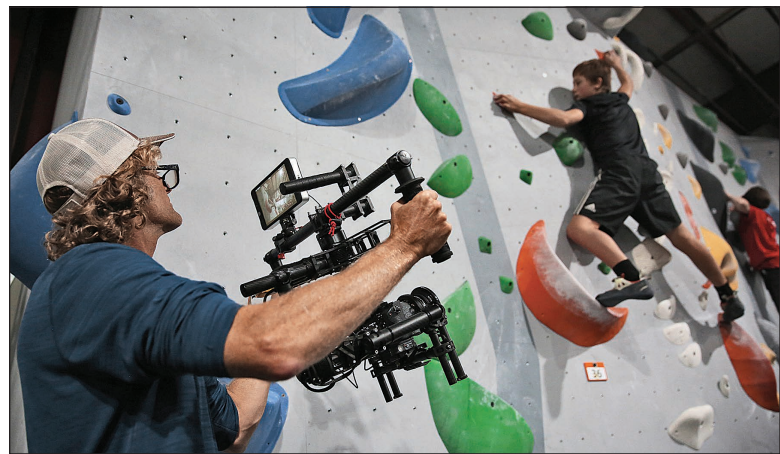


# The Bulletin

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SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin  
Bryan Harvey, cinematographer, shoots footage for "Our Towns," HBO's new documentary, at Bend Rock Gym before pandemic closures.

'OUR TOWNS' | DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES TODAY

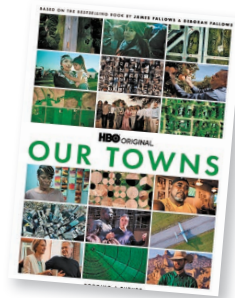
## Bend plays a big role on HBO

*'Bend was a place that had a big setback and already found its way back'*

**BY KYLE SPURR** • The Bulletin  
Bend plays an important role in the new HBO documentary, "Our Towns," which premieres Tuesday and features small cities that are bouncing back after adversity. Filmmakers Steven Ascher and Jeanne Jordan said Bend is an example of a place that successfully reinvented itself from an old mill town to a tourist destination. That recovery is something other

towns in the film are in the midst of accomplishing, the filmmakers said. "All of the other towns had some big setbacks and they are trying to find their way back, and Bend was a place that had a big setback and already found its way back," Ascher said. "That's why we wanted to look at the benefits and costs of success."

See **Towns** / A13



"OUR TOWNS" | 6 p.m. Tuesday, HBO/HBO Max

### ACTIVE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS IN CENTRAL OREGON

As homicide cases take longer to resolve, a Bend widow struggles with a bombshell:

# CITATIONS, BUT NO CHARGES



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin  
Stephanie Rodea holds a picture of her husband, Christopher, on her front porch in Bend on Monday. He was killed in a crash on the Bend Parkway in November.

**BY GARRETT ANDREWS** • The Bulletin

**S**tephanie Rodea, whose husband died in a six-car crash on the Bend Parkway in the fall, can't believe that no one is responsible.

Until Monday, as she waited for authorities to decide if there was enough evidence to charge someone in connection with the Nov. 19 crash, the death of her husband was one of nine active homicide investigations in Deschutes County. But in a meeting with District Attorney John Hummel on Monday afternoon, Rodea was told that no one

would be charged with the death of Christopher Rodea, who was 37 when a pickup truck slammed into his Ford van. Instead, traffic citations would be issued, Hummel told The Bulletin.

"There's no way everyone was doing what they were supposed to," Stephanie Rodea said. "I could say, I can't believe somebody could do this and get away with it. But then I'm just like, who cares if they get criminal charges? What is the point? It doesn't change anything."

Homicide cases have been taking longer to resolve in Central Oregon, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It adds to the grieving process," Rodea said. "You want to close as many doors as you can and instead it just lingers."

But Hummel also cites a backlog

of cases at the state crime lab, explosive population growth in Deschutes County and a shortage of local judges.

"It's not necessarily that more homicides are occurring now, it's that the longer each one takes to resolve, the more you'll have pending at any one time," Hummel said.

Nine is a high number for Deschutes County, with an estimated population of nearly 200,000, but it's not the high point of Hummel's nearly eight-year tenure. At one point in 2019, his office was pursuing 11 homicide cases. A majority of homicides in Deschutes County over the last six years have been vehicular homicides, according to the district attorney's office.

See **Charges** / A4

### Deschutes County

## Union leaders say teachers less nervous about classes post-vaccine

**BY JACKSON HOGAN**  
The Bulletin

Two months ago, Central Oregon teachers began receiving COVID-19 vaccinations ahead of much of the general population. By now, just about every teacher in Deschutes County who wanted to be vaccinated has been.

Because of this and other COVID-19 mitigation strategies in schools, the teachers' union leader for Bend-La Pine Schools said most of her union's members feel less nervous about returning full-time to in-person classes this month.

"Everyone having access to the vaccine if they want to be vaccinated, it ensures the educators' safety," said Sarah Barclay, president of the Bend Education Association. "There are a few people who still have concerns about the return to in-person, but the majority are excited."

It's a similar story in the Redmond School District, where Barry Branaugh — a board member of the Redmond Education Association — said he hasn't heard many teachers express concerns about COVID-19 safety recently.

"It's not much of a factor anymore," he said. Both Barclay and Branaugh said that local teachers are itching to see their students full time again after a couple months of part-online school.

See **Teachers** / A13

**80%**

Percentage of K-12 teachers who are vaccinated in the U.S., according to the American Federation of Teachers

## Black Bear Diner hit with \$35,000 fine from OSHA

**BY MICHAEL KOHN**  
The Bulletin

The Black Bear Diner locations in Bend and Redmond were fined \$35,000 for violating COVID-related restrictions, including allowing indoor dining when Deschutes County was in the extreme risk category due to high coronavirus caseloads.

Both diners, which are under the same ownership, "willfully" continue to potentially expose workers to the virus, despite a public health order of limited or zero indoor dining, according to a release from Oregon Occupational Safety and Health.

Oregon OSHA has been actively pursuing businesses that ignored the lockdown restrictions that limited restaurants, coffee shops and bars to takeout service only. Last month Kevista Coffee was fined \$27,470 for similar violations by OSHA.

Kathy Degree, the owner of the two Black Bear diners, has hired the services of Salem-based Kevin L. Mannix law firm to appeal the penalty.

See **Diner** / A13

