

# The Bulletin

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SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8

**Deschutes and Crook counties**

## By a slim margin, area moving down from extreme risk

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

The indoor dining ban and other major restrictions under COVID-19 rules will be lifted Friday for 15 counties — including Deschutes and Crook — because a key metric was missed by 0.1%.

Gov. Kate Brown announced late Tuesday that 15 counties put on the extreme risk level for spread of the virus — the highest of the four risk levels — could operate under the high risk standards instead.

“Oregon no longer meets the statewide metrics,” Brown said in a

statement.

The extreme risk level shuts down indoor dining, limits crowd sizes, caps entertainment and exercise activities and requires most businesses to close by 11 p.m. Visits to residents of nursing homes are curtailed. Under high risk, restaurants can offer indoor dining and other restrictions are loosened.

Brown’s statement ended a confusing delay of several hours beyond the normal release of risk level ratings.

See **Risk level** / A4

**OSU and OSU-Cascades to require vaccinations for staff, students in fall**

Oregon State University announced late Tuesday afternoon that every staff member and student, including those at OSU-Cascades in Bend, must receive the COVID-19 vaccine before teaching or learning on campus this fall.

That means thousands of staff and students will need to get vaccinated by Sept. 22, when the fall term starts.

Students exclusively enrolled in online courses with OSU will not need to be vaccinated, but the university highly encouraged them — and everyone — to get the COVID-19 vaccine in a press release sent late Tuesday afternoon.

“High rates of vaccination among our students, faculty and staff are needed to help improve the safety and well-being of our community,” OSU’s interim President Becky Johnson said in the release. “This vaccination requirement is intended for students and university employees so that we mutually contribute to the greatest level of population protection possible from COVID-19.”

— Bulletin staff report

**Central Oregon**

## Vaccination rates not enough to protect the community

BY SUZANNE ROIG

The Bulletin

A little more than five months into vaccinating against COVID-19, about half of Central Oregon’s eligible population in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties have received a shot.

Statewide, slightly more than half of those eligible, those 16 and older, have been vaccinated, which means that Oregon has a long way to go to get to community immunity, said Rudy Owens, Oregon Health Authority spokesman, in an email.

“We’re still a long way from achieving that community immunity, which is when a population has indirect protection from an infectious disease because enough people are immune to prevent frequent spread,” Owens said.

The goal of President Joe Biden and Gov. Kate Brown is to get the economy back to normal by this summer, Owens said. But that can only happen if “a significant majority of Oregonians get vaccinated.”

“There is no magic number of what the right number is for vaccinations,” said Chunhui Chi, Oregon State University professor of the Global Health Program in an interview. “Herd immunity is dependent upon how contagious the virus is. The more contagious the disease, the more people we need to be vaccinated to obtain immunity.”

“It’s difficult to achieve this.” At St. Charles Bend on Tuesday, there were 34 COVID-19 patients; eight were in intensive care and seven on ventilators, according to the hospital website.

See **Vaccination** / A4

# Madras, Culver high schools plan in-person graduations



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Madras High School senior William Clements receives his cap and gown from Amber Carlson, a representative of Jostens, in front of the school, which has announced official plans for an in-person graduation ceremony June 5.

## Most area high schools taking a wait-and-see approach

BY JACKSON HOGAN

The Bulletin

Most Central Oregon high schools have adopted a wait-and-see approach for this year’s graduation ceremonies. Their ability to hold an in-person, all-together celebration will depend on the local COVID-19 case counts at that time.

But high schools in Jefferson County have already decided.

Madras and Bridges high schools announced in-person graduation ceremonies

on June 5 at the Madras High School football field. The two schools will have 137 and 51 graduates this year, respectively.

Culver High School, which has 42 seniors, will also hold an outdoor ceremony at the district athletic field, barring an intense weather event, said Superintendent Stefanie Garber.

Madras High’s parents and students overwhelmingly supported having a more traditional ceremony instead of repeating the drive-thru, one-at-a-time diploma handouts that were held last June, said principal Brian Crook.

“There were a lot of positives to the drive-thru. It was really fun,” Crook said. “But listening to the community and our seniors, they

want the traditional ceremony, and I understand.”

The ceremony won’t be exactly the same as years past, Crook said. Instead of letting everyone into the football stadium, students will only get a set number of tickets to hand family and friends who wish to attend.

The number of tickets for Madras and Bridges graduates will depend on how bad the COVID-19 situation is in Jefferson County, according to a district press release. Each Madras High graduate will get between two and six tickets, depending on the risk level Jefferson County is in on June 2.

Because there are fewer Bridges graduates, their ticket allotments will range from four to 16.

See **Graduation** / A13

**LABOR DAY WILDFIRES**

# Owners get more time to rebuild

BY PETER WONG

Oregon Capital Bureau

Owners would get more time to rebuild homes and businesses destroyed in the 2020 Labor Day wildfires, without running afoul of planning requirements, under two bills that have cleared the Oregon House.

Both bills passed on 56-0 votes on Tuesday. One goes to the Senate, the other to Gov. Kate Brown.

House Bill 2289, which goes to the Senate, gives property owners five years — instead of the normal one year — to start reconstruction, which would not be considered a “land use action” under Oregon law. It applies in areas affected by wildfires under a state of emergency declared by Gov. Kate Brown between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2020.

The Labor Day wildfires destroyed an estimated 4,000 homes. The largest concentration, about 2,500, was destroyed in the Almeda Fire in Southern Oregon, but other fires were spread across Oregon.

Building permits are not usually considered land use actions.

But Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, said a work group he convened under the House Agriculture and Land Use Committee last fall after the wildfires anticipated the potential of legal challenges to reconstruction. Clem became chairman of the House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery this session.

“If this were deemed a land use decision, an angry neighbor could litigate, some other group could litigate. What we are trying to do is give a safe harbor,” he said.

“If you are rebuilding basically the same footage at the same location, it’s not a land use decision — it’s not appealable to the state Land Use Board of Appeals; it cannot be appealed to the county commissioners or the city council — and you can proceed with your rebuilding.”

See **Rebuild** / A13

