

CAMPUS *from page 1A*

which began Feb. 10 with fifth grade. Sixth grade started on Feb. 11.

Next week, third graders will return to campus Wednesday, Feb. 17, followed by fourth graders on Feb. 18.

The kindergarten has been split into two cohorts. Kindergarten A and first graders start on Wednesday, Feb. 24, and Kindergarten B and second graders start on Feb. 25.

According to O'Mara, the elementary will be in a hybrid instructional model, with on-site instruction two days a week and distance learning the other two days. Mapleton's school week is Monday through Thursday.

Kindergarten A students and first, third and fifth graders will attend on-site on Mondays and Wednesdays. Kindergarten B students and second, fourth and sixth grade students will attend on-site Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"If the Lane County COVID-19 metrics allow, we are looking forward to adding our middle and high school students before spring break, as well as our Pre-K kiddos after spring break," O'Mara said.

For more information, visit Mapleton.k12.or.us.

2021 tax season now open for state, federal returns

The Oregon Department of Revenue began processing state income tax returns on Feb. 12, the same day the IRS began processing federal returns. Although some taxpayers have already submitted their returns, processing doesn't start until the tax season officially begins.

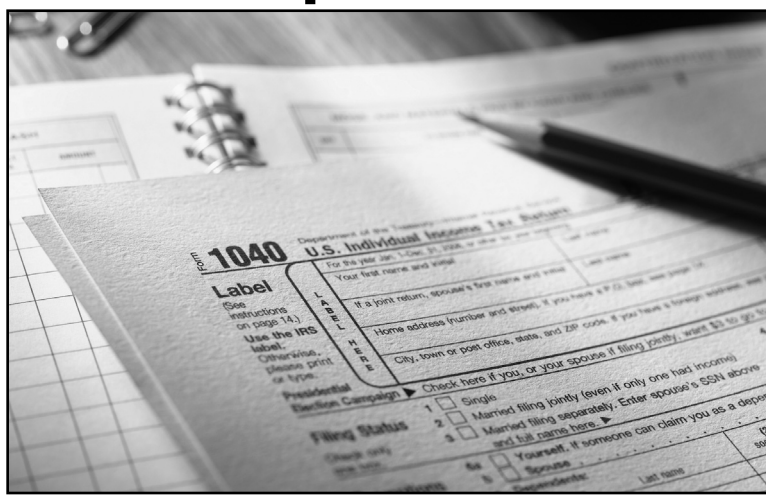
Returns will be processed in the order they are received. However, as in years past, the department won't be issuing personal income tax refunds until after February 16. The fastest way for a taxpayer to get a refund is by e-filing. Taxpayers who e-file returns and request refunds via direct deposit receive their refund sooner, on average, than those who file paper returns and request refund checks.

A refund hold is part of the department's tax fraud prevention efforts and allows for confirmation that the amounts claimed on tax returns match what employers report on Forms W-2 and 1099. Once we begin processing returns, filers can check Where's My Refund? to see the status of their refund.

As a result of COVID-19 stimulus payments, unemployment benefits, and federal tax law changes, there may be impacts to what taxpayers file on their Oregon income tax returns. Here are some important topics and information for Oregon personal income tax filers.

STIMULUS PAYMENTS

Economic Impact Payments received during 2020 and early 2021 may impact the amount of federal tax subtraction that can



COURTESY PHOTO

be claimed on the 2020 Oregon personal income tax return. The federal tax subtraction is based on the amount of federal tax you had to pay in the 2020 tax year. Individuals should reduce the amount of federal tax paid in 2020 by the payments received to determine the amount of federal tax subtraction they are allowed. The federal tax subtraction is limited to \$6,950 (or \$3,475 if married filing separately).

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Unemployment benefits are taxable to Oregon. Funds received through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program are also taxable to Oregon. Unlike W-2 wages, unemployment benefits do not automatically have amounts withheld to pay taxes at the end of the year. Individuals who did not elect to have withholding on their unemployment may see an increased tax bill.

For individuals still receiving unemployment benefits in 2021, the department urges recipients to submit Form 1040WH to the

Oregon Employment Department to authorize withholding.

OREGON WITHHOLDING

The Department of Revenue has its own Form OR-W-4. Individuals should review their withholding to determine if changes are necessary for tax year 2021. A calculator is available to help ensure withholding amounts are correct.

BUSINESS USE OF HOME

Oregon is automatically tied to changes made to taxable income under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA). Employees who receive a paycheck or a W-2 exclusively from an employer are not eligible for the business use of home deduction, even if they are currently working from home. Along with other changes, the TCJA suspended the use of employee business expenses for employees through 2025. Visit the IRS for more information on business use of home.

DISASTER RELIEF (COVID-19, WILDFIRES, STRAIGHT-LINE WINDS)

The Department of Revenue recognizes not all individuals will be prepared to pay their taxes in full this year. The department is offering penalty waiver relief for individuals impacted by COVID-19, wildfires, or straight-line winds. To learn more, visit Revenue's tax relief options webpage.

FREE-FILE

All Oregon taxpayers preparing their own returns can file electronically at no cost using Oregon's free fillable forms. There are many free or low-cost preparation options available for both federal and Oregon tax returns. Some software companies offer free software use and e-filing for eligible taxpayers. Visit the Department of Revenue website to take advantage of the software and free offers and get more information about free tax preparation services.

REVENUE ONLINE

The Department of Revenue continues to expand features available through Revenue Online. Individuals can view letters sent to them by the department, initiate appeals, make payments, and submit questions. Visit Revenue Online to learn more.

To get tax forms, check the status of your refund, or make payments, visit www.oregon.gov/dor or email questions to dor@oregon.gov. You can also call 800-356-4222 toll-free from an Oregon prefix (English or Spanish) or 503-378-4988 in Salem and outside Oregon. For TTY (hearing or speech impaired), we accept all relay calls.

To our valued readers: Help small businesses affected by coronavirus right now, including ours.

Businesses of all sizes have been hit hard in this challenging new age of social distancing and self-isolation, but the blow has been catastrophic for small operations that rely on in-person transactions. There are many ways to help this holiday season, like purchasing gift certificates or memberships, and yet there are many service-type businesses that don't have that option.

As we look to a new year, we're celebrating what connects us as a community, and what we can do to support our local businesses!

THAT'S WHY WE CREATED THE SUPPORT LOCAL TOGETHER CAMPAIGN.

The Support Local Together campaign will help local businesses who have to choose between promoting their business and paying the electric bill. It will also help support the *Siuslaw News*, who has seen a strong decrease in advertising revenue, but an increase in readership.

IT DOES TWO THINGS.

1. Funds advertising dollars for local businesses

Your financial support will go directly to fund advertising that our local businesses need to stay top of mind.

2. Supports local journalism

By becoming a supporting member, you are helping to replace some of the advertising revenue the *Siuslaw News* has lost over the past ten months, due to the pandemic.

HERE IS HOW TO SUPPORT:

- **Call 541-902-3524**
- Make a donation of your choosing.
- Choose a specific local business that you would like the advertising credit to go to, or leave that blank and we will designate it to a business we know needs help.

Our community is small but generous and we recognize there are many great organizations, like ours, that could use your help.

We believe the vast majority of our readers have always shared our view of the value and necessity of a strong local media and are willing to provide support equal to two or three cups of coffee a month to secure its future.

Thank you in advance for doing your share to secure a strong local economy in the community we are proud to serve.

Jenna Bartlett
Publisher
jbartlett@thesiuslawnews.com
541-902-3524

Yes, I would like to become a 2020/21 Support Local Together Sponsor

Call 541-902-3524

Mail sponsorship form to: **Siuslaw News Supporter**
PO Box 10 Florence Oregon 97439

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other Amount _____

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☐ **Check** ☐ **Credit Card**

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☐ We will send a gift card to the business(es) of your choice with your name. If would like to remain anonymous please check here.

***This sponsorship is not tax deductible.**



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