

PARADE

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Cutler said the Chamber paid \$650 for event insurance in case the parade could happen.

"We're just trying to bring joy, but we're not going to jeopardize anything," Cutler said on Monday morning.

Gov. Kate Brown announced last week that starting Dec. 3, each of Oregon's 36 counties will be placed into one of four risk categories for COVID-19 spread, with varying restrictions on events, businesses and other activities. The categories are lower, moderate, high and extreme.

Officials from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) on Monday were scheduled to review county statistics for the period Nov. 15-28 to determine the category for each county during the initial two-week period of restrictions, Dec. 3-17, said Liz Merah, press secretary for the governor.

OHA officials will reassess each county at two-week intervals, and counties can potentially move from one risk category to another.

For counties with populations below 30,000 — including Baker, which has about 16,800 residents — a tally of 60 or more new cases from Nov. 15-28 would put the county in the "extreme" risk category, with the most stringent limits. That includes a maximum of 50 people attending outdoor entertainment events.

From Nov. 15-28, Baker County reported 65 new cases.

State officials had not announced the list of counties in the extreme risk category as of press time Monday afternoon.

But Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett said he believes that based on the county's number of new cases over the past two weeks, it will be in the extreme category.

The county also could have



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald File Photo, 2019

A long train of Christmas presents entered by the Baker County Sheriff's Office helped brighten Main Street during the Twilight Christmas Parade in December 2019. This year's parade probably will be canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

qualified as an extreme risk based on its test positivity rate of about 17.7% for the Nov. 15-28 period, above the 10% threshold for the extreme risk category.

But even if the county had been in the high risk group — from 45 to 59 new cases during the two-week period, and a positivity rate between 8% and 9.9% — the maximum of 75 people attending outdoor entertainment events would have made it impossible for the Twilight Parade to happen, since it attracts hundreds of spectators, Cutler said.

She said that as of Monday morning the Chamber had received just four applications for parade floats. In a typical year there are 25 to 30 entrants, she said.

The parade includes

multiple vehicles from Baker City's police and fire departments, but Warner said those wouldn't have participated even if there was a parade.

"We want to err on the side of caution," he said.

Other restrictions for counties in the extreme risk category include:

- Restaurants and bars: Takeout highly recommended, no indoor dining, with outdoor dining limited to 50 people, a maximum of six people, from no more than two households, per table.

- Grocery stores and other retail outlets: Maximum of 50% of building capacity.

Jill McGinnis, communications manager for the company that owns Safeway and Albertsons stores, said the 50% capacity limit in the Baker City stores "will not

impact our operation as we typically run below these percentages in those stores."

Cody Miller, who owns the Grocery Outlet store in Baker City, also said the capacity limit won't force him to restrict customers.

- At-home social gatherings: Maximum of six people, recommended limit of two households.

- Churches, funeral homes, mortuaries, cemeteries: Indoor, maximum of 25% of building capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer; outdoors maximum of 150 people.

- Indoor recreation and fitness establishments, and entertainment, including gyms, swimming pools, K-12 indoor sports, movie theaters museums and concert halls: prohibited

CANNON

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The Council is slated to ratify an employment contract with Cannon at its next meeting, likely on Dec. 8.

The contract calls for Cannon to officially take over the job Jan. 1.

Mayor Loran Joseph negotiated the contract with Cannon after the City Council decided Nov. 17 that Cannon was their top candidate to replace Fred Warner Jr., who is retiring at the end of the year.

Cannon was among three candidates who visited Baker City in early November to meet with councilors, councilors-elect and residents.

Cannon said his wife and their three children — two sons and a daughter — are also excited about "becoming part of the community."

The contract sets Cannon's annual salary at \$105,000.

He could earn a raise

to \$110,000 if the Council rates his performance as satisfactory or better during an evaluation that, per the contract, will happen in July or August.

Cannon will also be eligible for a merit increase in his annual salary, of a minimum of 2%, based on subsequent performance reviews after the first such review in July or August 2021.

The contract includes a provision for the city to pay Cannon up to \$5,000 in moving expenses.

The contract allows the City Council to terminate Cannon without cause, with severance pay depending on how far in advance the Council notifies him.

With 150 to 180 days notice, severance pay would equal his salary for one month.

- 90 to 150 days notice — two months salary
- 30 to 90 days notice — three months salary
- fewer than 30 days notice — four months salary

CLINIC

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"These are difficult and unpredictable times for everyone right now," Shari Selander, New Directions CEO, stated in the press release. "And NDN desires to meet the behavioral health needs of Baker County residents with more accessibility than before."

The benefits of a walk-in clinic are twofold, Selander said. NDN will be able to meet the needs of Baker County residents at the time when services are needed, and clients will be able to come as often as they need, not just at an appointed time. This service also will add behavior health services to the community's list of clinic services, she said.

The New Directions Northwest walk-in clinic joins others offered at St. Luke's Clinic — Eastern Oregon Medical Associates and Saint Alphonsus Medical Center to connect clients to health care providers with same-day access, rather than days of delay.

"We are here when you need us, without needing to schedule an appointment," Marji Lind, clinical director, stated in the press release. "We want to meet people's needs in a better way."

New Directions Northwest accepts Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care/Oregon Health Plan, Medicare and most private insurances. More information is available by calling 541-523-7400 or at www.newdirectionsnw.org

Deschutes goes blue, and other election details

By Gary A. Warner
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon continued its run of backing Democrats for President that dates back to when "Kokomo" by the Beach Boys was the No. 1 song in the country.

The electoral map of Oregon took on its usual hues: The population centers around the Portland metro area and a stretch from Eugene northwest through Corvallis to the coast around Newport went for Democrat Joe Biden, who won the state and the national election.

President Donald Trump retained Eastern and Southern Oregon as strongholds of Republican red on the map, running up victories from Pendleton and Hermiston to Klamath Falls and Coos Bay.

In the far northwest corner of the state, Astoria and Clatsop County went for the Democrat, as per usual in recent races. But neighboring Tillamook and Columbia counties stuck with President Trump, after both flipping in 2016 following two consecutive wins by Democrat Barack Obama.

But the biggest — if not unexpected — flip could be seen on the map as a blue bulge running east out of the Cascades. Deschutes County unambiguously gave the

Democrat the majority of its votes for president for the first time since Beatlemania swept the nation.

Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno has until Dec. 3 to announce final voting totals.

But with many counties already reporting official, final results, the remaining votes are a tiny fraction of the turnout. It's safe to see how the election went in Oregon. Some of the numbers:

Blue streak

Biden kept the streak of Democrats' presidential wins in Oregon alive for another four years. The state last went with a Republican in 1984, when Ronald Reagan won a second term in the White House.

More votes, same result

Trump increased his total vote in Oregon in 2020, with 955,842 votes as Friday. That's up from 782,403 votes four years ago. But the extra votes only lifted Trump's percentage of the vote slightly — to 40.36% in 2020 from 39.09% in 2016.

Bigger bite

Biden has received 1,337,329 votes, a big jump over the 1,002,106 votes for Hillary Clinton in 2016. Both

numbers were big enough to beat Trump, but Biden's total gave him just over 56% of the vote in 2020, bettering Clinton's 50.07% of the vote in 2016.

Deschutes goes Democratic: Deschutes County issued its final vote totals on Friday. It's a landmark result in the presidential vote. Biden won just under 52.7% of the presidential vote in Deschutes County. It marks the first time the county gave over half its votes to a Democratic candidate for the White House since Lyndon Johnson won 69% over Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964. Trump won the county in 2016 with 46.4% over 43.1% for Clinton. This year, Trump won 44.3% of the vote. Minor party candidates and write-in votes accounted for the final 2.9% of the returns.

In 1964, Deschutes County cast a total of 10,095 votes in the presidential election. The 2020 total: 125,234. The total Deschutes County vote in 1964 is 221 fewer votes than Biden's margin of victory — 10,316 votes — over Trump in 2020.

Flipper

Most of the approximately 3,000 counties in the United States voted for the same party's candidate as in 2016.

Deschutes County was one of 59 counties to flip from Trump in 2016 to Biden, according to a national vote analysis by National Public Radio. Another 18 flipped from Clinton in 2016 to Trump in 2020. The 77 counties that flipped were a pittance compared to the last presidential election. In 2016, 237 counties changed parties from how they voted in 2012. Trump won 216 counties that went for Obama in 2012. In Oregon, Tillamook and Columbia counties made the switch to Trump. Both counties stuck with Trump this year.

Old record

Best turnout in 48 years. The 2016 election that led to Donald Trump becoming president saw a record 136 million ballots cast nationwide, a 59% turnout of eligible voters, the most since Richard Nixon was elected in 1968 with 60.7% turnout.

New record

Best turnout in 120 years. NPR projected there would be 155 million votes cast in 2020. That would equal a turnout of 67% of eligible voters, the highest percentage since 73%

of voters cast ballots in 1900 to elect Republican William McKinley over Democrat William Jennings Bryan. Women could not vote until 1920 and "Jim Crow" segregationist laws in southern states kept many Black men from voting.

All-time champ

Strong political difference drove just over 81 percent of eligible voters to the polls in 1860 to choose between four candidates. Republican Abraham Lincoln won with 39% of the vote against a split Democratic Party that fielded two tickets, one from the north and one from the south, plus the Whig Party. The electorate did not include women or the 4 million Black slaves in the country. Lincoln's win would set off the Civil War the following year.

Oregon's first election

Oregon became a state in 1859 and first voted the following year. Lincoln won Oregon with 36% of the vote, just ahead of the pro-slavery Southern Democratic ticket with Vice President John Breckinridge of Kentucky running for the top job. It helped in Oregon that one of the state's U.S. senators, Jo-

seph Lane (namesake of Lane County), was Breckinridge's running mate. Sparsely populated Oregon cast a total of just 14,761 votes, but good enough to give Lincoln three votes in the Electoral College.

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The family of **Howard Payton** expresses sincere appreciation to Baker County's wonderful community, including Fire Department, Forest Service, Law Enforcement, Church, Car Club, the many friends and neighbors for their prayers, love, and donations made to the Billy Payton Memorial, and Baker Rural Fire Department during our time of sorrow. We will never forget how fortunate we are to live in Baker County.

Family of Howard Payton; Sandra, Vince, and Sheryl, Mark and Valerie Donicht, Bob and Kelly.