

# HIKING THE GORGE

Angel's Rest is one of many hikes with stunning views • Explore, B1

# The Bulletin

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## COVID-19 in Oregon

# Delta variant's impact not equal across state

BY GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

The highly contagious COVID-19 delta variant has caused a steep increase in the number of infections in Oregon — but with different impacts across the state.

“Oregon is open, but the pandemic is not over,” said

Oregon Health Director Pat Allen during a press call Thursday.

COVID-19 infections by the delta variant have doubled in the past week, leading to a new spike in total numbers. OHA reported the number of delta variant cases had risen 25% between Wednesday and Thurs-

day alone.

The delta variant now accounts for over half of all COVID-19 cases in Oregon and is likely to rise, mirroring the national average of 80%.

The statistics were rolled out at OHA's first high profile press briefing since Gov. Kate Brown ended statewide COVID-19

restrictions June 30.

The rise in cases comes as vaccinations in the state have slowed to a trickle. While about 2.4 million residents have received at least one shot of vaccine, Allen said the latest daily number of new inoculations was about 2,000. That's down from a peak of over

50,000 on some days in early April.

Allen said COVID-19 cases are surging, up tenfold in the past week. The delta variant spreads up to 75% faster than the original COVID-19 virus that first appeared in Oregon in February 2020.

The spread of the virus is not

evenly spread throughout Oregon as in earlier spikes, OHA reported.

Allen singled out Umatilla County, which reported 70 new cases but has vaccinated just under 43% of eligible adults. The 2020 population of the county is just under 18,500.

See **Variant** / A6

## Deschutes County clerk

# Nancy Blankenship reflects on her service



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

After nearly 20 years of serving as Deschutes County clerk, Nancy Blankenship will retire at the end July.

Official leaves with one major concern: the spread of election misinformation

BY BRENNA VISSER  
The Bulletin

In her 18-year tenure as Deschutes County Clerk, Nancy Blankenship has become no stranger to change.

Since being elected in 2003, Blankenship witnessed ma-

major changes in voting technology and legislation, and helped usher county records into the digital era.

As she looks back at her time as clerk, Blankenship, 62, said she is proud of what she has

accomplished — in particular, her ability to run the office with integrity and earn the trust of both major political parties in the area.

But as she prepares to enter retirement, Blankenship is left

with one major lingering concern for her successor: the spread of election misinformation.

“That is the hardest thing we fight, or try to influence with education,” Blankenship said.

See **Blankenship** / A4

## BEND CITY COUNCIL | BUDGET

# Millions in 'adjustment' would support housing issues

BY BRENNA VISSER  
The Bulletin

In what is considered a historic investment in homeless and housing solutions, the Bend City Council intends to allocate roughly \$6 million of the \$7 million it received in American Rescue Plan funding from the federal government to support projects including affordable housing and managed homeless camps.

On Wednesday, the council supported recommendations from city staff for a \$13.1 million budget “adjustment,” which includes \$6 million from the American Rescue Plan COVID-19 relief act.

The American Rescue Plan funding is only half of the money that was awarded to the city from the federal government.

The other half will be given to the city next year.

The other \$7 million in the budget adjustment comes from a variety of sources, including state funding and city reserve funds, according to city Chief Financial Officer Sharon Wojda.

See **Budget** / A6

# Bend Fire braces for surge of calls

BY GARRETT ANDREWS  
The Bulletin

Look around: Bend is back and busy.

Locals and visitors alike are jamming outside, recreating, driving their cars, shopping, exercising and generally joining together outside their homes after more than a year of relative isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

See **Bend Fire** / A4

## BEND

# Rabid bat prompts county health officials to urge caution

BY DYLAN JEFFERIES  
The Bulletin

A dead bat found in southeast Bend tested positive for rabies this week, prompting county health officials to urge residents to take precautions

*Experts: Keep children, pets away from bats and avoid contact with stray wildlife*

against the deadly disease.

Health officials have three recommendations: Keep children and pets away from bats, avoid any physical

contact with stray wildlife, and make sure to vaccinate all cats, dogs and ferrets against rabies.

Rabies is transmitted through the

bites and scratches of an infected animal, according to health officials.

Dogs, cats and ferrets can be

vaccinated against rabies at 3 to 6 months of age. After initial vaccination, they need a booster shot after one year, and then another booster every three years.

See **Bat** / A4

TODAY'S WEATHER



Very warm  
High 90, Low 54  
Page B5

## INDEX

Business	A7	Dear Abby	A6	Horoscope	A6	Puzzles	B8
Classifieds	B6	Editorial	A5	Local/State	A2-3	Sports	B3-5
Comics	B7-8	Explore	B1-2,9-10				

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