

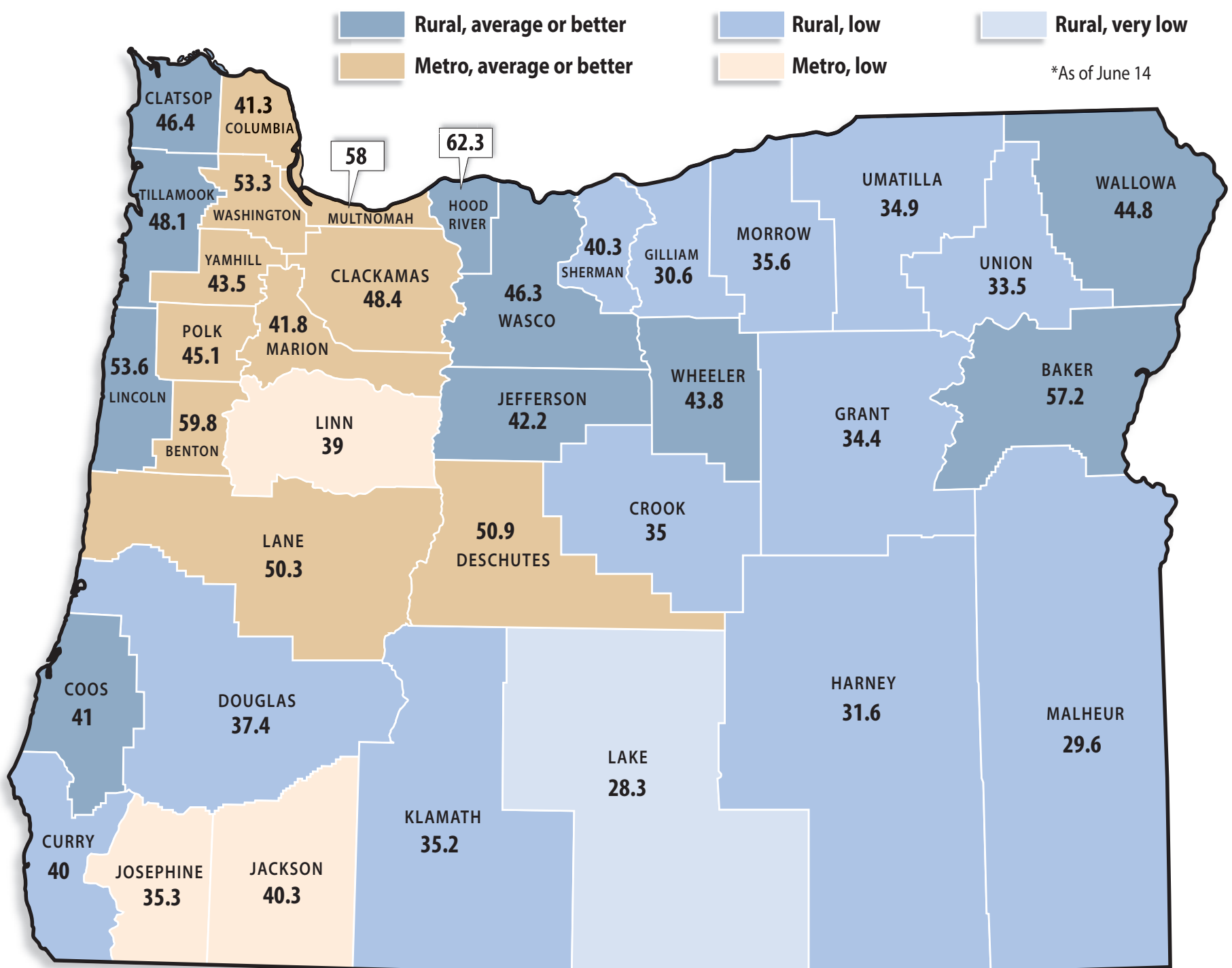
# PULSE

of Oregon

THE BULLETIN'S MONTHLY HEALTH SECTION

## COVID-19 vaccination rates by county

How do Oregonians compare? Find out what percentage of residents have had two shots compared with the rest of the nation.



Completed vaccination rates per county by percent of population compared to the national adjusted rate of 40.4% of the total United States population. "Average or better" is equal to or greater than the national average, "low" is up to 30% below the national average, and "very low" is more than 30% below the national average.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; select state departments of health; www.datawrapper.de

The Bulletin graphic

## Unclaimed, unknown remains live in Central Oregon funeral homes indefinitely

BY SUZANNE ROIG • The Bulletin

Stashed in locked cabinets at mortuaries around Central Oregon are the cremated remains of people lost to those who knew them in life.

Some of them were famous. Others lived a regular life.

For these lost souls, the afterlife is limbo, an urn on a shelf and a notation of basic facts just in case a loved one comes forward to claim them and place them in their final resting place. This spring in Klamath Falls, a group of Knights of Columbus worked to give 143 unclaimed lives

a final send-off, a burial at the Mt. Calvary Catholic Cemetery. The group hoped to encourage other chapters to step up and dedicate a space for the unclaimed, but funeral homes provide a temporary respite in the meantime.

"We make every effort to find a

family member," said Kevin Korn, a licensed funeral home director at Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home in Bend. "Invariably, someone comes around and asks for the remains. We can usually track someone down, even if they are estranged, or separated, or a distant relative. Sometimes people will step forward, and we try to meet the family's need financially."

Oregon statutes call for a funeral home to hold on to the body of someone who dies without a family to claim them for 10 days. After that, the funeral home can cremate the remains and must keep them for 180 days. Once that time has past, most funeral homes just hang on to

the remains.

"Our job is to make the remains, not dispose of them," said Brad Byrholdt, Bend Funeral Homes general manager. "I won't bury unclaimed remains because people do come back. Every funeral home has cremated remains that we safe-care in case someone comes back and asks for them."

"And they do." Many funeral homes work through the Oregon Department of State Lands to find a relative through property records, Byrholdt said. Sometimes the funeral home will research the person or post a death notice.

See **Remains** / D3