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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

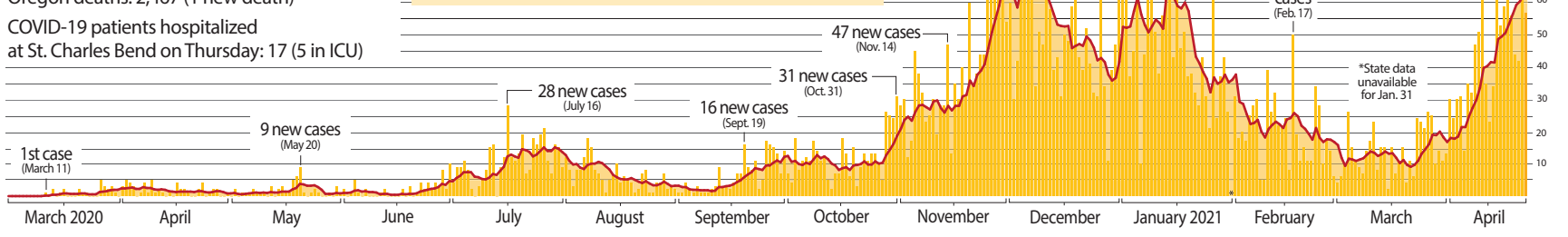
SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, DESCHUTES COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES BULLETIN GRAPHIC

COVID-19 data for Thursday, April 22:

Deschutes County cases: 7,368 (57 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 72 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 907 (12 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 19 (zero new deaths)
Jefferson County cases: 2,083 (6 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 32 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 178,110 (993 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,467 (1 new death)
COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Thursday: 17 (5 in ICU)

What is COVID-19? A disease caused by a coronavirus. Symptoms (including fever and shortness of breath) can be severe, even fatal, though some cases are mild.

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 6 feet from others and wear a face covering or mask. 5. Cover a sneeze with a tissue or cough into your elbow. 6. Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Irrigation equipment waters a field west of Echo on Wednesday. According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, the west end of Umatilla County is experiencing moderate to severe drought.

Umatilla County moves to declare drought, seeks help

BY BRYCE DOLE

East Oregonian
PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Commission unanimously voted Tuesday to declare a drought in the county and are asking Gov. Kate Brown and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to follow suit.

"We have a very large area in Umatilla County that is in the severe drought stage right now, with another equally large area in extreme drought," Commissioner Dan Dorran said in a meeting, adding that "the rest of the county is either in abnormally dry or moderate drought!"

Dorran said people in the agriculture industry have been reaching out to him and voicing concerns over the current conditions. "Right now, there's cattle farmers that are beginning to have to buy hay because of no early grass, and that's a big worry," Dorran said. "Dryland wheat farmers, where are they going to be and what kind of moisture are they looking at? Are they going to be able to sustain the crops they have until the next rain they get?"

Don Wysocki, a soil scientist for Oregon State University based in Umatilla County, said this year's wheat crop is in dire need of rain.

"If we get rain too late, we can't really recover," he said. "I think it's still at a stage where if we get rain, we'd have pretty good recovery. But another week or two and we're going to be beyond good recovery."

Counties like Baker and Union have already declared a drought as much of Central and Eastern Oregon is experiencing either extreme or severe drought conditions, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

State lawmaker from Prineville says harassment by peer was 'unacceptable'

Associated Press

A Republican state lawmaker who says she was subjected to sexual harassment by Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, said he responded inappropriately when she asked him to support a bill.

"I asked for a yes vote," Rep. Vikki Breese Iverson of Prineville told the Central Oregon Daily News. "He responded with some questions. I responded to his questions. He interjected with, going out for a beer, going out for dinner, dot dot dot. I continued to ignore those and just give the answers to the questions he had asked, and the last text that came through was just unacceptable."

Breese's comments provide more detail about the exchanges she says prompted her to file a complaint with the Legislative Equity Office. Breese Iverson has asked that House Speaker Tina Kotek remove Witt from the three legislative committees they both serve on.

Kotek's office said Tuesday she was setting up a meeting with the legislative equity officer, who fields harassment complaints. An independent investigator looking into the complaint recommended that Witt be barred from contacting or coming near Breese Iverson and that he be removed from chairing the

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, of which Breese Iverson is a member.

Following Witt volunteering to step down temporarily as committee chair, Kotek formally made that change Monday. In a note to lawmakers, she said Witt also would not attend virtual committee hearings. Witt has said he believes "101% that it will be found that there was no ill intent on my part whatsoever, but rather an attempt to further the committee interests."

An independent investigation is expected to conclude by the end of April. The matter would then go before the House Conduct Committee to consider whether Witt violated legislative rules.



Breese Iverson

LOCAL BRIEFING

Bend man pleads guilty for deportation threat

A Bend man pleaded guilty Thursday for threatening to report a man to immigration authorities, and as part of a plea deal he has agreed to serve probation and community service, along with fulfilling other conditions.

A judge will decide whether to go along with the deal worked out by prosecutors and Thomas George Schlossmacher, 61.

Schlossmacher pleaded guilty to one count of felony extortion in Deschutes County Circuit Court.

His sentencing is scheduled for May 11.

The case arose out of a business dispute between Schlossmacher and Cuahtemoc Cardona, who performed landscaping work for him in summer 2020,

according to the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office. As partial payment for the work, Schlossmacher gave Cardona his pickup truck. There was a disagreement about the final \$1,500 payment, which led Schlossmacher to text Cardona a threat to "turn you and your family into INS authorities for deportations, your choice," according to the district attorney's office.

Cardona is lawfully a resident of the United States, according to the DA's office.

According to a plea petition filed in circuit court, Schlossmacher has agreed to serve three years probation, 100 hours community service, pay \$1,500 to Cardona, remove the lien on Cardona's vehicle and write him a letter of apology.

He had no prior convictions.

— Bulletin wire reports

STATE BRIEFING

Oregon's gray wolf population grows 9.5%

SALEM — Oregon's gray wolf population continued to climb in 2020, with at least 173 individuals documented by year's end, according to state wildlife officials.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife released its annual Wolf Conservation and Management report Wednesday, which includes a minimum known count based on verified evidence such as tracks, sightings and remote camera photographs.

The 2020 population is a

9.5% increase over the end of 2019, when ODFW recorded at least 158 wolves.

"While Northeast Oregon continues to host the majority of the state's wolf population, dispersal to other parts of Oregon and adjacent states continues," said Roblyn Brown, ODFW wolf program coordinator.

A total of 22 packs were also documented in 2020, the same number as in 2019. Of those, 17 qualified as breeding pairs, having an adult male and adult female with at least two pups that survived to Dec. 31.

— Capital Press