

The Bulletin

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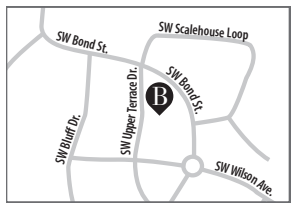
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

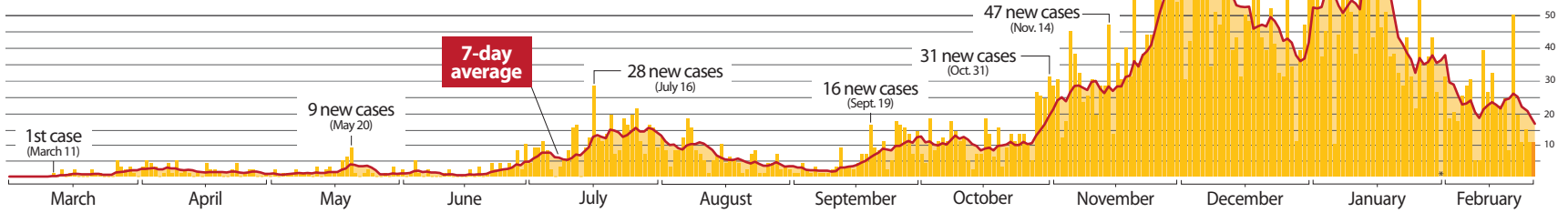
LOCAL, STATE & REGION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

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

COVID-19 data for Monday, Feb. 22:
Deschutes County cases: 5,860 (11 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 58 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 765 (zero new cases)
Crook County deaths: 18 (zero new deaths)
Jefferson County cases: 1,925 (4 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 27 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 153,134 (324 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,155 (0 new deaths)

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.



NEWS FROM SALEM

Oregon lawmaker accused of harassment is resigning

Oregon Public Broadcasting
On Sunday evening, Rep. Diego Hernandez, D-Portland, alerted the Oregon Secretary of State's Office that he would be resigning, but at the time he said it would not be until the end of March. On Monday afternoon, Hernandez revised the date saying he plans to stay in office through March 15, rather than March 31 as he had originally proposed.



Hernandez

Hernandez said in a text message to OPB that he made the change due to "office/staff transitions/health care" issues.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Hernandez would continue to accept his pay, benefits and \$151 per diem until March 15 when his resignation is effective.

"If you're elected and in office, you get your salaries and benefits until you are no longer in office," said Jessica Knieling, the Legislature's human resource director, who provided OPB with a copy of Hernandez's letter of resignation. "It's not discretionary. It's statutory."

Hernandez does not plan to participate in any legislative committee hearings in the upcoming weeks,

which could present problems for his fellow Democrats who want to pass bills out of the committees he currently sits on. Hernandez sits on the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures, House Committee on Energy and Environment, House Committee on Revenue and the House Committee on General Government.

After a panel of lawmakers determined Hernandez had violated legislative harassment rules, the entire House was scheduled to vote on his possible expulsion Tuesday.

Hernandez would have been the first lawmaker to be expelled from the body. It would have taken a two-thirds vote, or 40 members of the chamber to expel him.

After submitting a resignation, lawmakers have three days to withdraw the resignation. House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said the House would push the expulsion vote to the following week. Once Hernandez's resignation becomes final, the House would set the motion aside.

Kotek, who was one of several

Democratic colleagues who urged Hernandez to resign, said she was being cautious in her remarks due to a pending lawsuit.

Hernandez sued the Legislature and some individuals, including Kotek, seeking \$1 million in damages, plus attorney fees, noting the process of investigating allegations against him has inflicted "emotional distress in the form of anguish, embarrassment, loss of reputation, fear, worry, grief, anger, confusion, frustration, loss of sleep, and interference with usual life activities" for him.

But Kotek noted even "in a virtual work setting legislators have tremendous power" and it was important to hold members accountable.

To replace Hernandez, Democratic precinct committee people in his district will select between three and five people. This must be done within 20 days of the vacancy. Multnomah County Commissioners will then consider the candidates and select one to fill the remainder of Hernandez's term. They must choose Hernandez's replacement within 30 calendar days of the vacancy.

The 2021 legislative session is underway.

Oregon GOP ousts chair in shakeup; senators take key leadership roles

BY DIRK VANDERHART

Oregon Public Broadcasting
A conservative state senator from Myrtle Creek is the new chair of the Oregon Republican Party, following an event Saturday in which Republicans overhauled their top party leadership.

According to multiple Republican sources, state Sen. Dallas Heard handily won the job, beating three-term chair and Adair Village Mayor Bill Currier.

Heard, 35, is just one in a slate of current and former Republican senators who now have a central role in steering the party's course. Former Senate Minority Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr., now a Josephine County commissioner, won a contested race for vice chair. And state Sen. Dennis Linthicum, R-Klamath Falls, will serve as party treasurer.

A third sitting state senator, Chuck Thomsen of Hood River, was unsuccessful in his bid to serve as the party's secretary. He was defeated by incumbent secretary Becky Mitts, who also serves as chief of staff to state Rep. Mike Nearman, a Republican from Polk County.

"It's just kind of taking the party in a little different direction, a different type of leadership," Baertschiger said Sunday. "No criticism really of the prior leadership. ... It wasn't like there was some kind of coup."

Inquiries to Heard, Thomsen and a party spokesman were not answered Sunday morning.

The in-person election of top party officials was held Saturday at a VFW hall in Salem. Photos sent to OPB from a person who reported attending the event showed a hall packed with people in close quarters, none of them wearing face masks.

The leadership swap comes at a time the Oregon GOP has gained national attention for passing a resolution claiming the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol was a "false flag" op-



Sen. Dallas Heard, R-Myrtle Creek, was elected chair of the Oregon Republican Party on Saturday. Heard defeated three-term party chair Bill Currier.

eration by leftist forces — a conspiracy theory that has been debunked in the weeks since the incident.

The statement was denounced by all 23 Republicans in the state House. Two Republican senators representing swing districts, Thomsen and Bend-based Sen. Tim Knopp, also took exception to the statement. Knute Buehler, 2018 Republican nominee for governor, changed his party registration to nonaffiliated following the incident.

'It's going to take a while for the facts to get out'

Baertschiger was less critical. "I didn't really see an upside to that, even though there's a lot of questions about the Jan. 6 Capitol incident," he said. "It's going to take a while for the facts to get out. They're starting to come out. I think it's gonna be a mixed bag."

The state GOP has also been criticized in recent years for expending resources running two unsuccessful recall campaigns against Gov. Kate Brown, while at the same time failing to recruit competitive candidates for some statewide offices. Democrats currently control every

executive office in the state and hold supermajorities in the House and Senate, allowing them to pass any bill without Republican support.

It was unclear how Heard and others might seek to alter that trajectory. Heard in recent months has repeatedly garnered attention for his strident stance against state rules requiring masks and shuttering businesses to stem the spread of COVID-19.

When the Legislature met in special session Dec. 21, Heard tore off his face mask in protest on the Senate floor, and he accused Democratic legislators and the governor of a "campaign against the people and the children of God."

On Jan. 6, the same day as the attack on the U.S. Capitol, Heard addressed supporters of then-President Trump at an "Occupy the Capitol" rally in Salem.

It's not unheard of for sitting state lawmakers to lead the state party. More often, though, elected legislators and party leadership remain distinct from one another and former lawmakers like Baertschiger pursue the chair. Baertschiger said Sunday that Heard had a "burning desire" for the party's top spot.

LOCAL BRIEFING

OSU-Cascades to hold discussion on Oregon's Black exclusion laws

A group of Oregon State University professors will discuss various historical Oregon laws that discouraged Black Americans from moving to the state, and those laws' wide-reaching impacts, at a discussion Wednesday night.

The event, hosted by OSU-Cascades and Bend-based organization Love Your Neighbor, will feature four OSU professors: Erica McCalpine, Dwaine Plaza, Stacey Smith, and Robert Thompson, according to a university press release. The latter three professors are experts on the migration and settlement of Caribbeans, the role race played in the history of the American West, and African-American history, respectively, the release states. McCalpine, a business professor, is also the director of the OSU-Cascades Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Laboratory.

The free discussion is scheduled for 6 p.m. To register, visit OSU-Cascades' website.

Bend-La Pine School Board to discuss survey results, reopening schedule

The Bend-La Pine School Board plans to go over the results of a recent student-and-family survey, as well as discuss how school reopening has fared, at its work session Tuesday night.

In late November and December, Bend-La Pine Schools sent a survey to students and families in the district called YouthTruth, according to Andrea Wilson, executive assistant to the school board. The school board will go over the survey results, and talk about how to best gather input from students, parents and staff, Wilson said.

The school board only discusses topics during work sessions — no actions are taken.

The meeting can be viewed at 5:30 p.m. on Bend-La Pine's YouTube page, or listeners can call in at 408-418-9388. The access code to listen in over the phone is 120 614 0872.

Deschutes County Commission to discuss wildfire strategies

The Deschutes County Commission plans to discuss possible code changes related to wildfire hazard mitigation at a meeting Wednesday.

The commission is expected to talk about whether to affirm or amend the wildfire hazard zone in Deschutes County and how to develop building codes that make buildings more resilient to fire.

The commission is also expected to talk about whether to move forward with setting up standards for developing defensible space, which is the buffer created between a building and the grass, trees or any wildland areas that surround it, according to a county memo.

Having this space helps to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and helps protect structures from catching fire.

This topic is scheduled to be discussed after 1 p.m. at the commission's virtual meeting, which can be viewed on the county's website.

3 cars, 7 people rescued after getting stuck on Cascades Lakes Highway

Seven people and three cars became stranded Sunday after a motorist attempted to navigate a closed highway route and two other drivers became stuck while helping, according to Deschutes County Sheriff's Office.

At 10 p.m., Deschutes County dispatch received a call from Eric Valentine, a La Pine resident, who said his vehicle became stuck in the snow while trying to rescue his nephew, Brandon Dustin.

Dustin, of Eugene, had left La Pine around 5 p.m. Sunday and tried to take the "back way" to Eugene, authorities said. He attempted to take state Highway 372, also known as Century Drive or Cascade Lakes Highway, to U.S. Highway 58.

Snowmobilers traveling on the Oregon route told Dustin it was closed. Dustin attempted to turn around and got stuck in the snow, according to the sheriff's office. When Valentine tried to help Dustin, he also got stuck.

Valentine decided to call a friend, La Pine resident Jason Winford, who has a tow truck, and declined help from a search and rescue team. Winford arrived in a Chevy Suburban instead of a tow truck, and got stuck, too.

With three vehicles and seven people now stuck, Valentine called for experienced help. A search and rescue team returned the people and the vehicles to safety.

— Bulletin staff reports