

The Bulletin

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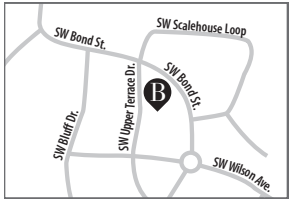
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NEWSROOM EMAIL Business business@bendbulletin.com City Desk news@bendbulletin.com Features communitylife@bendbulletin.com Sports sports@bendbulletin.com

NEWSROOM FAX 541-385-5804

OUR ADDRESS 320 SW Upper Terrace Drive Suite 200 Bend, OR 97702 P.O. Box 6020 Bend, OR 97708



ADMINISTRATION Publisher Heidi Wright 541-383-0341 Editor Gerry O'Brien 541-633-2166

DEPARTMENT HEADS Advertising Steve Rosen 541-383-0370 Circulation/Operations Jeremy Feldman 541-617-7830 Finance Anthony Georger 541-383-0324 Human Resources 541-383-0340

TALK TO AN EDITOR City Julie Johnson 541-383-0367 Business, Features, GO! Magazine Jody Lawrence-Turner 541-383-0308 Editorials Richard Coe 541-383-0353 News Tim Doran 541-383-0366 Photos 541-383-0366 Sports 541-383-0359

TALK TO A REPORTER Bend/Deschutes Government Brenna Visser 541-633-2160 Business Suzanne Roig 541-633-2117 Calendar 541-383-0304 Crook County 541-617-7829 Deschutes County 541-617-7818 Education Jackson Hogan 541-617-7854 Fine Arts/Features David Jasper 541-383-0349 General Assignment Kyle Spurr 541-617-7820 Health Suzanne Roig 541-633-2117 Jefferson County 541-617-7829 La Pine 541-383-0367 Music Brian McElhiney 541-617-7814 Public Lands/Environment Michael Kohn 541-617-7818 Public Safety Garrett Andrews 541-383-0325 Redmond Jackson Hogan 541-617-7854 Salem/State Government 541-617-7829 Sisters 541-383-0367 Sunriver 541-383-0367

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

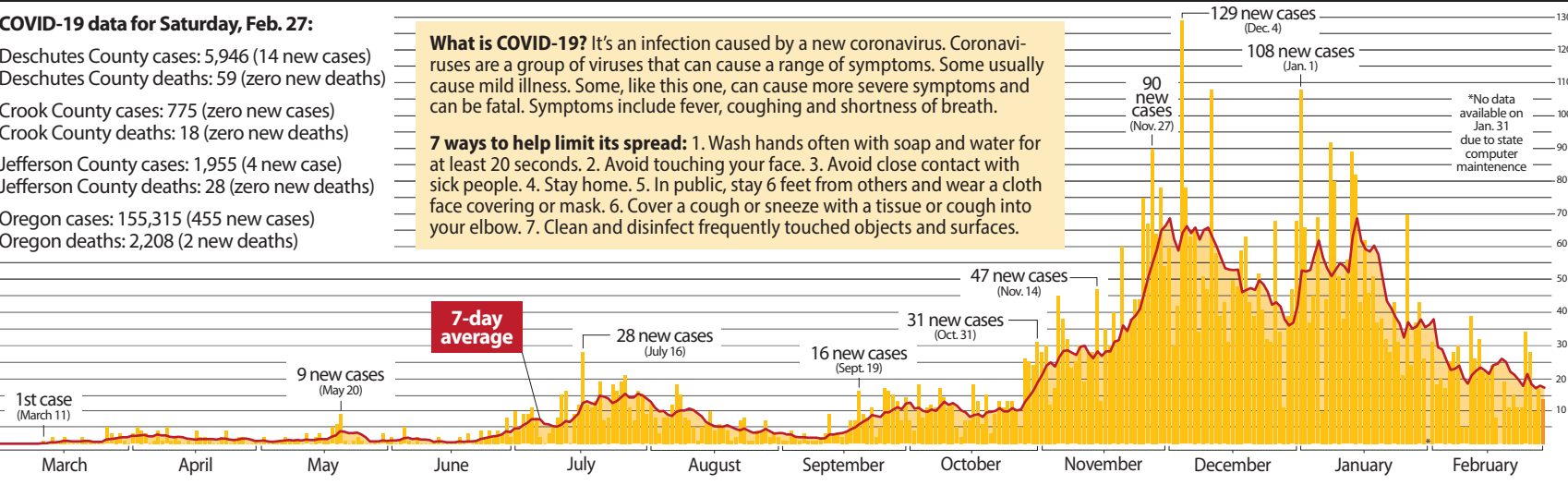
LOCAL, STATE & NATION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

COVID-19 data for Saturday, Feb. 27:

Deschutes County cases: 5,946 (14 new cases) Deschutes County deaths: 59 (zero new deaths) Crook County cases: 775 (zero new cases) Crook County deaths: 18 (zero new deaths) Jefferson County cases: 1,955 (4 new case) Jefferson County deaths: 28 (zero new deaths) Oregon cases: 155,315 (455 new cases) Oregon deaths: 2,208 (2 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.



Coronavirus relief heads to the Senate

Biden hails House passage of \$1.9T bill

BY ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House approved a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief bill that was championed by President Joe Biden, the first step in providing another dose of aid to a weary nation as the measure moves to a tense Senate. "We have no time to waste," Biden said at the White House after the House passage early Saturday. "We act now — decisively, quickly and boldly — we can finally get ahead of this virus. We can finally get our economy moving again. People in this country have suffered far too much for too long."

The new president's vision for infusing cash across a struggling economy to individuals, businesses, schools, states and cities battered by COVID-19 passed on a near party-line 219-212 vote. That ships the bill to the Senate, where Democrats seem bent on resuscitating their minimum wage push and



President Joe Biden removes his mask before speaking on the economy in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on Saturday.

fighting could erupt over state aid and other issues.

Democrats said that mass unemployment and the half-million American lives lost are causes to act despite nearly \$4 trillion in aid already spent fighting the fallout from the disease. GOP lawmakers, they said, were out of step with

a public that polling finds largely views the bill favorably.

"I am a happy camper tonight," Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., said Friday. "This is what America needs. Republicans, you ought to be a part of this. But if you're not, we're going without you." Republicans said the bill was too expensive and said too few education dollars would be spent quickly to immediately reopen schools. They said it was laden with gifts to Democratic constituencies like labor unions and funneled money to Democratic-run states they suggested didn't need it because their budgets had bounced back.

"To my colleagues who say this bill is bold, I say it's bloated," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif. "To those who say it's urgent, I say it's unfocused. To those who say it's popular, I say it is entirely partisan."

The overall relief bill would provide \$1,400 payments to individuals, extend

emergency unemployment benefits through August and increase tax credits for children and federal subsidies for health insurance.

It also provides billions for schools and colleges, state and local governments, COVID-19 vaccines and testing, renters, food producers and struggling industries like airlines, restaurants, bars and concert venues.

Moderate Democratic Reps. Jared Golden of Maine and Kurt Schrader of Oregon were the only two lawmakers to cross party lines. That sharp partisan divide is making the fight a showdown over whom voters will reward for hearing more federal spending to combat the coronavirus and revive the economy atop the \$4 trillion approved last year.

The battle is also emerging as an early test of Biden's ability to hold together his party's fragile congressional majorities — just 10 votes in the House and an evenly divided 50-50 Senate.

La Grande man reflects on service trip to Rwanda

BY DICK MASON

The Observer (La Grande) Rwanda is a medical paradox. The east African nation of 13.1 million has one of the lowest COVID-19 death rates in the world, yet the availability of basic medical equipment is limited.

Lou Gerber, of La Grande, understands this well. The retired Oregon National Guardsman, who served as a medic in Iraq in 2003 and 2004, returned after a two-week trip in December to Rwanda with his son Matt, who grew up in La Grande but now lives in Texas.

Lou Gerber gained a first-hand glimpse of Rwanda's medical system while teaching a CPR and first aid class to 38 first responders and providing them with donated medical supplies. Gerber was jolted to find many medical professionals in Rwanda have no stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs or pulse oximeters, which measure blood oxygen levels.

"Nurses did not have these," Gerber said. "It was very surprising." On the other end of the medical spectrum, Gerber said Rwanda's government is diligent in its efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19.

"It is very meticulous about protecting the population," Gerber said.

Gerber's son agreed, explaining that people must wear masks at almost all times, even



Lou Gerber teaches a CPR and first-aid class in December at Nibakure Community Village in Rwanda. Gerber served as a combat medic in Iraq with the National Guard in 2003 and 2004.

when in vehicles. "You will get pulled over if everyone is not wearing a mask," Matt Gerber said.

Rwandans are screened for COVID-19 many times a day. "Every time you walk into a bank, a grocery store or a hotel your temperature is taken," Matt Gerber said.

There also are many random checks. Lou Gerber noted he once saw people in a car stopped at a red light having their temperatures checked.

People entering Rwanda also face intense screening.

"We had to be tested in the United States five days before we left (for Rwanda) and after we arrived we were quarantined for 24 hours," Matt Gerber said.

This diligence is likely why Rwanda has been ranked first in Africa and sixth globally in managing the COVID-19

pandemic, according to a 2021 story in Africannews.com, which cites rankings made by the Lowy Institute of Australia.

Rwanda is lauded for its COVID-19 prevention efforts but not the state of its economy.

"The whole country is impoverished," Matt Gerber said. The nation has a dearth of fundamental medical supplies as a result. Often, Matt Gerber said, Rwandans lack basics, such as bandages.

He said his father was inspired to teach Rwandans how, in the absence of bandages, to cut sheets that can be used to stop bleeding.

To help address this shortage, the Gerbers brought a large assortment of first aid supplies, many donated by people in Union County. The supplies were collected and organized with major help from Lou Gerber's wife, Robin.

"She rallied the community to give donations, which made this a successful venture," said her son Matt.

Lou Gerber, an EMT, made his presentation with the aid of an interpreter who translated his words into Kinyarwanda, Rwanda's national language. Early in his three-hour presentation, the interpreter tapped Gerber on the shoulder.

"She asked me to slow down so that she could catch up to

me. When I'm talking about something I'm excited about I start talking too quickly," Gerber said.

Matt Gerber said his father's talk was given in a hot, uncomfortable outdoor setting. Despite this, he said the first responders listened intently throughout.

"These people were so excited," he said. "They were on the edge of their seats."

Matt Gerber, a corporate social responsibility strategist, also spent a portion of his time in Rwanda helping to develop a vocational development program for individuals who want to become seamstresses. He donated two sewing machines and a large amount of sewing items to help get this program started.

The trip to Rwanda was the first for Lou Gerber and the sixth for Matt in the past seven years. Matt Gerber said he hopes he and his father can make similar trips in the future.

"I hope we can start making service trips somewhere in the world every year," he said.

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Advertisement for MARIPOSA WIG & POST-MASTECTOMY BOUTIQUE, featuring an image of a boutique interior and text about Post-Mastectomy Care, Compression, Bras, Hats, Wigs.

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