

JUMP from page 1A

"In April, we released the apportionment results from the 2020 Census, which showed that the total population in the U.S. was 331.4 million and determined each state's share of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Since then, we've had teams working nonstop on the next set of 2020 Census data — the redistricting data. These data may play an important role in our democracy and also begin to illuminate how the local and demographic makeup of our nation has changed over the last decade," Jarmin said. "As we have discussed before, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed our schedule for collecting and processing the data for the 2020 Census. We have understood the urgency to provide the redistricting data to the states, some of which have tight deadlines."

Jarmin stated that in order to provide these critical data to all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico as soon as possible, the bureau was providing the exact same data in two releases. The first release happened on Thursday and there will be a second release in September which will be easier to access and more user friendly.

Jarmin also spoke to the concerns of those who question the accuracy of the 2020 count.

"I'd like to say a few words about data quality — something in which we know there is keen interest given the challenges presented in 2020. We have produced the reliable and usable statistics that we and the public expect. While no census is perfect, we are confident that today's redistricting results meet our high data-quality standards," he said. "It is too early to speculate on undercounts or overcounts for any specific demographic group. Throughout data processing, we've been comparing the counts to benchmarks as part of our quality checks on the data — and we have

conducted one of the most comprehensive reviews in recent census history. The data we are releasing today meet our high data quality standards."

Florence data has not been completely tabulated and shared yet, but there are some interesting early figures available which can be used to interpret future needs and current trends.

Sample data has been used to predict the final tallies for the area, but there are preliminary numbers which show that 9,396 people live in Florence and 92.2 percent identify as white only. An additional 2.9 & consider themselves multi-racial.

The average rent in Florence is \$885. The median household income is \$42,356.

Locally, 44.3 percent of residents are older than 65. Females make up 53.8 percent of the population. Those who are disabled make up 18.6 percent of the population and

In addition, 86 percent of respondents have computers and 82 percent have internet access.

The data collected from Lane County not only counts the number of people residing in the county, but also collects data related to housing, education, nationality and education and income levels.

The population data gathered shows there has been an increase in the total population of the county from 351,715 to 382,971, a rise of 8.6 percent. Those that identified themselves as white alone make up 89 percent of Oregonians and there are 27,587 veterans in Lane County.

One of the most difficult challenges facing local residents and those attempting to find housing across the state is the growing shortage in the number of homes available for those seeking to move or change residences.

The new Census data states there are 164,847 housing units in Lane County and 59 percent are owner occupied. There are

2.4 persons per household. The median price of a home in the county is \$263,200 and the median rental cost is \$989.

The per capita income for residents is \$29,705 and 13.95 percent of Oregonians live below the poverty line.

Education levels in the county show that 92 percent of Oregonians have a high school diploma and 30.5 percent have a bachelor's degree, or higher. 93 percent of homes have a computer and 85 percent have internet access.

In addition, females make up the majority of the state's workforce, with 56.3 percent fully employed. 10,998 businesses are owned by women.

Jarmin also addressed the issue of increased refusal of respondents to answer all or part of the survey's questions a situation which was more prevalent than in previous years.

"Throughout data processing, we've been comparing the counts to benchmarks as part of our quality checks on the data. We have conducted one of the most comprehensive reviews in recent census history," he said. "As part of our review, we've had to contend with higher item nonresponse rates for characteristics than we've experienced in past censuses. This means while people were counted, some people left one or more questions blank, even if they completed most of the census questionnaire."

The Census Bureau is still working on finalizing the redistricting and population totals for the country and will hold another nationwide virtual meeting in September to review and discuss the final changes in the membership numbers for each state in the House of Representatives.

The complete 2020 Census report can be viewed at census.gov.

CONT. from page 5A

Dana Barbato, Director of Human Resources at Three Rivers Casino Resort, agrees with Johnson on the importance of community effort and she raised alternatives in addressing the housing crises.

"I believe the only way to find a solution to the housing challenges is to work together as a community to incentivize builders to invest in the entry-level homeowner market and encourage vacation homeowners to offer long-term leases to local workers," she said.

Barbato believes Florence is a great place to work and live, but she adds how experiencing long waits and a lack of product availability in the places the community enjoys will persist. While residents are hopeful the housing market will open back up, she sympathizes on how "there is no easy solution."

In the meantime, Three Rivers is invested in supporting its employees who

are facing housing barriers, which includes offering emergency assistance and designating someone to watch the market and post listings that come up on the Team Member Community Board.

Furthermore, the staff delivers strong communication with one another and connects on ways to be resourceful in seeking alternatives to affordable housing.

"We ask those who have an extra room, trailer or space to rent to other team members in need," Barbato adds. "We have been working diligently researching options such as mobile housing units, partnering with vacation rental owners and providing camping or RV space to team members."

As for challenges, Three Rivers is faced with a similar burden to many businesses in the area — a staff shortage due to limited housing in the area. The challenges in hiring enough team members to fill open positions persist for local school districts, hospitals, senior homes,

restaurants and more. "The natural solution is hiring from out of the area, but with no housing available we are losing some very good candidates," Barbato said.

Meanwhile, housing projects like the Three Mile Prairie, Our Coastal Village and DevNW are working to expand space for housing. The City of Florence completed its Housing and Economic Opportunities Project in 2018 and has amended city code to remove some barriers to development.

It will take all these projects, and input from the community, to truly solve Florence's housing situation.

"It's a very holistic approach," Morgan said. "If you don't have housing, if you don't have food, if it weren't for folks ... working on these projects and people out in the community, places like food share don't exist. Our entire economy relies on the support structures to keep going. Without good housing, you can't get workers in."

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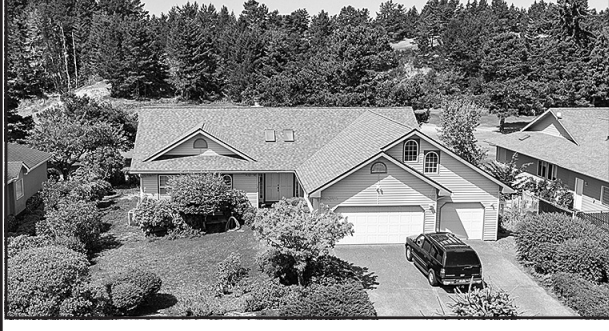
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FIRE PREVENTION GUIDE | AT HOME
Wildfire Preparedness Tips

When you think of dangerous fires, your mind likely associates them with your home, office or other structures. But wildfires have become a devastating force of nature leaving millions of people displaced or evacuated from their homes.

Nearly 45 million homes abut or intermingle with wildlands and more than 72,000 U.S. communities are now at risk of wildfires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. But how do you know if you fall into this category?

One way to know is to contact your local planning and zoning office to find out if your home is in a wildfire risk area, and if there are specific local or county ordinances you should be following.

If you are part of a homeowners association, work collaboratively to identify regulations that incorporate preparedness landscaping, home design and building material use.

You can also talk to your local fire department about how to prepare and when to evacuate in the

event of a wildfire. The more prepared you and your neighbors are, the better chance you'll have of avoiding injury during a wildfire.

SAFETY TIPS

Here are some preparedness tips from the NFPA:

To prevent embers from igniting your home, clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks.

Remove dead vegetation and other items from under your deck or porch, and within 10 feet of the house.

Remove flammable materials within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings.

Wildfires can spread to tree tops, so prune your trees so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.

Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained, as dry grass

and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.

STAY ALERT

Wildfires generate media attention, so stay tuned to your local news stations for the latest updates on wildfire activity. If your neighborhood or region is under an evacuation order, be sure to follow the guidance of your local officials. The NFPA recommends leaving as early as possible, even before you're told to evacuate. Promptly leaving your home and neighborhood clears roads for firefighters to get equipment in place to fight the fire.



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