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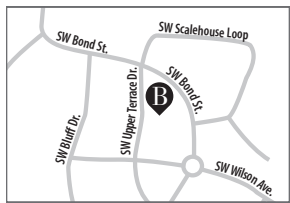
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

LOCAL, STATE & NATION

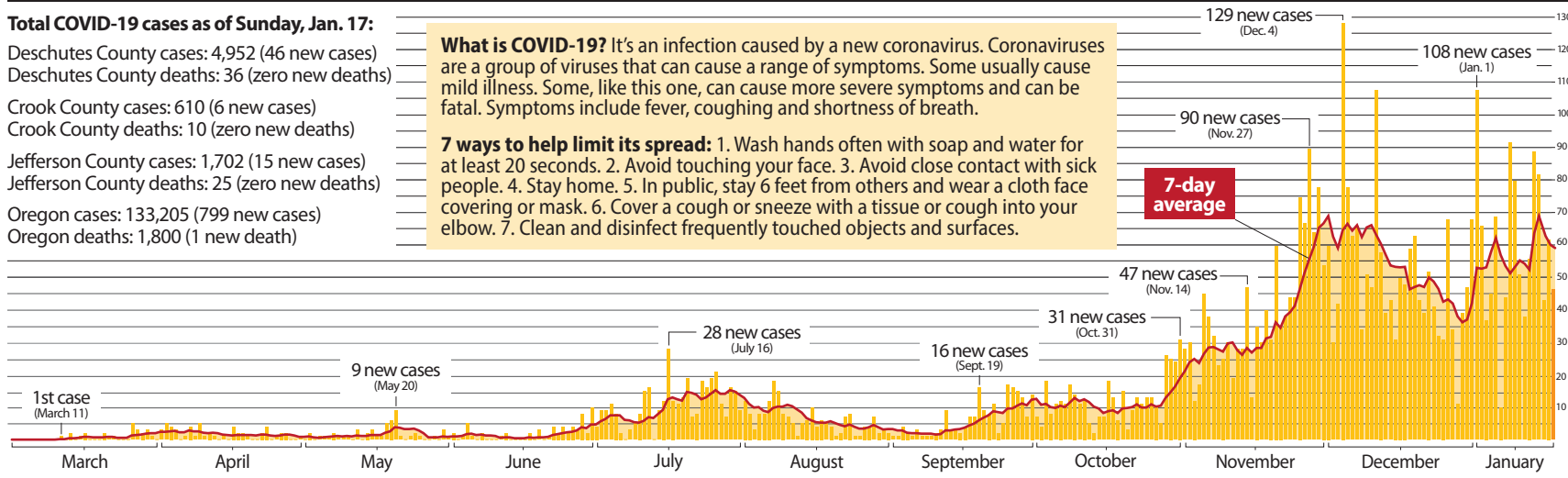
DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, DESCHUTES COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES, BULLETIN GRAPHIC

Total COVID-19 cases as of Sunday, Jan. 17:
Deschutes County cases: 4,952 (46 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 36 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 610 (6 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 10 (zero new deaths)
Jefferson County cases: 1,702 (15 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 25 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 133,205 (799 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 1,800 (1 new death)

What is COVID-19? It's an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause a range of symptoms. Some usually cause mild illness. Some, like this one, can cause more severe symptoms and can be fatal. Symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

7 ways to help limit its spread: 1. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 2. Avoid touching your face. 3. Avoid close contact with sick people. 4. Stay home. 5. In public, stay 6 feet from others and wear a cloth face covering or mask. 6. Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or cough into your elbow. 7. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Virus mutation discovered in Washington state

Unlike other variants, it hasn't spread yet

BY SANDI DOUGHTON

The Seattle Times
SEATTLE — Three COVID-19 infections diagnosed in Washington in October were caused by virus with a mutation that might boost the respiratory bug's ability to dodge immune defenses. The mutation, called E484K,

is also present in two of the worrisome new viral variants spreading around the globe — those that originated in South Africa and Brazil. But the virus detected in Washington did not have any of the other mutations that characterize those variants, said researchers at the UW Medicine Virology Lab.

No other infections with the mutation have been detected since October, though surveillance is limited in the state.

"Based on what we have right now, it hasn't taken off," said computational biologist Pavitra Roychoudhury, part of a team that sequenced the three genomes. "We definitely want to keep an eye on it."

The mutation has been spotted sporadically in the U.S.

since spring, said Trevor Bedford, a computational biologist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center who has been tracking genetic changes in the virus since the start of the pandemic.

Those isolated sightings haven't sparked major outbreaks. "It appears that just having the (E484K) mutation isn't enough to make a huge difference to the virus," he wrote in an email.

However, in combination with the 10 or more other mutations in the South Africa and Brazil variants, it is spreading rapidly.

Genetic changes in the virus are raising alarms because several new variants have emerged recently around the world, some of which spread more easily. The variant now dominant in the U.K. has popped up in several states, including Oregon.

Capitols

Continued from A1

Large-scale protests did not materialize in Oregon on Saturday, either, despite calls for demonstrations on social media.

Security was stepped up in recent days after the FBI warned of the potential for armed protests in Washington and at all 50 state capitol buildings ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday.

Crowds of only a dozen or two demonstrated at some boarded-up, cordoned-off statehouses, while the streets in many other capital cities remained empty. Some protesters said they were there to back President Donald Trump. Others said they had instead come to voice their support for gun rights or oppose government overreach.

"I don't trust the results of the election," said Michigan protester Martin Szlag, a 67-year-old semi-retired window salesman from Dearborn Heights. He wore a sign around his neck that read, in part, "We will support Joe Biden as our President if you can convince us he won legally. Show us the proof! Then the healing can begin."

Relief and apprehension

As the day wore on with no bloodshed around the U.S., a sense of relief spread among officials, though they were not ready to let their guard down.

The heavy law enforcement presence may have kept turnout down. In the past few days, some extremists had warned others against falling into what they called a law enforcement trap.

Washington State Patrol spokesman Chris Loftis said he hoped the apparently peaceful day reflected some soul-searching among Americans.

"I would love to say that it's because we've all taken a sober look in the mirror and have decided that we are a more unified people than certain moments in time would indicate," he said.

The security measures were intended to safeguard seats of government from the type of violence that broke out at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

On Sunday, some statehouses were surrounded by new security fences, their windows were boarded up, and extra officers were on patrol. Legislatures generally were not in session over the weekend.

Outnumbered

The roughly 20 protesters who showed up at Michigan's Capitol, including some who were armed, were significantly outnumbered by law enforcement officers and members of the media. Tensions have been running high in the state since authorities foiled a plot to



Dave Killen/The Oregonian

A small group of armed demonstrators gather at the Oregon Capitol on Sunday, days before the inauguration in Washington.

kidnap Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer last year.

At the Ohio Statehouse, about two dozen people, including several carrying long guns, protested outside under the watchful eyes of state troopers before dispersing as it began to snow.

Kathy Sherman, who was wearing a visor with "Trump" printed on it, said she supports the president but distanced herself from the mob that breached the U.S. Capitol. "I'm here to support the right to voice a political view or opinion without fear of censorship, harassment or the threat of losing my job or being physically assaulted," she said.

Utah's new governor, Republican Spencer Cox, shared photos on his Twitter account showing him with what appeared to be hundreds of National Guard and law enforcement officers standing behind him, all wearing masks. Cox called the quiet protests a best-case scenario and said that many "agitating groups" had canceled their plans for the day.

At the Texas Capitol, Ben Hawk walked with about a dozen demonstrators up to the locked gates carrying a bullhorn and an AR-15 rifle hanging at the side of his camouflage pants. He condemned the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and said he did not support Trump.

"All we came down here to do today was to discuss, gather, network and hang out. And it got blown and

twisted completely out of proportion," Hawk said.

At Nevada's Capitol, where demonstrators supporting Trump have flocked most weekends in recent months, all was quiet except for a lone protester with a sign. "Trump Lost. Be Adults. Go Home," it read.

Through Inauguration Day

More than a third of governors had called out the National Guard to help protect their capitols and assist local law enforcement. Several governors declared states of emergency, and others closed their capitols to the public until after Biden's inauguration.

Even before the violence at the Capitol, some statehouses had been the target of vandals and angry protesters during the past year.

Last spring, armed protesters entered the Michigan Capitol to object to coronavirus lockdowns. People angry over the death of George Floyd under a Minneapolis police officer's knee vandalized capitols in several states, including Colorado, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin.

Last last month, crowds in Oregon forced their way into the Capitol in Salem to protest its closure to the public during a special legislative session on coronavirus measures. Amid the potential for violence in the coming days, the building's first-floor windows were boarded up and the National Guard was brought in.

STORM AFTERMATH

Damage closes Eagle Creek Trail; evacuation order lifted

The Oregonian

A winter storm has shut down the Eagle Creek Trail again, only two weeks after it reopened to the public.

The U.S. Forest Service announced Thursday the Eagle Creek Trail will be closed until further notice, as crews clear landslides and fallen trees from the popular hiking trail in the Columbia River Gorge.

"The steep slopes and loss of vegetation from the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire throughout the waterfall corridor make the area prone to landslides, rockfall, and debris flows from heavy rains," the forest service said in a news release Thursday.

Forest officials had reopened the trail Jan. 1, more than three years after it closed due to the Eagle Creek Fire. Hikers had been flocking to the trail in the

two weeks since, revisiting its many waterfalls and moss-covered canyons.

The recent storm that blew across Northwest Oregon has hit the Gorge especially hard. A large landslide Wednesday morning shut down the Historic Columbia River Highway and part of Interstate 84. Several state park sites in the Gorge were also closed Wednesday because of storm damage and inaccessibility.

State authorities reminded weekend travelers to be cautious as cleanup continued.

A Wednesday landslide in Dodson swept away a 50-year-old nurse from Warrendale. The debris flow in Dodson was estimated at 10 feet deep in places.

Authorities lifted an evacuation order for Dodson on Sat-

urday night. Early Wednesday, authorities had urged about 25 households in the area to evacuate.

Multnomah County officials lifted the orders after reviewing a preliminary report from engineers hired by the county to assess the hillsides south of Dodson, according to a county news release. The geologists hired by the county "noted that there are inherent risks of living in this area of the Columbia River Gorge, and that risks of debris flow at the site location should be assumed as higher than nominal levels," according to the county.

State highway officials urged travelers to check TripCheck.com before passing through the Gorge.

While the Eagle Creek Trail was recently reopened, seasonal

closures on the trail are nothing new. After a winter storm destroyed a footbridge in 2015, the trail was partially closed for a year. And in 2017, a winter storm completely washed out a waterfall viewpoint on the trail,

destroying a side trail.

The U.S. Forest Service will partner with the Pacific Crest Trail Association to fix the trail, forest officials said. Work will begin as soon as it is safe to do so.

Oregon Reads Aloud
A Virtual Celebration and Fundraiser
with SMART Reading

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