

**Coronavirus | Central Oregon****Internet plays pivotal role during pandemic****BY SUZANNE ROIG**

The Bulletin

The pandemic showed teachers, students, parents and senior citizens how important it is to have access to the internet.

At the Redmond School District, about 1,400 students required hotspots, a pocket-sized mobile router used to create

an internet connection to continue learning.

Likewise, at the Bend-La Pine School District, more than 1,000 hotspots were issued to students.

The internet is a dependable source of information for families being asked to shoulder more of the responsibility for learning and seeking help.

Often it's the first thing to be erased from a tight budget as it's seen as a luxury. But access is not assured to all in Central Oregon due to a lack of financial support from the region's most prominent internet provider.

COVID-19 showed internet access is a necessity, said Scott Cooper, NeighborImpact executive director. At the start of

the pandemic, the nonprofit that helps families in need, from housing to food, in Central Oregon, switched to an online platform to offer services.

"That kept assistance rolling," Cooper said. "Now that we are coming out of pandemic conditions, we're finding that the internet applications made aid more widely

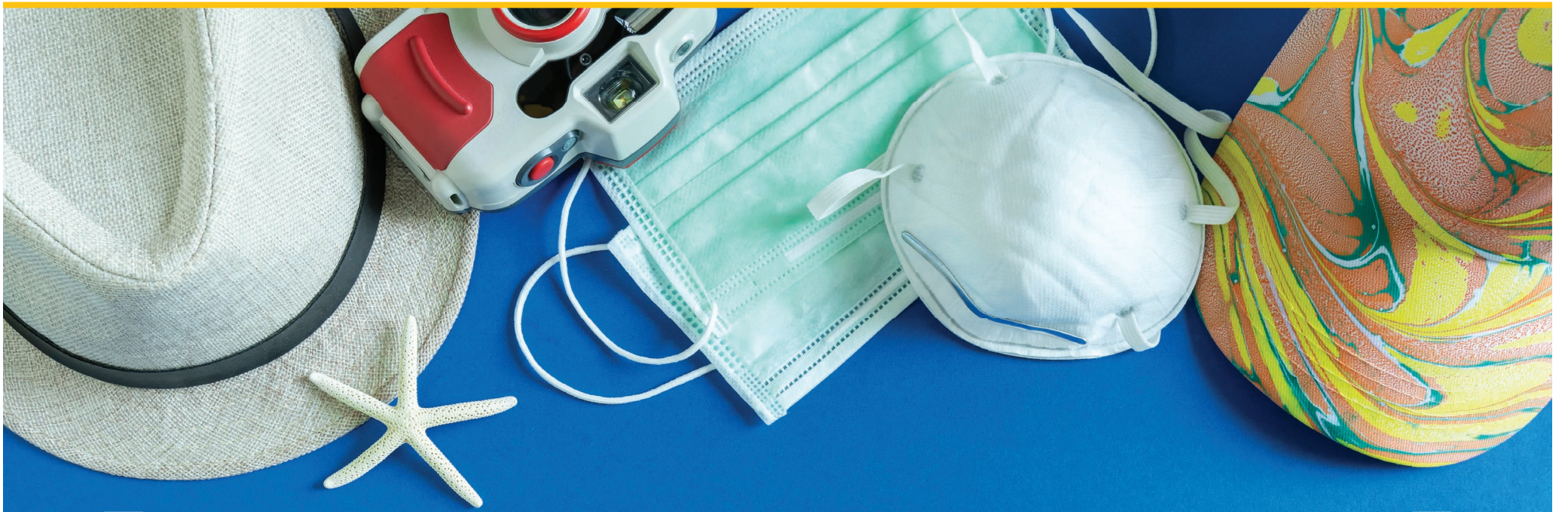
available."

Using the internet actually helped the nonprofit reach people by eliminating barriers like child care and transportation.

"Clients who live in more remote areas can have the same access as clients who live near an office," Cooper said. "Being able to use a phone or cellular

connection to file a housing application or an application for rent assistance or to look up a location for an open food bank is a time saver for clients and spreads relief to more people and bigger geography.

"That adds equity to the system by allowing everyone to access services."

See **Broadband** / C8**Travel Guide**

# How to take vacation time in the **post-vaccine** TRAVEL BOOM

**BY NATALIE B. COMPTON**

The Washington Post

**E**ven before the coronavirus pandemic fundamentally changed how we live and work, Americans have never been good at taking days off. The pandemic further tipped the scales of our work-life imbalance.

"The concept of being totally removed from work has become really foreign," says Andrea Bonior, a clinical psychologist who writes an advice column, Ask Dr. Andrea, for The Washington Post. "We've been absorbed in this little work-life murky blob that swirled everything together."

Because of lockdowns and travel restrictions, the potential for days off was limited. Many felt like vacation time would be wasted if it was not spent traveling. But now with the world's borders reopening for tourism, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention saying that vaccinated people are able to travel with less risk, taking paid time off (PTO) is looking more appealing than ever.

After a year of not going anywhere, travelers may have forgotten best practices for requesting time off — or have new anxieties due to the pandemic. Here's what to keep in mind as you begin putting in your vacation requests.

**Keep travel boom in mind**

Everyone who was saving their PTO for a time when they could travel is gearing up to take those trips again.

See **Vacation** / C8

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