

Safety *from A1*

as a result of the state's increase in coronavirus cases and Lane County, too, has felt the COVID-19 surge as it reported its highest count in a day of 40 cases on July 18.

Daily case counts have dropped to fewer than 10 since then.

As of July 21, the county has had a total of 406 cases, 54 of which are currently infectious with one person hospitalized.

To date, 33,538 tests have been conducted and three deaths have been reported as a result of the coronavirus.

More locally, Lane County Public Health data lists ZIP code 97424 as having 12 cases.

Based on contact tracing and investigations, county health officials say new cases have predominantly been travel-related as Lane County residents travel to other areas and return to infect others in small gatherings.

Governor Kate Brown has said that restaurants and bars do not appear to be sources of "significant" spread, so she will not shut them down for now. But she has added that "nothing is off the table."

In an effort to mitigate the strain of ongoing health requirements

on businesses, free face masks have recently been made available to the area.

As Lane County received 48,000 KN95 masks from the State Office of Emergency Management to support small businesses, last week the City of Cottage Grove received 1,500 of that bulk.

The masks are disposable and available for small businesses of 50 or fewer employees.

"They're not medical grade," said City Manager Richard Meyers. "They're just regular face covering masks."

The masks were first made available at the Cottage Grove City Hall this Monday. By the end of the day, 100 masks had been picked up by nine businesses and should the city eventually run out, more can be requested.

The free masks can be picked up at City Hall during office hours, which are 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Businesses are encouraged to have a representative come to City Hall to pick up masks, which are to be used specifically for employees.

Though this may provide some relief for staff, local businesses have also seen an ebb and flow of a customer base which is frequently sub-

jected to new socialization requirements.

Food and beverage establishments in particular have noted that customers are often walking in to businesses without a clear understanding of the current rules.

"What we try to do more than anything is communicate, communicate, communicate," said Jakelen Eckstine, head server at Axe and Fiddle.

In restaurants and bars, the rule of thumb is that patrons should keep a mask on unless they are sitting at their designated table eating or drinking.

"When you get up from your table or you're walking anywhere — like walking to the bathroom — get that mask up," advised Smith.

One added element of stress for small businesses, though, is that state mandates have effectively made staff the enforcement arm of the public health requirements. This puts businesses, especially in the hospitality industry, in the awkward position of policing their establishments.

Smith has tried to take a friendly approach to enforcement.

"[The rules] are there for a reason. They're there for the safety and well-being of our community," said Smith. "So

we start with not blaming anyone. I think that's a great place to start."

Staff at the newly opened Covered Bridge Brewing Group, too, are trying to strike a balance.

"We want to make people feel as welcome as possible during these crazy times — and safe," said part-owner Chrissy Chapman. "We're trying the best we can to comply in as pleasant a way as we can."

Customer pushback against the requirements has been relatively rare according to several establishments.

"As the days go by and it becomes more routine, it's getting less and less," Chapman attested.

Businesses noted that one challenging point to get across is that the requirements are not a political statement.

"Our jobs are on the line if we don't follow these," said Chapman. "It is up to us to enforce those rules."

Enforcing those rules comes at some cost to the businesses, too, as public health guidelines require a high degree of attention.

"It's something we're definitely taking very seriously," said Eckstine. "We're following the mandates as closely as possible."

In addition to providing staff with pro-

TECTIVE equipment, food and beverage businesses must keep a constant eye on sanitation levels.

This means that despite an economic slump, in some cases more staff are required to get the job done.

The Axe and Fiddle, for example, brings in a "quasi-host" to control evening traffic for seating, said Eckstine.

Restaurants and bars are also volunteering to provide masks to customers who forget their own, adding a bit more to costs.

And because mandates could change at a moment's notice, businesses must constantly keep staff up to date on the latest guidelines.

Smith said Coast Fork Brewing has regular staff meetings, which are used as a training ground to stay updated and communicate safety precautions.

"We talk about things right down to the amount of bleach we put in every bottle," she said. "So everybody feels ready and equipped."

Coast Fork Brewing has implemented some unique practices as well, such as marking tables "sanitized" or "not sanitized" for customer protection. It has also instituted a "speak up" policy to encourage staff to notify others if they think something can be improved.

The policy extends to customers, too.

"I'll never be upset if someone calls something out because I want to be 110 percent and I believe that's true of every business in this community," said Smith.

For the latest state-level information on COVID-19, visit the Oregon website online at govsta-tus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19.

One solution for oxygen at home, away, and for travel
Introducing the INOGEN ONE — It's oxygen therapy on your terms

No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go virtually anywhere — even on most airlines. Inogen accepts Medicare and many private insurances!

Reclaim Your Freedom And Independence NOW!

Call Inogen Today To Request Your FREE Info Kit
1-855-839-0752

inogen
USA
MKT-P0108

Imagine The Difference You Can Make

DONATE YOUR CAR
1-844-533-9173

FREE TOWING
TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Help Prevent Blindness
Get A Vision Screening Annually

Heritage for the Blind

Ask About A FREE 3 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!!

COVID-19 TESTING AVAILABLE

Schedule your screening today.
Call 541.225.4997 or visit
NovaCovidTest.com

nova HEALTH

Caring in Action

GROVE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
"BUILDING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY"
YOUR LOCAL PROVIDER OF HOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT!

Sales & Rentals, Insurance Billing, CPAP/BIPAP, Home Oxygen, Mobility, Walk Aids, Bath Aides, Power Chairs, Power Scooters, Aids to Daily Living. Friendly & Knowledgeable Staff

148 Gateway Blvd (Bi Mart Plaza)
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
541-225-5443

grovemedical@outlook.com
Join us on Facebook

Let us help you select the right wood flooring for any room!
Stop by our showroom for a free design consultation and estimate.

An Unparalleled Selection of Quality Wood Flooring

Natural Hardwood | Engineered Hardwood
Pine Flooring | Sustainable Bamboo
Distressed Hardwood | Vinyl | Tile

Rogers and Son Floor Covering

1324 E. Main St. | Cottage Grove
541-942-0500 | rogersandsonfloorcovering.com

Swap & Shop

Buy – Sell – Trade

10:05 – 11am
Monday – Friday

3 Items - \$500 limit

This is truly the place to find that hard to find item or turn your unwanted possessions in to other people's treasure.

717 Main Street
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Lobby Phone: 541.942.2468
Studio Line: 541.942.5548
Online requests: request@knnd.com

A "NUGGET" OF A SALE

Start a yearly subscription or add a year for
\$35.00*
(reg price \$43.50)

Includes digital access on cgsentinel.com.

*This offer is not transferable and the offer is available those who have not subscribed in the last 31 days. Special introductory offers are limited to no more than two special subscriptions in a twelve month period and must be paid in advance to qualify for special rate. Once the above discounted period ends, you will be billed at the regular subscription rates.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

116 N. 6th St. • Cottage Grove
CGSENTINEL.COM
541-942-3325

Subscribe ONLINE using code: mine20
Must "MINE" this deal by July 31, 2020