

The Bulletin

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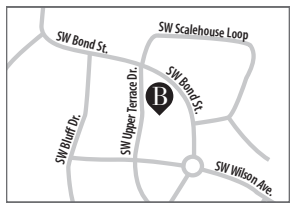
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

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 Wednesday, April 7:

Deschutes County cases: 6,535 (32 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 72 (1 new death)

Crook County cases: 824 (1 new case)
Crook County deaths: 19 (zero new deaths)

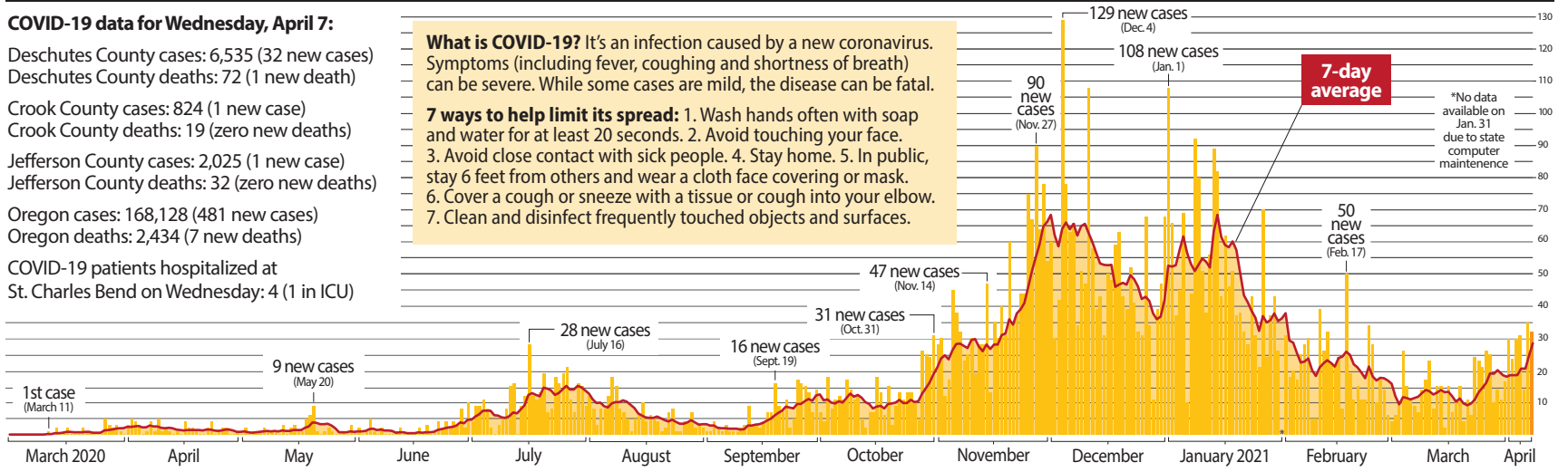
Jefferson County cases: 2,025 (1 new case)
Jefferson County deaths: 32 (zero new deaths)

Oregon cases: 168,128 (481 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,434 (7 new deaths)

COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Wednesday: 4 (1 in ICU)

What is COVID-19? It's an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Symptoms (including fever, coughing and shortness of breath) can be severe. While some cases are mild, the disease can be fatal.

- 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.



Oregon, citing limited resources, won't approve virus exposure notification app

BY ANDREW THEEN

The Oregonian

Oregon said Tuesday it won't approve widely adopted technology that would allow smartphone users to be notified if they are potentially exposed to COVID-19, saying the health authority has "all available resources" assigned to vaccine management.

The announcement ended suspense over a project first announced six months ago but repeatedly delayed, with limited explanation. Oregon is one of just four states along or west of the Continental Divide that hasn't adopted the technology.

The state for months had said it was studying the program's efficacy after a pilot project at Oregon State University,

but officials were initially unable to produce documentation of their analysis.

In a news release Tuesday, the health authority said it "decided to pause the ongoing planning" for the application to "focus on vaccinations and other priority efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic."

Officials wrote that discussions with public health departments and other community groups highlighted the benefits and costs of the notification app.

But they opted not to move forward, citing "the intensive efforts state and local health officials would need to undertake to promote the app and address likely gaps in its adoption across Oregon's diverse communities, as well as

the added contact tracing demands full adoption would place on county public health staff."

After announcing it would "pause" its plans Tuesday, the state did provide a two-page document to The Oregonian in response to a public records request.

"The OSU pilot was not able to collect data to either prove or disprove its effectiveness for Oregon citizens," the undated document reads, adding: "Given current resource constraints and the focus on the vaccination effort, the recommendation is to discontinue the effort at this time."

Nearly 12,500 students and staff at Oregon State downloaded or activated the exposure notification system, which the state said was a 20% adoption rate

out of 40,000 people.

But it's unclear if that rate is reflective of the situation, as the university reported enrollment of only 23,000 at its Corvallis campus this fall – and some portion of those students were learning remotely.

In fact, there were no instances where a student or staff member received a notification for potential COVID-19 exposure because there were a "relatively small number of people on campus," and "relatively few cases detected on campus" during the pilot because "most students were taking classes online," according to the two-page report.

What's more, none of the known cases at Oregon State University involved a person who had enabled the notification app to alert others.

Tax credit expansion to boost families in Oregon, where child care is pricey

BY COREY BUCHANAN

Oregon Capital Bureau

Anita Sawaneh, a mother who runs Sierra Leone Child Care out of her home in Milwaukie, supervised 20 kids a day before the pandemic. Now, that number has dwindled to two.

Though she loves her job, bills and stresses have mounted.

So, along with helping pay overdue utility bills, Sawaneh said the increased child tax credit passed through the American Rescue Plan will provide her and the kids with small sources of joy — like occasionally going out for ice cream or buying a new toy.

"It's been hard on them this last year, so I'm just trying to find a way to celebrate the little stuff," she said.

Framed by The New York Times as having "the makings of a policy revolution," the new child tax credit will increase the amount of money families with children under the age of 6 receive from \$2,000 to \$3,600 per child and to \$3,000 per child above age 6. It also expands the reach of the credit to those who earn little-to-no income by making the credit fully refundable. The provisions are set to expire at the end of 2025, but advocates are hoping for them to become permanent.

For now, according to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, the new credit will lift about 40,000 people above the poverty line in the state while 92,000 people will move closer to the poverty line. Previously, low income families with low-to-no tax burden could not receive the credit, and the public policy center indicates that 292,000 Oregonians will benefit from this provision.

"I certainly think the most groundbreaking aspect of this change is the elimination of the income requirement to have access to the credit. By doing that is to say that all children regardless of their income, we are investing in as a community and not picking and choosing who is worthy of it and who is not deserving," said Janet Bauer, a policy analyst for the Oregon Center for Public Policy. "I think the exclusion of the lowest income households, or partial exclusion, was probably the most regressive and problematic aspect of the child tax credit."



Bauer also liked that the policy provides a monthly payment to families rather than a lump sum.

"That can better help support the day-to-day budget of households," she said. "I think that innovation is really important"

Andrea Paluso, the executive director of Family Forward Oregon, believes the tax credit changes are a good start but still insufficient — particularly compared with the generous direct payments some other affluent countries provide.

"The U.S. is really behind other rich nations in the way it has prioritized and invested in real family support structures," she said.

Paluso noted that child care costs exceed what most families can afford and that every county in the state is considered to be a child care desert for young children.

"Oregon has historically been rated one of the least affordable states for child care," Paluso said.

She added that women are often forced to quit their jobs due to child care responsibilities and they have also disproportionately borne the brunt of pandemic job losses. Paluso also pointed out that families merely inching above the poverty line doesn't mean they can afford things like housing and transportation in the Portland metro area, let alone child care. She surmised that instead, most families will use the money to pay for basic necessities.

"For an infant and toddler, you're talking about maybe on average \$12,000 a year (for child care). Is a \$3,600 credit going to cover the cost of that? No, but it may help," Paluso said.

She added: "Families need more income. People with kids need more money to afford many things: housing, food, dia-

LOCAL BRIEFING

Former Hydro Flask CEO delivering this year's virtual commencement address for OSU-Cascades

The former CEO of famed Bend company Hydro Flask, Scott Allan, will give the commencement address at Oregon State University-Cascades' virtual graduation ceremony this year.

Allan, a Bend resident, planned to give the address at last year's OSU-Cascades commencement before its cancellation due to COVID-19, according to a university press release. This year's virtual ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. on June 13.

During Allan's tenure, Hydro Flask donated \$250,000 to OSU-Cascades in 2016, which helped the university create its outdoor products bachelor's degree program, the release stated.



Allan

Prescribed burns planned in Deschutes forest

U.S. Forest Service staff plan to start two prescribed burns Thursday in the Deschutes National Forest.

The prescribed burns will take place about 6 miles west of Pine Mountain and 17 miles southeast of Bend near the junction of Forest roads 18 and 1825.

The burns will cover about 400 acres, according to the Forest Service. Ignitions of the fires are expected to occur from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, but could continue through Friday.

Smoke and residual burning will be visible in the area for up to a week. Residents near the Pine Mountain area may see smoke in the morning.

Off-highway vehicle trails 12 and 28 will be temporarily closed during the burns.

— Bulletin staff reports

Find it all online bendbulletin.com

THE POWER OF PREVENTION



In 2019, there were 872 confirmed cases of child abuse in Central Oregon – 46% under the age of five.

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