

Brown from A1

COVID issues as well as how new federal funding can help address livability issues faced by Oregon residents.

Brown was joined at the press conference by Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Director Patrick Allen and Rachel Banks, OHA Public Health Division Director, who provided Oregonians with a mildly optimistic scenario as they approach Christmas weekend.

The state has received just more than 76,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to date and is scheduled to receive 48,750 more doses Dec. 29, according to the OHA website. Most of those have been distributed and the decision as to the recipients of the next shipment of the Pfizer vaccine — along with the more rural-friendly Moderna-produced vaccine — is still being determined.

“This week we began administering vaccinations to long-term care residents and staff, finally putting us on the offense for our most vulnerable Oregonians. Since the very early days of this pandemic, one of the greatest tragedies has been the deadly nature of COVID-19 for our seniors living in long-term care,” Brown said. “Not even our most strict policies of infection control and visitation protocols have been able to fully protect elderly Oregonians living in these facilities. It feels really good that we are now able to start these vaccinations, with the hope that these folks can reunite with their families once again and feel safe from this virus soon.”

Nearly 4,500 front-line health care workers in Oregon have received vaccine doses so far. In addition to rolling out the much-anticipated vaccine campaign, Brown said there’s evidence that the state’s recent two-week “freeze” and the measures taken since then “have blunted the virus surge we were all dreading as we entered the Thanksgiving holiday,” added Brown.

The governor continued by thanking Oregonians for adhering to the state’s recent two-week phase back instituted just before Thanksgiving, suggesting those involved in educating Oregon’s youth should be among those next selected to receive the vaccines.

“As we continue to work our way through

vaccinating our health care workers, as well as residents and staff in long-term care facilities, we look next to the groups identified by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and recommended to the CDC: including people over 75 and workers who are critical to keeping society going,” Brown said. “One thing I know for sure is that our educators, school staff, child-care providers and early learning educators must be at the top of the list in Oregon’s next round of vaccines. Our kids need to know they’re number one. And that we’re doing everything we can to get them back into the classrooms.”

Brown also thanked the legislators who participated in this past weekend’s special session, of which the governor said the most pressing issue was the extension through June of the Eviction moratorium set to expire a year’s end.

“I called for a special session because it’s absolutely critical we get help to Oregonians who have made the necessary sacri-

fices to prevent the spread of COVID-19. And I am incredibly grateful to the Legislature for coming together to pass policy bills that will provide relief for tenants and landlords, keep roofs over people’s heads by extending the eviction moratorium, and support our restaurants and bars,” Brown said. “I’m also grateful to the bipartisan work of lawmakers to deliver on a wildfire relief package.”

Brown’s remarks came after a week of uncertainty surrounding the release of the Pfizer vaccine, a potential housing emergency related to evictions and the continuing underemployment of tens of thousands of Oregonians — which she blunted with a positive message.

“I know the mere thought of 2020 coming to an end brings a smile to many of our faces. It surely has been a year for the books,” Brown said. “Even in our most difficult moments, I continue to be endlessly impressed with how Oregonians come together and lift one another up during tough times.”



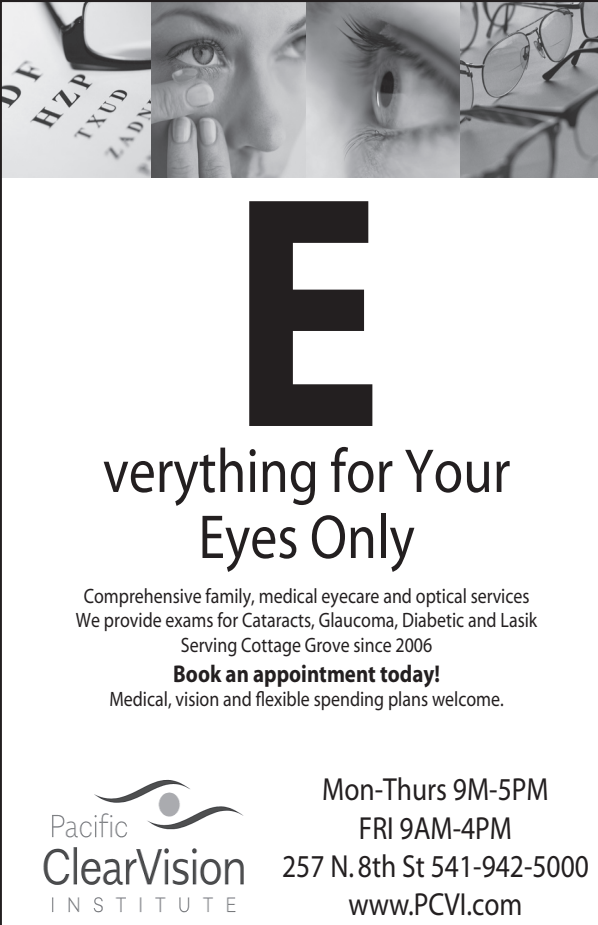
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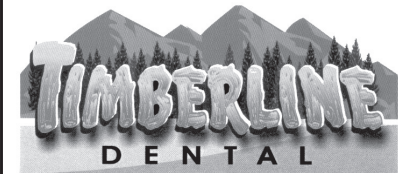
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