

COVID from page 1A

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field and Seneca Sawmill in Noti. The county only announces workplace clusters if they surpass five confirmed cases.

On Tuesday, Lane County Public Health (LCPH) Public Information Officer Jason Davis announced that the county is monitoring 617 people who were in contact with people contagious with COVID-19.

"That is an all-time record," Davis said.

During the rest of the week, LCPH gave additional updates in two press conferences, which are streamed live on Lane County Government's Facebook page and available to view online.

"We can have an outbreak or clusters in one population of people, but unless the entire community is really taking the health recommendations seriously and being vigilant on those, then we will see spread to all corners of our community," Davis said on Thursday. "Unfortunately, that's what we're starting to see."

His immediate recommendation for the community is to take action to remain safe.

"The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has let us know that it is possible that the virus is airborne. That means that you can get it pretty easily," Davis said. "The only way to stay safe is constant vigilance — and even then, there is a possibility that you might still get sick"

The numbers in Lane County are increasing at a rate that is still manageable for LCPH staff to conduct tracing. However, the alarming numbers prompted the Oct. 6 meeting of the Lane County Board of Commissioners to consider "COVID-19 Response and Recovery" during its morn-

ing meeting.

During the meeting, Lane County Health & Human Services Director Karen Gaffney presented five options for the commissioners to consider in addressing the county's growing case rate:

1. Continue to monitor and intensify messaging efforts regarding masks, gatherings, distancing and hygiene
2. Sector-specific work with higher education, businesses, faith communities, etc.
3. Direct staff to prepare an ordinance to require mask wearing
4. Request to be placed on the Governor's County Watch List
5. Request to return to Phase 1.

"What we need people to do is pretty straightforward: wear a mask, don't gather, keep your physical distance and (maintain) hygiene," Gaffney said.

She and Lane County's Senior Public Health Officer Dr. Patrick Luedtke said that county staff recommended the first two policies, which are already active.

According to Luedtke, a return to Phase 1 would be a "blunt instrument" that would hurt certain areas that are so far less affected.

"It doesn't take into account the geography of our county — frontier, rural, urban — and where the predominant cases are," he said. "It may not give us the maximum benefit we would like and may also put some punishment on those areas that haven't seen a great deal of the disease."

Phase 1 is detailed at govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon as part of Gov. Kate Brown's reopening plan for the state. Lane County has been out of Phase 1 — which limits gatherings and

requires more people to work from home — since June 5.

The health officials also talked about the requirements to make it onto the Governor's County Watch List.

"Counties are placed on the Watch List when COVID-19 is spreading quickly and public health officials cannot trace that spread to specific sources — creating a potentially dangerous dynamic," the website reports. "Metrics include when there is a sporadic case rate of 50 or more per 100,000 people in the last two weeks and the county has had more than five sporadic cases in the last two weeks. Sporadic cases are those that cannot be traced to a source; they indicate community spread."

In Lane County, "We have not had an issue with sporadic cases," Gaffney said. "We are able to do really great work in our contact tracing and link those cases to outbreaks. That is why we are currently not on the governor's watch list."

Luedtke added, "It doesn't seem as though we will (meet the requirements) anytime soon as long as we keep our numbers at this relatively high level and don't go too much higher, and we maintain the staffing that we have."

As for a local mask ordinance, the statewide order is still in place, and there is little extra a county government could add to that.

After this information, the commissioners got the chance to weigh in on.

West Lane District 1 Commissioner Jay Bozievich said that he is seeing "a lot of fatigue" as people grow weary of the restrictions that keep them away from loved

ones and events.

"My message to folks is that we've got to get those behaviors back in control so (LCPH staff) can continue to do the contact tracing you've been doing that keeps our random case rate down," he said.

Commission Chair Heather Buch, representative for East Lane District 5, instructed staff to pursue additional messaging and sector-specific guidelines, the first two staff recommendations.

However, "We should be prepared to be on the Governor's County Watch List soon if our numbers continue to rise," she cautioned.

Lane County has been conducting testing for those affected by the recent wildfires, with three testing dates this week. There have been a total of 69,821 negative tests since testing began in March.

According to govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19, the state has had a total of 36,116 cases as of 12:01 a.m. Friday. Oregon has had 594 deaths.

In a Tuesday press conference, Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said, "The rising case numbers should catch everyone's attention. COVID-19 is a stubborn enemy. It will not go away easily or soon. Rooting it out of our homes and our community requires all of us working together."

Part of the conference was the announcement that the federal government will be giving Oregon 60,000 to 80,000 COVID-19 rapid tests per week until the end of the year. The Abbott BinaxNOW antigen tests can diagnose cases of COVID-19 in 15 minutes.

This will double Oregon's testing capacity, though testing will be prioritized for vulnerable communities. It is unclear how the tests will be divided by county.

In the meantime, Davis suggests that Lane County residents continue to wear masks, maintain distance, limit gatherings and wash often.

"The best way that people can truly be helpful is to examine their own actions and really make sure they are doing their part and communicating with their friends and families," he said. "If you really want to make a difference, really want to help, the best thing you can do is have those conversations in your social group and in your family with those who may not be masking, or who may not see COVID as a serious threat to our public health. ... This needs to be a pro-social, helpful effort, where we're all pitching in and really trying to slow the spread."

In her closing remarks on the COVID-19 agenda item at the Lane County Commissioners meeting, Buch said, "Everybody needs to participate. This is an 'us' issue, not a 'they' or 'them' issue. I strongly urge folks to continue to follow the guidelines so that we don't have to move on to options three, four and five. And option four may not be an option; it may be dictated for us."

On Friday afternoon, Brown announced that Umatilla County was back on the Watch List even though it remains in Phase 2.

"Combined with yesterday's record high statewide case count, this is a sign that we must tread cautiously or we risk losing the gains we've made in slowing the spread of COVID-19," the governor stated.

VOTE from page 1A

count ballots in Oregon have been certified by a federally accredited voting system test laboratory.

There are a number of dates and deadlines which must be adhered to for votes to count.

After voters have filled out their ballot, they can return it by mail or take it to any official

drop box.

In Florence, voters wishing to use a drop box can do so at the Florence Justice Center, 900 Greenwood St., where a white drive-up voting drop box is located near the entrance.

For those returning their ballot by mail, no stamp is necessary because the postage has been pre-paid by the state. Voting officials encourage voters

to return their ballot as soon as they can, but no later than Oct. 27 in order to ensure they are received by Nov. 3.

Ballots are not forwardable. If someone is registered to vote by Oct. 13 but now have a different address, call Lane County Elections office for instructions on how to update your registration and receive a ballot. If a ballot is lost, de-

stroyed, damaged or someone makes a mistake in marking the ballot, they may call the county elections office and request a replacement ballot.

People who are not registered to vote in any Oregon county may register online at oregonvotes.gov no later than 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 13. The online option is available only to those with a valid Oregon driver's license, DMV-issued identification card or learner's permit.

Remember, ballots must be physically received at a county elections office or in an official drop box by 8 p.m. Nov. 3.

As Clarno mentioned, the technology and the processes are in place to guarantee a free and fair election. However, another type of challenge faces election officials.

"The biggest threat we have to elections today continues to be

misinformation. It can be found in many sources — social media, traditional media, statements by candidates and elected officials, email lists, text message chains and mailers," she warned. "Misinformation can even be spread through candidate statements and measure arguments in this voters' pamphlet. Candidates pay a fee to have the statements printed and they are not fact-checked."

Clarno added that although there has been much discussion about the U.S. Postal Service recently, "most of what has been reported is misinformation. We work closely with our postal partners and are confident service levels for your ballot continue to be high as they were in the May Primary."

To track your ballot or to find your nearest drop box, visit oregonvotes.gov/myvote.

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<p><b>COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH</b> 4590 Hwy. 101, Across from Fred Meyer — 997-7418 Sunday School, 9:30a.m. – Worship, 10:45 Wed. Prayer - 6:00 p.m. – Wed. Ministries 1-8 Grade 7 p.m.</p>	<p><b>NEW LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH, E.L.C.A.</b> 21st &amp; Spruce Street – 997-8113 Pastor Jim Abbott – All are welcome Sermons are on YouTube at <a href="https://youtu.be/jcTJVWp_6ps">https://youtu.be/jcTJVWp_6ps</a>. <a href="http://www.florencewlife.lutheran.org">www.florencewlife.lutheran.org</a></p>
<p><b>CROSS ROAD ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> Corner of 10th &amp; Maple- 541-997-3533 Sunday Live Services: 9am &amp; 11am (please pre-register) Facebook Streaming: 11am Sunday morning <a href="https://www.florencecrossroadag.org/church-online">https://www.florencecrossroadag.org/church-online</a> Other platforms update after the service. <a href="http://florencecrossroadag.org">florencecrossroadag.org</a> <a href="mailto:office@florencecrossroadag.org">office@florencecrossroadag.org</a></p>	<p><b>PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE SIUSLAW</b> 3996 N Hwy 101 541-997-7136 Internet and in person Sunday services at 10AM, Call the church for details. Reverend Greg Wood All Welcome. Come as you are.</p>
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<p><b>FLORENCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> 2nd &amp; Ivy - 541-997-2961 - Non-Denominational Service is on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Our service is also available via Zoom. Contact us at <a href="mailto:office@florencechurch.com">office@florencechurch.com</a> for log-in information.</p>	<p><b>RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH, L.C.M.S.</b> Every Sun., Bible Class 9 a.m., Worship Service 10 a.m. 85294 Hwy. 101 S. – 997-8038 DVD of Weekly worship service available. <a href="http://www.puppro.wixite.com/rlcflorence">www.puppro.wixite.com/rlcflorence</a></p>
<p><b>FLORENCE CHURCH OF CHRIST</b> Pre-Denominational (Romans 16:16) 1833 Tamarack Street (2 blocks east of Hwy. 101 on 18th St.) Bible Study: Sunday 10 a.m.; Worship: Sunday 11 a.m. <a href="http://www.churchofchristflorence.org">www.churchofchristflorence.org</a></p>	<p><b>ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH</b> 2135 19th St. — 997-6600 One service, at 9:00 AM, each Sunday in July. Reservations are required. Call 541-997-6600 or e-mail <a href="mailto:standrewssecretary19@gmail.com">standrewssecretary19@gmail.com</a> and state name &amp; number of people in your family that plan to attend. Weather permitting, service may be held outdoors in the Labyrinth Area behind the church. Face masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing are required both indoors and outside.</p>
<p><b>FLORENCE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE</b> 12th and Nopal – 997-9020 Services will be available via YouTube. Follow the link at <a href="http://florencenaz.church/">http://florencenaz.church/</a></p>	<p><b>SAINT MARY, OUR LADY OF THE DUNES CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 1.5 miles south of river on Hwy 101 – 997-2312 COVID-19 Compliant Masses have been scheduled. Please call our office for details.</p>
<p><b>FLORENCE EVANGELICAL CHURCH</b> 1318 Rhododendron Dr. • 541-997-2523 Sunday Service 11am ( Children Sunday School) Mid-Week Activities, all ages.</p>	
<p><b>FLORENCE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST</b> 4445 Hwy 101 (South of Fred Meyer) – 997-3951 Worship on Saturday 10:30 A.M. Adult/Children's Sabbath School 9:15 A.M.</p>	
<p><b>FLORENCE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP</b> 87738 Hwy 101 at Heceta Beach Road RUAAUU? All are welcome to explore the answer. Until it is safe to meet in person, Sunday Worship Services are available 24/7 on our website: <a href="http://www.florenceuuf.org">www.florenceuuf.org</a></p>	
<p><b>FLORENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 2nd &amp; Kingwood • (541) 997-6025 Link to Sunday services at <a href="http://www.florenceunitedmethodist.org">www.florenceunitedmethodist.org</a> or find us on Facebook.</p>	

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