

EAST OREGONIAN

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INSIDE ARLINGTON CAR SHOW MIGHT BE HOTTEST AROUND

COVID-19

Umatilla County has 2nd highest case rate in Oregon

Morrow County records 3 new COVID-19 deaths; state urges masking in 21 counties

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Morrow County on Monday, July 25, reported three new deaths from COVID-19, bringing its total to 37 and its case rate to a high 301 per

100,000 population, according to the Oregon Health Authority. The state rate was 190 and Multnomah County's 158 on July 20.

Umatilla County's last recorded death attributed to COVID-19 occurred June 16, Marlee Goodnight, health department commu-

nications coordinator, said.

"Death reports continue to trickle in from the massive January surge," she said. "Most fatalities are among the old."

Despite no deaths this month to date, total recorded COVID-19 mortality in Umatilla County grew from 229 in early July to 235 on Monday.

Umatilla County had the second highest COVID-19 case rate among

Oregon counties as of July 20, with 29,606 per 100,000 population.

At 31,773, Jefferson County was first and its neighbor Crook third, at 27,160, in Oregon Health Authority data. Malheur and Deschutes Counties rounded out the top five, followed by Grant, Morrow and Harney. The only western Oregon county in the top 10 was Linn in ninth place, ahead of Klamath.

With 294 fatalities per 100,000,

Umatilla County also suffered a higher than statewide average rate of deaths attributed to COVID-19.

During the week of June 26 to July 2, 209 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Umatilla County. That number fell to 190 for July 3 to 9, and to 189 for July 10 to 16. Data were not yet available for July 17 to 23.

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MORROW COUNTY

2 county ambulance services fight it out on Facebook

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — Morrow County Health District and Boardman Fire Rescue District on Monday, July 25, threw social medial jabs at each other over who can handle emergency calls for ambulance service.

Morrow County Health District in a post on Facebook contended the Ambulance Service Area Plan for the county designates the health district as the ambulance service provider for all of Morrow County, and Boardman Fire has been ignoring that.

"BFRD is engaging in a practice known as call jumping, where multiple providers responded to a single incident," according to the health district's post. "In Oregon, call jumping is illegal. The state of Oregon has determined that this practice presents risks to the public and patients that do not outweigh the benefits of the action."

The health district and the Morrow County EMS Advisory Committee on April 27 even issued a determination against Boardman Fire and Rescue District Chief Michael Hughes' request to change the plan and allow Boardman Fire to respond to all calls within its district, which covers an area of 330 square miles. That determination also called out Boardman Fire District for "a failure to adhere to appropriate protocol and procedure," which included "patient confidentiality violations in public

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Weston-McEwen head coach Kenzie Hansell calls out instructions to his team during the first half against Heppner in the 2A state quarterfinals Nov. 13, 2021, at Les Payne Field in Heppner. Weston-McEwen, Heppner and the rest of the Blue Mountain Conference will play nine-man football in the 2022 season.

East Oregonian, File

Local teams brace for 9-MAN FOOTBALL

Six Morrow and Umatilla County teams will switch to new format

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

ATHENA — Nine-man football is coming to a field near you.

With declining enrollment in some small-school communities, the Oregon School Activities Association has decided to play nine-man football at the 2A level.

"So far, it has been well-received," OSAA Executive Director Kris Welch said. "They were told about it last year. I haven't heard a lot of negative stuff. I don't think they will voice that until they have played a full season. We did this to help save football in small communities. I think it was a good decision."

According to Welch, there were several meetings and discussions at the state level about the move.

"People saw the benefit of growing the game, and being able to have a football team," he said.

It also creates the possibility of being able to have junior varsity teams because less players are needed.

In Umatilla and Morrow counties, six schools — Heppner,



East Oregonian, File

Kenzie Hansell, head coach of the Weston-McEwen High School football team, talks with players Oct. 1, 2021, ahead of a game against the Heppner Mustangs in Athena. He said the TigerScots are going to be ready for the 2022 season, when all teams in the Blue Mountain Conference change to playing nine-man football.

Irrigon, Stanfield, Riverside, Umatilla and Weston-McEwen — which all play in the Blue Mountain Conference, along with Grant Union, will play nine-man football this fall.

Weston-McEwen coach

Kenzie Hansel said whether it be 11-man or nine-man, his team is just excited to play the game.

"We are always excited to play football and represent our families, community and our school," he said. "We're going to go out

there and continue to compete. Touchdowns are still six points. We are excited about the upcoming season. We look forward to getting back on the field."

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