

Vaccination urged for 3-month flu season

By Rocky Wilson
Wallowa County Chieftain

Laina Fisher, administrator for the Wallowa County Health Department, says the county is well into its three-month flu season and she recommends flu shots for most persons.

Employed at the health department since 2002, Fisher says flu season typically comes later to Wallowa County than it does in much of the nation, with January through March the local window when that sometimes-serious virus, which regularly changes strains,

invades this area.

Olive Branch Family Health, based in Enterprise with a one-day-a-week clinic open in Wallowa as well, ordered 180 doses and has no remaining vaccines available.

The other flu vaccination outlets within the county still have supplies of the vaccine, in larger quantities at Safeway Pharmacy and Winding Waters Clinic and in lesser quantities at the Wallowa County Health Department and Wallowa Mountain Medical. Fisher says the vaccine remains effective for about four months.

Fisher says flu shots safely can be administered to anyone 6 months and older, and she stresses how important it is for pregnant women, kids, persons who will be spending much time around infants, and persons age 55 and older to receive flu shots.

The Wallowa County Seroptimist Club has created a fund to cover vaccination expenses for persons unable to pay for them, she says.

Symptoms of the flu are upper respiratory coughs, high fever, fatigue, problems with breathing, plus ear and eye infections, Fisher notes.



Rocky Wilson/Chieftain

Wallowa County Health Department Administrator Laina Fisher, left, and Assistant Administrator Jodi Beck say flu season now is underway in Wallowa County and vaccinations remain available.

WATERMASTER: *Position local again*

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“A lot of people are super-happy they don’t have to drive to La Grande,” says Bates.

During his first winter on the job, he says, he’s performing a lot of proactive research to better learn the intricacies of water rights in Wallowa County. Duties the new Wa-

termaster has beyond research and education include inspection of wells and keeping records at five stream gaging stations on the Wallowa and Lostine rivers, and on Bear Creek. A sixth stream gaging station in the county operates on the Imnaha River and is monitored by Idaho Power, says Bates.

Bates is not anxious to

confirm it, but the Oregon Water Resources Department he works for is a regulatory agency with enforcement powers. By applying site-specific testing techniques regarding both surface and ground water, Bates has the authority to regulate water flows when water rights have been violated.

Bates also says there’s

little difference, in practical terms, between ditch companies and irrigation districts.

The graduate of Heppner High School flashes a subtle smile when speaking of his two young daughters and a third that’s on the way, and when he describes the pleasure he receives from riding Quarter horses or playing guitar.

WOLVES: *ESA status in consideration*

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The next step in Oregon’s wolf management may include removing wolves from the state endangered species list. Nash said the state Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider that at its April meeting, take public comment and vote on the proposal in July or August.

“I’m confident that the commission will vote for it,” Nash said. “I have confidence that the department (ODFW) supports delisting.”

The state listing covers wolves only in Northeast Oregon. The federal Endangered Species Act covers wolves in the rest of the state.

Cascadia Wildlands, an environmental group that took part in developing Oregon’s wolf recovery plan, said the survey result is encouraging but “it is not the time to let up.”

“It is our hope that (ODFW) continues to implement the state’s landmark wolf manage-

ment plan and rules that have served as a recovery model for other states while preventing burdensome conflict,” legal director Nick Cady said in a news release.

Under the state wolf plan, a breeding pair is defined as a pair of adult wolves that produce at least two pups that survive to the end of the year. Of Oregon’s nine known packs, only the Imnaha pack does not have a breeding pair. The Umatilla pack has not yet been surveyed. Six of the seven breeding pairs are in Eastern Oregon; the other is the famous wanderer, OR-7, his mate and their pups in Southwest Oregon.

The Cattlemen Association passed a resolution at its annual meeting in December that supports lethal control of wolves in three cases: livestock losses, human health or safety and when game populations dip below management levels.

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