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# The Bulletin

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### COVID-19 | Central Oregon

## Doors open a little wider for businesses as risk drops



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Instructor Megan Susnjara demonstrates a workout move Friday while leading a fitness class at Tread Tabata in Bend.

### Central Oregon schools

## Leaders make plea for relaxed distancing regulations

BY KYLE SPURR  
The Bulletin

All seven Central Oregon school superintendents signed a letter to Gov. Kate Brown urging the state to ease COVID-19 social-distancing guidelines and allow all students in the region to return to full-time, in-person learning. The letter, sent Tuesday, was signed by superintendents at Bend-La Pine Schools, Crook County, Jefferson County, Culver, Redmond and Sisters school districts and the High Desert Education Service District. Brown has not responded to the letter, but her office is expected to address possible changes next week. Lora Nordquist, superintendent of Bend-La Pine Schools, said Friday that each school district supports safety restrictions but wants to see slight changes that would give classrooms more capacity to accommodate students.

See Schools / A4

### COVID-19 | Vaccine

## Oregon needs huge infusion to meet goal

BY GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon would need up to double the doses of COVID-19 vaccine it currently receives to fulfill President Joe Biden's seven-week sprint to allow all adults to be offered inoculation, Oregon health officials said Friday. Gov. Kate Brown and top state medical experts held a press call Friday to say they hoped to meet Biden's timeline, but would move cautiously.

See Vaccine / A7

### Case-count drop in Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties allows restaurants to welcome more

BY MICHAEL KOHN • The Bulletin

At lunchtime Friday at Mio Sushi in the Old Mill District, server Emma Roach brought platefuls of steak and sushi to hungry customers. About half the tables were blocked off to prevent too many patrons inside, but a handful of tables were open for business.

While the restaurant still has a ways to go before being fully operational, Roach can seat a few more patrons now compared to earlier this week, thanks to Deschutes County dropping a level in COVID-19 risk, from high to moderate. "We are just excited that we get to have the opportunity to have more people here," said Roach. "On weekends especially it will help improve the flow of customers so it's much better.

It will give us more flexibility with the space." Friday marked a small victory for pubs, restaurants, gyms, and other places of business hit hard by the COVID-19 lockdowns. The falling numbers of cases allowed them to increase seating capacity, boosting morale and potentially bottom lines too. Deschutes County moved to moderate risk, which allows indoor dining, entertainment, and recreational centers to go to 50% capac-

ity or 100 people, whichever is smaller. Rules are also loosened for the number of people at indoor and outdoor gatherings, as well as in stores and malls. Jefferson and Crook counties also moved downward in risk as Central Oregon has seen new case counts fall in recent weeks. Weekly case counts are back down to levels not seen since late October, less than 30 a day.

See Risk / A4

### CROOK COUNTY

## Woman charged with felony after dropping off horses, 'disappearing'



McCarl

BY GARRETT ANDREWS  
The Bulletin

A Crook County woman is facing possible incarceration on animal neglect charges after allegedly leaving her horses on land she didn't own and effectively "disappearing" as their health deteriorated.

Richele Lerae "Rikki" McCarl, 51, relied on the kindness of Good Samaritans to care for her two horses over a six-month period in 2020, according to a request to seize the horses filed in Crook County Circuit Court.

See Horses / A7

## Climate change impact on Bend is topic of OSU-Cascades talk

BY MICHAEL KOHN  
The Bulletin

Larry O'Neill always loved the weather. From preschool age, when other kids were watching the Cartoon Network, he asked his parents to put on the Weather Channel. As an adult, he's turned that passion into a career. O'Neill is Oregon's state climatologist. He is also an OSU-Corvallis associate professor teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses.



On Tuesday, he will share his knowledge on climate change in a Zoom discussion sponsored by OSU-Cascades. The climate change talk will focus on issues specific to Bend and Central Oregon. O'Neill will address the ways that climate change can affect life in the High Desert, including reduced snowpack, longer fire seasons, early water runoff, and impacts on this area's plants and wildlife.

See Climate / A7

TODAY'S WEATHER



Partly sunny  
High 64, Low 40  
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