

COVID-19 in Oregon

Grant County has highest infections, lowest vaccinations in state

BY STEVEN MITCHELL

Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County had the highest rate of COVID-19 infections per capita in Oregon last week, and the county also has the worst vaccination rate in the state.

The county's rate of COVID-19 infections was 625 per 100,000 people, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As of Sunday, Grant and Coos counties had the lowest vaccination rate in the state, 17.4%, according to the CDC, which calculates based on complete vaccinations.

Kimberly Lindsay, Grant County public health administrator, estimated Sunday that around 30% of the county's residents are partially or fully vaccinated.

Lindsay said the county has stopped requesting additional vaccine doses from the Oregon Health Authority because of a lack of demand.

COVID-19 cases continue to climb

The COVID-19 outbreak in Grant County continues with the largest single-day increase in cases reported Wednesday. Grant County Health Department announced Wednesday 24 individuals in the John Day, Canyon City, Prairie City and Mt. Vernon ZIP codes tested positive. The individuals are working with their health care providers. Deschutes County also saw coronavirus cases jump Wednesday.

—EO Media Group

She said the county put first shots into the arms of 73 residents last week, along with 273 second shots for the two-shot vaccines.

On Monday, Jessica Winegar, health department clinic manager, said the health department had 1,200 doses on the shelf that she would not be taking to that day's vaccination event.

Greg Armstrong, the owner of Len's Drug,

told the Eagle the pharmacy has more doses than people coming in to get the shot.

"I am very concerned," Lindsay said. "With 70% unvaccinated, that leaves just over 5,000 people available for COVID-19 to move through freely. That's a lot of room to roam."

The surge in cases and the county's low vaccination rate, particularly among seniors, concerns public health officials.

"I am very concerned. With 70% unvaccinated, that leaves just over 5,000 people available for COVID-19 to move through freely. That's a lot of room to roam."

— Kimberly Lindsay, Grant County's health administrator, pictured at a County Court meeting in November



As of Sunday, Grant County had vaccinated 34.8% of residents 65 and older, the lowest rate among Oregon's 36 counties, according to CDC data. Meanwhile, in Harney County, 53.1% of people 65 and older received the vaccine. In Lake County, 48.7% rolled up their sleeves. In Umatilla, 57.7%; Morrow, 55.1%; Union, 53%; Baker, 99.9%; and Malheur, 58.5%.

Poll: 58% expect some remote K-12 learning for years; 61% say high unemployment rates are temporary

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A quarter of residents say the change will be temporary and only 5% believe it will not happen at all, according to the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

Klaus Heyne of Corbett wouldn't buy a gift online. But he's happy to skip the line for everyday items.

"I no longer buy my laundry detergent or dishwashing fluid in Target," he said. "I buy it online. It's here in two days, and I didn't pay a penny for shipping."

Remote education

A majority (58%) of Oregonians expect remote learning for K-12 students to continue for a few years, but only on a temporary basis, compared with 12% who think it will be permanent and 22% who expect online

classes to shut down soon. Republicans (30%) are more likely to predict an end to e-learning than Democrats (20%) and Independents (18%).

Forest Grove fitness instructor Rachel Sandage said the mostly important skills for younger pupils include "how to get along with people, how to share — and you can't learn that online." But the 60-year-old said it might be fine for digital-minded high school and college students.

Heyne, 69, disagreed, saying his son had put off college for a year rather than spending big bucks for a virtual institution.

"Higher education thrives on interpersonal exchanges," he said.

High unemployment

Oregonians are bullish when it comes to finding a job. Most (61%)

say high unemployment rates will be temporary, compared with 23% who expect it on a permanent basis. Homeowners (65%) are more likely than renters (56%) in seeing lasting unemployment as transitory.

Robin Anna Davis said the genie of automation and algorithms can't be stuffed back in the bottle, but that doesn't mean the economy will collapse.

"Progress happens," said the resident of rural Clackamas County. "It happened to the blacksmiths when cars came along. People evolved."

Telemedicine

The rise of telemedicine left some Oregonians heading in different directions. The poll showed 43% believe virtual doctor's visits will become permanent for nonurgent

health care visits — while 35% said it's only an ephemeral part of life. The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center reports that divide was "the closest split" among survey respondents. Oregon seniors (45%) were more likely than young adults (30%) to think the COVID-prompted change will be permanent.

"If it's not something I need to go in for, why would I?" Sandage asked.

"The virtual visits, it just makes sense," said Davis, 58.

Heyne suspects insurance companies prefer telemedicine because it's easier on their bottom line, saying he trusts the long-established relationship he has with his general practitioner.

"Healing is a human enterprise," he said. "If you need telemedicine, you don't need a doctor."

Working from home

Half of state residents think working from home will persist indefinitely, compared to 37% who believe it's merely a passing phase. The remainder (11%) were unsure or rejected the change (3%). Portland area denizens (57%) far outpaced those living outside the metro or Willamette Valley areas (37%) in seeing the change as permanent.

When Sandage, the fitness instructor, polled her students about returning to in-person workouts, about half of the retirees were happy to keep working out virtually.

"It's convenient for them to roll out of bed and do it online," Sandage said. "I have students joining my classes from Boston, Toronto and Europe. I don't think it's ever going to go back to 100% in person."

Homeless

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The center would essentially bring together services that already exist, but make it so homeless people would not have to travel across the city — which can be difficult to do without a car or enough money for gas — to get different needs met.

McConnell offered a hypothetical situation to illustrate how difficult orchestrating services can be. Think of a mom trying to find child care for her kid in one location, she said, then having to travel to the employment center WorkSource

Oregon in the hopes of finding a job only to then have to travel again to find a place with a computer so she can then apply for that job.

"The goal is to be a one-stop shop for housing insecure or homeless," McConnell said.

Whether the shelter would be a 24/7 operation, or just winter warming shelter has yet to be determined, McConnell said.

The city has been keeping an eye out for a location but has not identified a property yet, she said.

The next most immediate step is to initiate a public process to find a nonprofit organization to operate the center as

soon as Gov. Kate Brown signs the bill that includes the money.

The idea then is to use the \$2.5 million to buy a building and pay for some of the operating costs, without other nonprofits contributing their existing services, she said.

The goal would be that whatever entity is chosen to run it would eventually purchase the center or take it over completely, McConnell said.

Depending on how successful the city is in finding a site and nonprofit partner, the center could be open this coming winter, she said.

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Schools

Continued from A1

"It's a better, more kid-friendly schedule," Scott Cooper, chairman of the Crook County School Board, told The Bulletin after the board's meeting.

Crook County High School will see the biggest shift with a trimester schedule, going from seven 55-minute periods to five 70-minute periods each day. The middle school and Pioneer Alternative High School's class schedules won't change much, according to district data.

A recent school district survey found that 58% of middle and high school students, 56% of school staff and 68% of families preferred a schedule with fewer, longer classes.

"Trimesters allow us to slow our pace down and concentrate on five classes at a time instead of seven," said Michelle Jonas, principal of Crook County High School. "Students appreciated the slower pace of not having a seven-period day."

The longer class periods are beneficial for classes with lots of hands-on projects, like welding or chemistry, Jonas said.

And with trimesters, a student who doesn't like the class they're in, or who is struggling with a subject, is only in that class for 12 weeks, rather than 18, she said.

"When you start an elective and don't like it, 18 weeks is a long time," Jonas said. "Twelve weeks gives them the ability to start over fresh, or try something new."

Having high schoolers start the day an hour later benefits both teens and teachers, Jonas and Cooper said. What would normally be first period is now teacher prep time, so teachers

can collaborate, grade and discuss lesson plans together, they said.

And teenagers getting a little extra sleep is a plus as well. A 2014 article in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics found that insufficient sleep can result in anxiety and mood disorders becoming more common for teens. Teens who don't get enough sleep are also more likely to cause a car

crash due to drowsiness, and are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease and obesity.

Cooper, who has two kids of his own at Crook County High School, noticed they reacted positively to a later school start this school year.

"Our teenagers thrived when they got a little more sleep in the morning," he said.

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BERNIE MADOFF • 1938-2021

Ponzi schemer dies in prison

Associated Press

Bernard Madoff, the infamous architect of an epic securities swindle that burned thousands of investors, outfoxed regulators and earned him a 150-year prison term, died behind bars early Wednesday. He was 82.

Madoff's death at the Federal Medical Center in Butner, North Carolina, was confirmed by his lawyer and the Bureau of Prisons.

Last year, Madoff's lawyers unsuccessfully asked a court to release him from prison during the coronavirus pandemic, saying he suffered from end-stage renal disease and other chronic medical conditions.

His death was reportedly due to natural causes.

For decades, Madoff enjoyed an image as a self-

made financial guru whose Midas touch defied market fluctuations. A former chairman of the Nasdaq stock market, he attracted a devoted legion of investment clients — from Florida retirees to celebrities such as film director Steven Spielberg, actor Kevin Bacon and Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax.

But his investment advisory business was exposed in 2008 as a Ponzi scheme that wiped out people's fortunes and ruined charities. He became so

hated he wore a bulletproof vest to court.

The fraud was believed to be the largest in Wall Street's history. At the time of Madoff's arrest, fake account statements were telling clients they had holdings worth \$60 billion. A fraction of that has been recovered.

One of his sons, Mark, killed himself on the second anniversary of his father's arrest in 2010. Madoff's other son, Andrew, died from cancer at age 48. His wife, Ruth, is still living.



Madoff

OBITUARY

Leroy Eugene Hall

June 1, 1930 - November 20, 2020

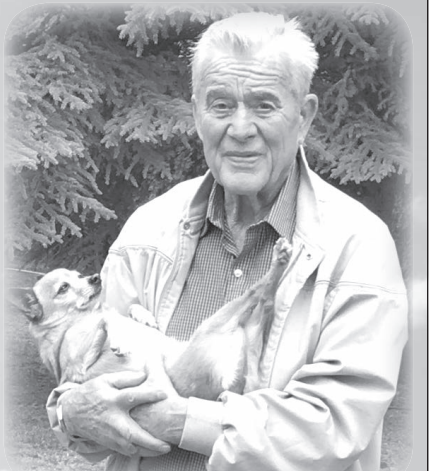
Leroy Eugene Hall, age 90, passed away in Redmond, OR on November 20, 2020. He is greatly missed by family and friends.

He was born June 1, 1930 in Manhattan, Kansas to Franklin (Frank) and Anna Pearl (Maine) Hall. He

was the oldest of four children. His parents moved the family to Foster, Oregon when he was nine years old. Leroy graduated from Sweet Home High School in 1949 and worked in the woods setting chokers and falling timber until he went into the service in 1951. He proudly served his country in the Korean War from 1951 to 1953 when he was honorably discharged.

Leroy moved to Redmond in 1954 where he met his wife Anna Lee Renno. They were married July 7, 1954 and raised their family. Leroy worked in road construction, traveling all over Oregon until he retired in 1997. Leroy never knew a stranger and kept people laughing at his stories and jokes. He loved fishing, camping, gardening, and traveling with his dog "Bo".

He is preceded in death by his parents, wife, a daughter, his brother, and two sisters. He is survived by his three children, Loren (Jeanene) Hall of Redmond, Tana Gagnebin of Boise Idaho, Gena (Shawn) Huff of Redmond, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Graveside service will be at 12:00 at the Redmond Memorial Cemetery with a Celebration of Life at the VFW Hall Redmond 1:00pm Saturday April 24, 2021.



OBITUARY

Vern Eldon Rice

September 21, 1953 - April 7, 2021 (67)

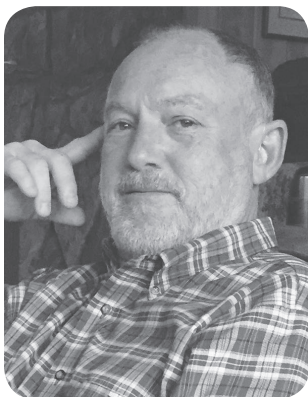
Vern was born in Eugene, Oregon to Leonard and Gladys Rice and spent his childhood in Springfield, Oregon. Vern married Donna (Schille) Rice in 1980. Vern and Donna moved to Central Oregon in 1984. Vern devoted his career life to energy conservation working at Midstate Electric Co-op from 1984 to 1991 and then Central Electric Co-op from 1991 to 2018.

Vern loved spending time outdoors with family and friends sharing his enthusiasm for hiking, backpacking, disc golf and canoeing.

Vern is survived by his wife Donna, sons Aaron and Alex, sister Judy Bodenhamer and multiple nieces and nephews.

There will be no service due to Covid restrictions.

Donations in Vern's memory can be sent to: Council on Aging of Central Oregon



DEATH NOTICES

Raymond L. Fisk
of La Pine, OR
Oct 16, 1942 - April 10, 2021

Arrangements: Baird Memorial Chapel of La Pine is honored to serve the Fisk family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign the online guestbook.

Dale Ross Cheney, Sr.
of Redmond, OR
October 14, 1934 - March 5, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals - REDMOND www.autumnfunerals.net 541-504-9485
Services: Services have been held.

Beverly Ann Martell
of Bend, OR
Oct 4, 1937 - April 9, 2021

Arrangements: Baird Memorial Chapel of La Pine is honored to serve the Martell family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign the online guestbook.

OBITUARY DEADLINE

Call to ask about our deadlines
541-385-5809
Monday-Friday 10am-3pm
Email: obits@bendbulletin.com