

State reports 26 travel related Zika cases

By Will Denner
East Oregonian

More than two dozen travel-related cases of Zika virus have been confirmed in Oregon in 2016.

According to the Oregon Health Authority, the first case of the year was confirmed in February. There have now been 26 cases this year alone. OHA spokesman Jonathan Modie declined to disclose which Oregon counties have confirmed positive tests for the virus, citing patient confidentiality. Each Oregonian who contracted Zika in 2016 did so when traveling, primarily in Zika-infested Central and South American countries.

On Thursday, county Health Department Administrator Laina Fisher, RN, said none of the 26 confirmed cases were identified within Wallowa County.

Zika is mostly spread to humans from mosquitoes carrying the virus. Two mosquito species — *aedes aegypti* and *aedes albopictus* — have been identified as carriers. Florida is currently the only U.S. state to have cases that came from local mosquitoes.

Zika symptoms often mimic the flu and include fever, rash, muscle aches and headaches. An unknown percentage of patients manage their symptoms from home, choosing not to see a doctor.

“Many individuals who contract it may not know they have it,” said Sarah Williams of Umatilla County Public Health.

Williams said no cases

of Zika have been found in Umatilla County. To keep it that way, Williams said the best thing people can do is to avoid traveling to Zika-infested areas, especially women who are pregnant or may become pregnant.

Pregnant women infected with Zika are at risk of passing the virus to their fetuses, which can cause birth deformities.

For people who must travel to Zika-infested countries, Modie said the OHA advises them to meet with their healthcare providers to discuss prevention methods. Because there are currently no vaccinations or medicines to prevent Zika, Modie said carrying EPA-approved bug-repellent is a must, as well as wearing long sleeves and pants.

People are also at risk of contracting Zika through sex.

With summer winding down, the good news for Oregonians is that cool temperatures will significantly reduce the active mosquito population. In the meantime, however, OHA recommends people see their healthcare provider if they experience Zika-like symptoms.

And although no Oregon mosquitoes have been identified as Zika carriers, health officials recommend taking preventive measures similar to those for West Nile virus. That includes eliminating standing water around the home and using bug repellent.

“It’s important to remind people that there still are mosquitoes out there,” Modie said.

EPD investigating string of vehicle burglaries

Wallowa County Chieftain

The Enterprise Police Department is looking for two male suspects following a string of vehicle break-ins Tuesday night on the north side of town near the Enterprise Cemetery.

According to police, some unknown subjects entered some vehicles and stole personal property on NE Glendale Avenue. It’s believe they also entered a truck on NE Hyland Drive

and stole property.

Authorities are looking for two males who were dressed in dark-colored hoodies and probably jeans. They were last seen around 12:30 a.m. Wednesday.

The Enterprise Police Department reminds residents to lock your vehicles and don’t leave valuables in the open.

If you have information about these crimes, please contact EPD at 541-426-3136.

County loses a crucial couple to retirement

Everett and Dana Roberts step away after years of service at courthouse

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County employees Everett and Dana Roberts recently said goodbye to their longtime positions at the county courthouse after serving the public for a combined total of 45 years.

Everett Roberts was the courthouse maintenance supervisor, while Dana Roberts served as Wallowa County Clerk.

Both are Wallowa County natives, and they began working for the county at different times.

“You can blame his wife for wanting to retire at the same time,” Dana Roberts said.

Everett Roberts, 66, said it was his wife’s idea that he work past retirement age to help pay down the couple’s bills before retirement.

Everett started working part-time as a custodian at the courthouse in 1995 for about 18 months before taking over the facilities manager position.

Dana went to work as a part-time clerk for about a year in the Elections Division of the Clerk’s Office in 1990 until Charlotte McIver, the clerk at the time, hired her full-time as an assistant. McIver retired in 2006, leaving Roberts with little time to prepare for the upcoming election for the county clerk position.

Their advice for staying married while working in the same building?

“We have no connection as far as departmental work,” Everett said. “If she does need something done, she calls the facilities manager, who is me. At work, I don’t treat her any



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Everett and Dana Roberts beam as they receive a cake from Commissioners’ Executive Assistant Stacey Fregulia to honor their retirement from the Wallowa County Courthouse on Aug. 31.

differently than any of the other departments here. I don’t get involved in the politics of her office, and it’s worked.”

“Some days I don’t even see Everett,” Dana said. “It’s funny, people come in and ask where Everett is. I just tell them that I can punch in his phone number and find him that way. I generally don’t know where he is.”

And their replacements?

“Mat Kassahn started July 5 of this year,” Everett said. “We hired him then so I could work with him on what’s going on here. He’s doing really well.”

“I got to bring Sandy (Lathrop) in a few years ago to train,” Dana said. “I told the commissioners I needed a full-time person to train because I was leaving Aug. 31, and she was interested. She’ll do well. I have faith in her.”

Biggest career challenge?

Everett: “Changing people’s minds about the landscaping here. It was a rough

road to get over, explaining why something that was here for 70 years had to go. A lot of people thought I planted willy-nilly, but I spent a lot of time planning it out and researching.”

Dana: “The election process; especially since the state centralized it. A lot of it’s easier, but it’s taken a lot of learning. (The election process is) an ongoing thing that never really stops.”

Career rewards?

Everett: “To be out elbow-deep in a rose bush and have someone come by and

say how much they enjoyed and appreciated the grounds here. That’s by far the most rewarding thing that’s happened while working here.”

Dana: “Meeting the customers. People could come in a little irritated, but I could usually explain and talk them through it, and they left in good humor. I think I got along well with most everyone who has come in. It’s a very interesting job.”

The future?

Everett: “First we’re going to hit the hills for a few days and decompress. I suppose here and there I’ll find some fish that need to be caught or some elk or antelope that might look good in my freezer.”

Dana: “We’re going to stick around. We’ll visit our three sons on occasion. We’re not going south for the winter. We have no desire to.”

Former County Commissioner Mike Hayward, who worked with the couple through his 18-year tenure, said, “Dana and Everett worked for the county for a long time. Having them both retire at the same time leaves a significant hole in the courthouse staffing. Although I’m sure they have suitable replacements, they will be missed.”

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