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The Bulletin

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SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8

COVID-19

Federal Reserve chair sees few problems from delta variant, A11

New surge of COVID hits tired Oregon

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

A possible fifth wave of the COVID-19 is swelling in a pandemic-exhausted Oregon that less than a month ago seemed to be on the verge of recovery.

"The highly contagious delta variant has increased tenfold in the past two weeks in Oregon, and it is now estimated to be associated with 80% of the new cases in Oregon," Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state's top epidemiologist, said Tuesday evening.

The Oregon Health Authority reported 804 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday and five deaths. It had reported 1,032 on Tuesday, along with five deaths. Statistics released on Tuesday at times are inflated by lagging reports from the weekend.

Hospitalizations were up to 274 from 259 on Tuesday. The positive test rate was up to 7.8% from 7.4% the previous day. OHA officials have said that a rate above 5% indicates a spike in cases.

OHA's weekly report on variants showed 179 confirmed cases of the delta variant, up from 90 the week before.

While less deadly and sweeping than earlier spikes before vaccines were available, hospitals are filling up with the unvaccinated as local and state officials in Oregon both decline to issue directives to curb the outbreak, unlike other states.

See *Wave* / A13

Mask confusion: CDC guidance confounds and frustrates some Americans

BY BRYAN PIETSCH AND DEREK HAWKINS

The Washington Post

Across the country, people said they felt whiplashed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation that even vaccinated people should resume wearing face coverings indoors under specific circumstances. The frustration felt by some Americans at the changing guidance comes as officials try to convince a pandemic-weary public to once again embrace health measures many believed no longer applied.

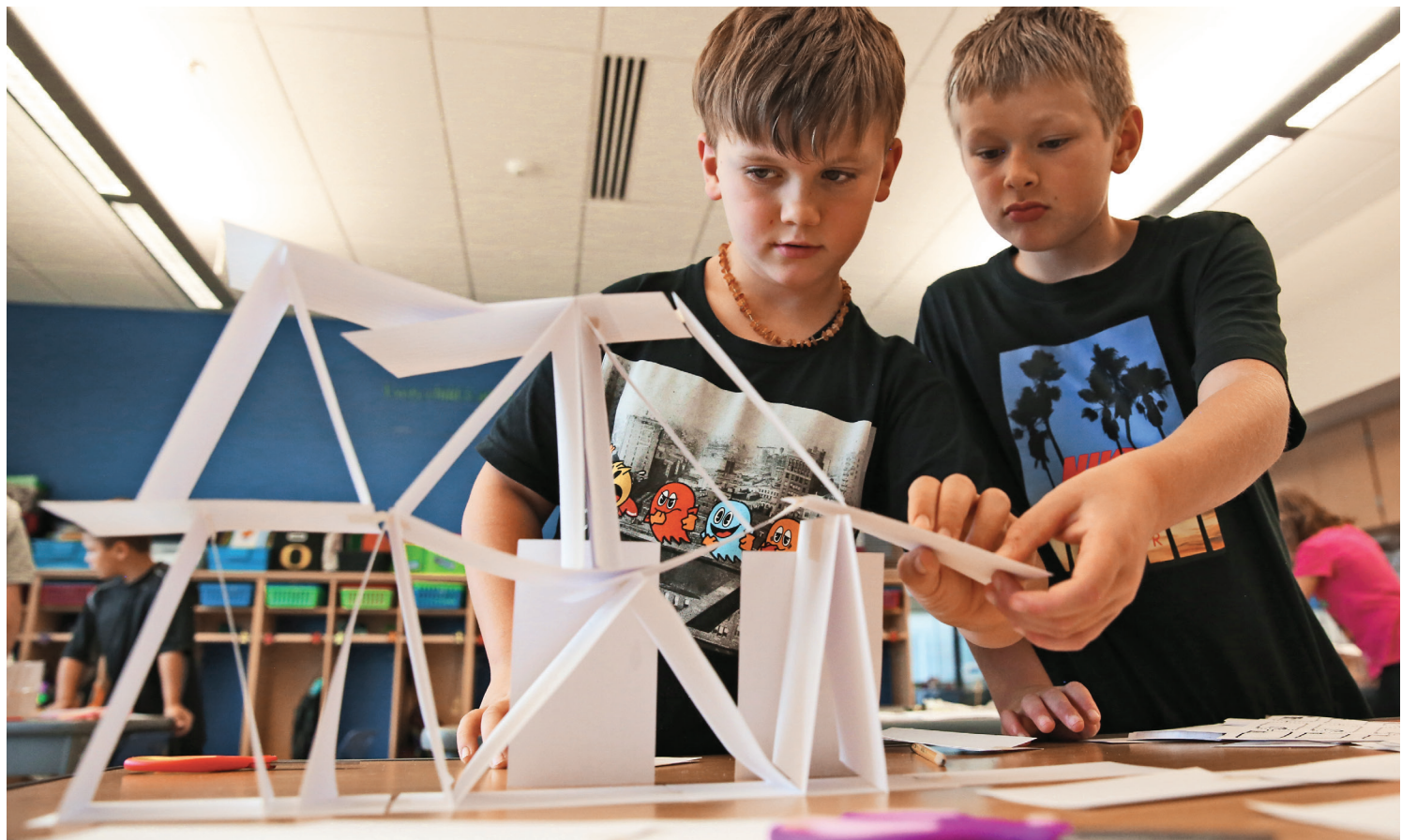
"I feel like the government keeps changing what they want us to do," said Aubrey Garner, who lives in Conroe, Texas, and owns a residential cleaning service. "I'm not sure they know what the answer is to COVID."

At stake in the renewed push for masking is whether the country can control the spread of delta, which is driving up infections nationwide and threatening to reverse hard fought gains against the pandemic. New cases in the United States have risen 63% in the past week, spiking in Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas, where vaccination rates are low. Hospitalizations rose more than 40% in the same period, according to tracking by The Washington Post. The rapidly spreading variant could also jeopardize the U.S. economy's fragile recovery, pushing some companies to reexamine whether to bring workers back into offices this fall.

See *Masks* / A13

Getting excited to learn

Summer school helps students prepare for fall with STEM projects



Dean Guernsey/Bulletin photos

From left, Jackson Steedman and Wes Engel balance index cards to build a hotel for an engineering project Tuesday at Summer Blast, a STEM-themed camp at Barnes Butte Elementary School in Prineville.

BY NICOLE BALES • The Bulletin

PRINEVILLE — Classrooms at Barnes Butte Elementary School in Prineville were bustling Wednesday with elementary school students showing off projects they had spent the past five weeks working on.

A first grade class used craft materials to construct mini boats that could float and stay upright. The class also pretended to be engineers while constructing the "Great Wall of Barnes Butte" using folded paper and a tower in the center of the classroom with paper cups.

Posters displaying different kinds of careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics lined the halls of the school to get students thinking about how skills they learn in school can be applied in the real world.

The students were part of Summer Blast, the school district's STEM-themed K-5 summer school program that attracted 500 students.

Kassiopeia Fullerton, a fifth grader at Crooked River Elementary School, said the summer program has been more fun than a typical school year. She particularly enjoyed the building activities and reading about science.

"They have like all these true facts, and you just learn about flesh-eating flies and

it's so cool," she said.

School districts throughout Central Oregon have come up with creative ways to try to reengage students and teachers after restrictions from the coronavirus pandemic were lifted, and generate excitement going into the fall. More than \$200 million in state and federal funding was set aside to support summer school programs for high school students behind in credits, summer enrichment programs and wrap-around child care.

School districts have used the funding to expand their regular summer programs and create new programs. The result is unprecedented numbers of students signing up.



From left, first graders Gemma Wilson-Powell and Tatum Conklin blow on the sails of their sailboats.

Crook County, one of Central Oregon's smallest school districts, has one of the largest summer school programs, with more than 1,300 students in K-12 participating. The district's enrollment is more than 3,000.

Michelle Zistel, the vice principal of Barnes Butte Elementary, took the lead in organizing Summer Blast. She and Jonny Oelkers, the program coordinator for the school district's online school, wanted to create a fun camp-style experience for kids while also getting them excited about learning, Zistel said.

See *School* / A4

Fraudulent homebuilder gets 45 days in jail

John McClean's deceit a 'nightmare' for victims

BY GARRETT ANDREWS

The Bulletin

The victims of John Vincent McClean started meeting around eight years ago, organized by a determined woman named Janelle Smith, a retired bookkeeper who'd

seen her personal finances devastated by the fraudulent and, now, convicted businessman.

Though Smith died in 2018, the group she started met once again Tuesday, possibly for the last time, in Deschutes County Circuit Court to see McClean sentenced. The businessman was ordered to serve 45 days in jail and serve three years probation in exchange

for pleading no contest to two counts of aggravated theft and one of racketeering.

It was cold comfort for the victims. Several pleaded with Judge Wells Ashby for a harsher penalty. "I'm begging the court," said Bend pharmacist Katie Thraen. "You knock off a 7/11, you go to jail. You've heard what he did. This can't just end like this."

A decade ago, McClean, now 60, and his brother, Glen, operated several businesses involved in home construction in Central Oregon, including McClean Brothers Construction and John McClean Construction. The charges on McClean's indictment relate to the construction of five houses between 2012 and 2014.

See *Fraud* / A4

