word out about Azra on social media.

"It's really a community thing," she said. "A community of dog lovers, animal lovers, pet lovers."

### The rescue

Umatilla Tribal Dispatch received a call from the Pendleton office of Oregon Department of Transportation reporting the missing dog was on a ledge on a steep cliff on Interstate 84 on Cabbage Hill.

The dispatch center at 9:38 a.m. called the Umatilla Tribal Fire Department to assess the situation, according to a press release from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Fire Chief James Hall responded and found the dog on the north side of the eastbound lane of I-84 near milepost 219.

Morgan said when she got the call about Azra from the ODOT employee, she headed out to try to get her dog.

"I'm afraid of heights," she said, "but I went up there anyway to see if I could get her off the ledge."

As soon as Azra saw her, Morgan said, she started whining and crying.

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## Event calls for removal of Snake River dams

Tamastlikt Cultural Institute hosts whale totem journey, exhibit

By PHIL WRIGHT  
*East Oregonian*

MISSION — The 3,000-pound killer whale totem was the focal point of a one-day exhibition at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute near Pendleton, but the message behind the totem was far larger:

Saving the orcas means saving salmon, and saving salmon means saving ourselves. And doing that requires removing the dams on the Snake River.

Kat Brigham, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Attendees get a closer look at the 3,000 pound whale totem Saturday event, May 14, 2022, outside Tamastlikt Cultural Institute near Pendleton. The totem was at the center of "Whale People: Protectors of the Sea," an immersive video presentation on the plight of Northwest salmon and orcas.

the Umatilla Indian Reservation, put it this way: "We have to take care of the land, the water and air. And it hasn't been taken care of very well."

Tamastlikt hosted two related outdoor events on Saturday, May 14, to draw attention to the extinction crisis facing Pacific Northwest salmon and orcas and build support for the Indigenous-led movement to remove the lower Snake River dams.

Brothers Doug James and Jewell James, master carvers of the House of Tears Carvers of the Lummi Nation, led a presentation that afternoon on the art and cultural aspects of totem pole carving. Bobbie Connor, director of Tamastlikt, said dozens of people attended the event.

The totem pole's journey began

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