

SPRING BREAK IN OUR BACKYARD



The Bulletin

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COVID-19 in Oregon | Status report

1 million vaccines, but variants loom

State hits an inoculation milestone, but new virus strains and vaccine deliveries present new challenges

BY GARY A. WARNER • Oregon Capital Bureau

The appearance in Oregon of a more contagious and virulent variant of the COVID-19 virus is concerning for health officials racing to vaccinate up to 3 million more Oregonians, after the state hit the 1 mil-

lion vaccine mark on Wednesday.

“Today marks an important milestone in our state — this would not have been possible without the dedication of our vaccinators around Oregon,” said OHA Director Pat Allen.

Allen’s report to lawmakers Wednesday included good news: 1 million shots of vaccine since December, and the long, steep fall in infections and deaths since the winter. OHA’s risk level report for counties has only two rated as extreme risk: Coos and Curry.

Twenty of 36 counties in the state have received per-

mission to start giving vaccines to the next group of eligible Oregonians, which includes people age 45 and above with underlying medical conditions, pregnant women over aged 16 and several other groups.

But Oregon’s program is also experiencing headaches, hiccups and hints of some troubling signs.

Allen told a legislative committee that Oregon had been told that supplies of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine are delayed, with the date of additional shipment unknown.

See **Oregon** / A13

COCC lets go of one of its top-paid employees

New, less expensive position will focus more on branch campuses

BY JACKSON HOGAN

The Bulletin

Central Oregon Community College let go of its second-highest paid administrator, Matt McCoy, and eliminated his position last week — partially to save the college at least \$65,000 annually.

COCC President Laurie Chesley also wants to streamline the administrative department where McCoy supervised a wide swath of the college as vice president of administration. McCoy’s position will be replaced with one that oversees COCC’s three branch campuses in Redmond, Madras and Prineville, along the college’s online learning program and the College Now program, Chesley said.

“Having a position whose unadulterated focus is on meeting the needs of our outlying communities is an important strategic decision,” Chesley told The Bulletin.

McCoy, whose title was vice president of administration, had many duties. These included overseeing the branch campuses and campus services — which includes maintenance and custodial work — and working with the state Legislature. All of these duties will be split among existing COCC administrators, with the exception of the branch campuses, which the new hire will handle, Chesley told COCC staff in a March email.

Although finances weren’t the only reason for eliminating McCoy’s position last week, they do play a role in the decision, Chesley said. McCoy’s annual salary was \$171,250, and the range for the new administrative position will be between \$90,783 and \$106,883, according to Jenn Kovitz, COCC spokesperson.

COCC has also laid off or furloughed employees and implemented a hiring freeze during the COVID-19 pandemic in other departments, so it was only fair to do the same for the administrative department, Chesley said.

See **COCC** / A13

SETTING THE STAGE

Les Schwab Amphitheater renovations continue, include larger performance area



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Employees with Sunburst Fabrications weld steel beams for the new stage at Les Schwab Amphitheater on March 18.

Renovation continues at the Les Schwab Amphitheater, where the first phase of the project will improve the stage in the hopes of attracting a wider variety of performers.

The stage will be larger, with a height of 62 feet and an additional

1,840 square feet. Improvements in accessibility will include a full Americans with Disabilities Act compliant pathway. Work on the first phase began in December and is expected to be complete by June.

Additional phases of the renovation are expected to last into 2023.

Sheriff increases parking enforcement at Smith Rock

Those parking illegally now subject to \$115 fine

BY KYLE SPURR

The Bulletin

As visitation doubled at Smith Rock State Park in recent years, the Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office has decided to increase enforcement of overflow parking along the county

roads outside the park.

Anyone parked on Smith Rock Way, Wilcox Road and 17th Street could be fined \$115.

Last year, park and county officials and nearby property owners partnered to install signs that read “NO PARKING ON SHOULDER.” But up to 200 visitors each day keep parking along the roads. Some people leave their cars and walk a mile to the park.

To help enforce the parking rules, the sheriff’s office plans to patrol the area more often to make sure people are complying, said Sgt. Jayson Janes.

The sheriff’s office began receiving complaints last week and deputies issued eight citations on Sunday.

“We are hoping to educate people now before the warmer weather arrives,” Janes said. “The county has done a good job with the signs, so we are letting peo-

ple know about the signs and that we will be enforcing the no parking.”

Matt Davey, Smith Rock State Park manager, said visitation has doubled since 2012, around the time Travel Oregon launched “The 7 Wonders of Oregon” campaign, which included Smith Rock.

The park recorded 851,144 visits in 2019, nearly double the 483,448 in 2012, according to park data. The

park closed for two months in 2020 due to COVID-19 and still recorded 727,656 visits.

“The parking in the park wasn’t designed for that exponential growth,” Davey said. “We can’t just instantly accommodate that.”

Davey said the park is addressing the parking problems in its master plan, which hasn’t been updated since 1991.

See **Smith Rock** / A4

