

COVID vaccine walk-in clinics coming May 14 and 24

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa Memorial Hospital and Medical Clinic will be hosting two walk-in clinics — one Friday, May 14, in Joseph, and one Monday, May 24, in Wallowa — for individuals who want a COVID-19 vaccine.

These will be the first walk-in COVID vaccine clinics put on by the hospital since the vaccine first came to the county in December 2020, WMH Communications Director Brooke Pace said.

The first will be held May 14 at the Wallowa Memorial Medical Clinic in Joseph from 9 a.m. to noon. The second will be at the WMMC in

Wallowa May 24, also from 9 a.m. to noon. Both the two-shot Moderna vaccine and the one-shot option from Johnson & Johnson will be available.

“Anyone interested in receiving a vaccine can walk in at that time,” Pace said.

Pace said as of May 6, 2,083 individuals had completed their vaccine series through WMH, and an additional 40 had received the first shot.

“If people have questions (about a vaccine), contact their primary care providers,” Pace said. “We have reached the point where our supply is greater than the demand. We are encouraging people who have waited their turn in line to step up.”

The number of people getting vaccinated in Wallowa



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Memorial Medical Clinic in Joseph is the site of one of two upcoming walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinics. The clinic in Joseph will be Friday, May 14, 2021, and there will be one in Wallowa May 24.

County continues to increase, even if it is at a slower rate.

But there still are plenty of individuals seeking the vaccine, Pace said.

“We are continuing to see people trickle in in terms of

people who want it. I think that as more people get it and the longer the vaccinations have been happening, the people who were on the fence and see their friends and family members receive it, and

not see any side effects, they are taking the vaccine,” she said.

According to data from the Oregon Health Authority, Wallowa County is in the upper third of the state when it comes to the percentage of residents who have received a vaccine. As of May 10, the county vaccination rate was 41.8%, according to OHA.

That number is below the state average of 46.5%, but is the 12th-highest rate in Oregon. Benton County, at 56.7%, has the highest rate. Umatilla County has the lowest rate at 24.8%.

That means of the 7,160 people in the county, per OHA data, about 2,992 people have gotten at least one shot of the vaccine, and 37.1%, or about 2,656, have been fully vaccinated. In terms of full vaccination, Wallowa County is seventh in the state, and is

ahead of the state average of 34.4%.

In terms of those eligible for vaccine — which, currently, is anyone 16 and older — the county is 13th in Oregon at 50.7%, and 45% of the nearly 5,900 people in that age range have been fully vaccinated. The completed rate among those eligible is the fifth-highest in the state.

The number of new cases in Wallowa County seems to have leveled off after a jump that led to the closure of Wallowa High School for two weeks.

The school was scheduled to reopen May 12.

The number of total cases in the county, as of May 10, was 182. Sixteen of those fell between April 27 and May 3, and at one point there were 20 cases in a 10-day span. But there have been just six new cases since May 3.

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WALLOWA COUNTY
GRAIN GROWERS

Wallowa a hot spot during next week's elections

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — The Wallowa School District is likely to be the most active during next week's primary elections.

In addition to voters deciding on a ballot measure to raise funds for upgrades to the school, two positions on the school board have contested elections on Tuesday, May 18.

Michael Lowe, the incumbent seeking another four-year term in Position 2, is facing two challengers for the spot — Joseph Miles and Zach Lathrop.

Position 5 will have a new person in the seat, as Mark Moeller and Bill Robb are both running for their first term.

Voters in Wallowa also will decide on a measure that would raise \$7 million for the district and draw an additional \$4 million in a match-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa School District's bond measure that, if passed, would raise \$7 million for the district and draw an additional \$4 million in a matching grant from the state, is among the items on the ballot in next week's district election. Two positions on the school board are also up for election.

ing grant from the state. The measure would increase the property tax \$1.96 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for the length of the bond. The additional grant money comes only if the measure is passed.

Only one other election — for Position 4 in the Joseph School District — features a contested race. Incumbent Rachel Sykora made a late

decision to re-run for the four-year position, and will face Kathy Zacharias, who put her name in the ring only when it appeared Sykora was not going to run again, according to county Clerk Sandy Lathrop.

Every other race in the county next week — from school to cemetery districts — is unopposed.

In county schools, includes Olivia Losby for Position 6 in the Joseph School District; Heather Melville (Position 1), Kate Fent (Position 4) and Mandy Decker (Position 5) in Enterprise; and Rene Crawford (Position 2) and Dustin DeHaan (Position 5) in Troy. All those running except for Crawford are incumbents. The incumbent for that position, Ervin Hafer, retired, Lathrop said.

In the Lower Valley Water District, incumbents Kim Werst in Position 4 and Rick Schaeffer in Position 5 are running unopposed, as are Rob Burns, Jason Crenshaw, and Gary Willett — all incumbents — in the Evergreen Water District.

Larry Wightman and Bobbie Baker are each seeking another term in the Wallowa Rural Fire District, and incumbents Bob Young (Position 3), Dave Hurley (Position 4) and Greg Johnson (Position 5) are all running again.

Bonnie Henderson is again running in the Wallowa Cemetery District, and incumbents Muriel Jones, Les Carlsen and Shirley Dowd are seeking roles again for the Lostine Cemetery District.

Enterprise's Cemetery District will still have a couple of holes following next week's election. Incumbent Tim Kiesecker is running again for Position 5, but Positions 2 and 4, which are up next week, are currently vacant.

Reid Kooch is running in the Alder Slope Cemetery District, and Tom Schaafsma looks to fill a role in Joseph.

Wallowa Memorial Hospital Board incumbents Nick Lunde (Position 3) and Kate Loftus (Position 4) are running unopposed. And at the ESD, David Flynn is running again for an at-large position, while Bre Austin is running to fill an open at-large role after Joan Madsen retired.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

OR 82: Bear Creek (Wallowa River) Bridge Project

Between 2022 and 2024, we will be replacing the Oregon Highway 82 Bear Creek (Wallowa River) Bridge, located at milepost 45.8, a mile west of Wallowa. Deterioration of the 80-year-old structure has prompted us to replace the bridge to create a safer, wider crossing that is key to keeping traffic moving in and out of Wallowa County. To collect your feedback about the upcoming project we are holding a virtual open house.



ONLINE OPEN HOUSE May 17-31

<https://odotopenhouse.org/or82-bear-creek-wallowa-river-bridge>

Please take a few minutes to visit the site May 17-31 to review our plans, pictures and traffic impacts information, and then let us know if you have any comments.

Overview: The Bear Creek Bridge serves as the primary freight route and provides the only year-round access to Wallowa County without leaving the state. Without extensive repairs or replacement, continued deterioration will eventually result in closure. A new bridge is proposed to support economic vitality and improve safety.

Key project plans include:

- Realign roadway and improve highway curve.
- A wider bridge to improve vehicle and bike safety.
- Remove issues with footings in the river.
- New structure will be built to withstand seismic activity.



We will design the project this year and construct in 2022-2024. We appreciate your review and feedback. It will help us construct a better, safer project.

ODOT is pleased to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need special accommodations or alternate language formats to participate in this open house event, please contact us (contact information below). Alternate formats available upon request or call statewide relay at 711, or e-mail: ODOTeoo@ODOT.state.or.us.

For more information, please contact Tom Strandberg, ODOT Public Information Officer at 541-663-6261, or email thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us



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