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According to Davis, the warm spring weather, spring break and spring holidays are coupling with climbing vaccination numbers to give people a false sense of security about COVID-19.

“There are a lot of lessons learned as we start to take advantage of more liberty and a decreased sense of risk,” Davis said. “Pretty much every single one of our upward trends began with just a couple cases. And those few cases, even though they seem like such a relief from our high cases this winter, they can turn very rapidly back into those double digits — as they have.

I would ask for the community’s help, and all our partners’ help, in trying to reverse this. Please, please, do your very best to make your gatherings as healthy as possible.”

In fact, Davis considers the county to be at double the amount of infectious people than when the county was first consid-

ered “low risk.”

He said the case rate is 88.7 cases per 100,000, or within range to be redesignated as moderate risk.

“Since we just moved down from moderate to low risk, we will be utilizing that grace period as we do our very best to reverse these trends,” Davis said. According to LCPH, the current rise in cases comes from three main categories: multi-household gatherings, large parties and workplaces.

“Obviously, multi-household gatherings are completely preventable. You don’t have to have them. I know it’s the time of year when the weather starts getting nicer and you want to have a backyard barbecue, but we really urge folks to forgo those for now while we’re seeing these drastic case increases,” David advised.

When people do gather, he urged them to take steps to keep people safe. This includes meeting outdoors when possible; keeping safe distance between people; wearing masks; and only relaxing those if someone is considered ful-

the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

LCPH reported that approximately 32.7 percent of Lane County adults have received at least one dose of vaccine.

That number will climb with Brown’s announce-

additional doses of each of the vaccines, but LCPH said it was equipped to handle the increase in eligible residents. The county’s goal is to get 70-75 percent of the overall adult population vaccinated.

“This will protect us from large-scale outbreaks and rapid case increases,” Davis said.

To help with this, Lane County has been conducting mass vaccination sites, with three sites now equipped for large-scale events. These are Autzen Stadium, Lane Community College and Lane Events Center, all in the Eugene area.

“Last weekend, we were able to vaccinate a little over 10,500 individuals at our mass vaccination sites,” Davis said. “A lot of good work is being done there in terms of being able to vaccinate quite a

few people all at once.”

The county will continue to plan both mass vaccination clinics and targeted clinics. People can sign up for their vaccine at lane-county.org/coronavirus or by contacting LCPH at 541-682-1380 or email corona-info@lanecounty.org.

“If you look at the map of Oregon counties, Lane County is one of a number of counties of the 36 counties which are experiencing pretty drastic case increases,” Davis said. “We’re not alone, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to reduce that situation. We have the capability, we have the power, and we demonstrated as a community in the past that we are able — by using masking, distancing and prioritizing our social gatherings — to really reverse these trends and be a bubble of safety and health, even amidst large-scale, state-wide and national trends on the up.”

For more information, visit covidvaccine.oregon.gov and lanecounty.org/coronavirus.

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— Jason Davis, Lane County Public Health Public Information Officer

BOARDS from page 1A

Office Manager Dina McClure then presented the financial information for the month, which was accepted after a brief discussion. There was then a break as some directors, due to their ties to local financial institutions and the districts, removed themselves from a discussion of interest rates related to investing district funds.

Then, Farnsworth asked

some specifics about the rates quoted to McClure during her research of best returns for deposits. There were more questions directed by Farnsworth to McClure and she was unable to answer some of the specific points he raised, but agreed to find the answers and get back to the boards with the answers.

The financial debate continued with comments from WLAD directors Mike Webb and Rick Yecny, as well as SVFR

Director Ron Greene, all of whom reiterated the efforts made to both control spending and provide employees with a salary and benefit package that would serve as an inducement to retain employees.

Yecny also pointed to better-than-expected reports on PERS unfunded liability and future financial commitments related to the latest contract signed by the district with the union.

As discussion pro-

gressed, WLAD Director Cindy Russell was also opposed to Farnsworth’s suggestions regarding salary reductions, pointing out that many district employees have associate and/or bachelor’s degrees and provide excellent service, dependable care and an important health-safety component to area residents.

Russell went through a long list of the certifications and classes ambulance district staff and vol-

unteers are asked to attend, all of which improve overall knowledge and service provided to clients. She also pushed back against the idea that paying employees less and expecting the same level of service would be actualized.

Farnsworth suggested the voters would ultimately decide the path forward in these areas.

At the end of the meeting, the closing comments from directors were supportive of the work done

by WLFEA employees and the overall tone of the meeting then shifted to the future as WLFEA president John Murphey asked Schick to provide a plan for even further integration between the two agencies.

The next WLFEA board meeting is scheduled for April 22, beginning at 6 p.m.

For more information, visit svfr.org and www.westernlaneambulance.com.

Rotary seeks submissions for speech contest

Any Siuslaw or Mapleton-area high school student (public, private, or home-schooled) in grades 9-12 who cares about ethical standards and behavior in today’s world is invited to participate in the Rotary Club of Florence’s annual Rotary International 4-Way Test Speech Contest.

The contest will be held virtually online at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 22. The top three finalists at the contest will present their speeches to a virtual meeting of the Florence Rotary Club on Tuesday,

May 4, at noon. First place for the local contest receives \$750, second place prize is \$500, and third place will receive \$250.

The three finalists from this event will also compete with contestants from other coastal Rotary clubs, with the first-place finisher at the second round competing in a “Speak Off” at the Rotary District Conference. Additional cash prizes will be awarded at the District level.

All participants will be required to take the Rotary 4-Way Test and apply it to

real life throughout their speeches. The 4-Way Test has four principles:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build good will and better friendship?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

The choices for topics are endless. For example, would the Super Bowl pass the 4-Way Test? What about your homework as-

signments? How about social networking?

All speeches must be original and may not be less than 5 minutes or more than 7 minutes. Speeches should also be memorized.

For information on participating, including an application and guidelines, visit www.theflorence Rotary.org and choose the tab “Club Youth Programs” followed by “Speech Contest.”

Nonprofits can apply for Mapleton Community Foundation grants

Mapleton Community Foundation grant applications and guidelines for 2021 are available at the Mapleton and Deadwood Post Offices and at the Mapleton branch of the Siuslaw Public Library on Thursdays from noon to 5 p.m.

The deadline for submission is May 7.

The following are the criteria for the grants:

- Funds are to be used to

benefit students or residents living within the Mapleton School District boundaries.

- Grant applicants must be a qualifying, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization.
- Funds will not be awarded to individuals, or for operating expenses.

For more information or to receive an electronic copy of the application, contact Kathy West at 541-268-4665.

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