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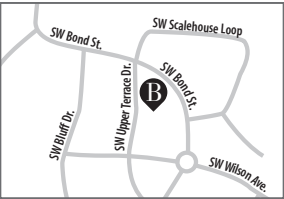
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

COVID-19 data for Thursday, Aug. 5

Deschutes County cases: 10,827 (86 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 87 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 1,469 (22 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 24 (zero new deaths)

Jefferson County cases: 2,540 (12 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 42 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 225,919 (1,382 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,885 (8 new deaths)
COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Thursday: 33 (4 in ICU)

The Bulletin had been tracking the seven-day average case count based on state data since local coronavirus cases were first reported in March of last year. Starting with the July Fourth weekend, the state stopped providing county-level data for weekends or holidays. When data is available, The Bulletin will continue to publish information about the pandemic.

LOCAL BRIEFING

COCC announces incentive for vaccinated students

Central Oregon Community College on Wednesday announced that students and employees fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will have the chance to win \$500.

The community college is using the incentive to encourage students and staff to get vaccinated before the fall.

Those who are fully vaccinated by Sept. 20 will be eligible to win one of over 100 gift cards valued at \$500, \$250 and \$100.

“We know the COVID-19 vaccines are our most effective tool in the fight against the coronavirus, its deadly variants and the pandemic’s impact on our personal freedoms and public health,” Dr.

Alicia Moore, the college’s vice president of student affairs said in a statement.

“Thanks to federal funding, COCC is able to offer financial incentives as a way to say ‘thanks’ to students and employees for getting vaccinated.”

For more information, visit the college’s website, www.cocc.edu

A vaccination clinic is scheduled at the COCC Madras campus on Aug. 20 and Sept. 10, from 3 to 7 p.m.

Anyone over the age of 12 is eligible and no photo ID or health insurance is necessary.

The Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccinations will be available, and Spanish-speaking volunteers will be present.

—Bulletin staff report

STATE BRIEFING

Fired Albany school leader says different values behind her ouster

An ex-Oregon schools leader said the people who ousted her last month never spoke to her, and the district’s work on equity — which she championed — is now languishing.

Board members at the Greater Albany Public Schools District fired Superintendent Melissa Goff soon after new members took over, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Goff was terminated without cause, a point Goff said confirmed she hadn’t done anything wrong. She said she was removed for having different values, such as ensuring equity was integrated into teaching.

Board Chair Eric Aguinaga, however, said in an emailed statement that Goff was fired because she had become a polarizing figure in the Albany community.

The conflict is not the only example of recent friction between elected school board members and administrators.

The Newberg School Board has announced plans to repeal state policies aimed at equity including a policy that among other things, bans hate symbols such as nooses and swastikas. Those plans have drawn opposition from the state Legislature’s Black, Indigenous and people of color caucus and House Majority Leader Barbara Smith-Warner, D-Portland.

Aguinaga also disagrees with Goff’s allegation that Albany has been shirking commitments to help historically marginalized students. The chair noted that Goff’s interim replacement, longtime school leader Rob Saxton, is deeply committed to equity work.

Goff argues that the process to bring in new administrators — including Saxton — is evidence that the district is less committed to helping students of color and other student groups the district hasn’t historically served well. Goff said

four recently filled positions went to white men on a fast timeline.

Astoria port panel backs letter urging caution with sea otter reintroduction

The Port of Astoria Commission voted unanimously Tuesday to urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to consider potential issues for port infrastructure in reintroducing sea otters on the Pacific coast.

A letter was drafted by the West Coast Seafood Processors Association, a trade group. Lori Steele, the association’s executive director, appeared remotely at the port meeting to advocate for the letter.

The Fish and Wildlife Service was instructed by Congress to conduct a one-year study that analyzes the cost and feasibility of reestablishing sea otters. The association plans to send the letter to the federal agency prior to a final report to Congress in January.

“We tried to focus the letter on providing constructive input and identifying the real critical issues that the Fish and Wildlife Service needs to address in their study,” Steele said over Zoom.

The association reached out to the Port of Astoria asking for support because the group considered the agency a stakeholder.

“There are a lot of considerations and issues for ports and potential impact on port infrastructure,” Steele said.

The letter has already received signatures from several ports along the coast, including Coos Bay, Newport and Ilwaco in Washington state.

Steele said it is possible the Fish and Wildlife Service will seek greater protection for sea otters under federal law.

“If that happens we will run into all kinds of trouble with trying to get permits and things like that for infrastructure, maintenance and repair,” Steele said. “Those are largely, I think, the concerns from the port perspective.”

—Bulletin wire reports

COVID-19 in Oregon

Pendleton hospital reports record-high total patients

BY BRYCE DOLE

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The COVID-19 surge sweeping Umatilla County continues to drive up hospitalizations at CHI St. Anthony in Pendleton.

Roughly two-thirds of the hospital’s inpatients over the past week tested positive for COVID-19, and more than a quarter of patients admitted to the emergency department had the virus, according to Harold Geller, the president of CHI St. Anthony.

“We urge everyone to become vaccinated,” said Geller.

On July 31, the hospital had 13 COVID-positive patients in its care, the highest daily total since the pandemic began, according to Geller. If that total exceeded 18, Geller said the hospital “may need to suspend elective surgeries, but not emergency surgeries.” On Monday, the number of hospitalized patients had dropped to 9.

As infection ramped up in the county in July, the hospital admitted 24 patients with COVID-19, with 22 of those patients coming in the last 10 days of the month. Those patients were spread across the hospital’s critical care and medical units.

And as hospitals throughout Oregon and Washington fill with COVID-19 patients, transferring patients to other



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Brandon Ragsdale directs a patient on proper self-administration of a COVID-19 test Wednesday during a free testing event at CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. Ragsdale said the event gathered at least 11 cars before it opened, with many cars having more than one occupant.

hospitals for a higher level of care continues to be a challenge for St. Anthony, according to Emily Smith, a hospital spokesperson.

Of the 25 staffed intensive care unit beds available in Eastern Oregon, only five were available as of Tuesday, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

“The governor is incredibly concerned about the increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations we are seeing due to the spread of the delta variant in areas with low vaccination rates,” Charles Boyle, a spokesperson for Gov. Kate Brown, told the Oregon Capitol Bureau. “Severe illness from COVID-19

is now a preventable disease, thanks to vaccines.”

Boyle said the governor’s office and OHA have “been in communication with Umatilla County about what assistance or additional resources they may need” and added that the state “will continue to reach out and stand ready to assist.”

Reported COVID-19 hospitalizations have spiked statewide as the highly contagious delta variant rips through communities, infecting huge swaths of unvaccinated people. As of Tuesday, nearly 380 people were hospitalized with COVID-19, the highest total since January, The Oregonian reported.

Lawsuit: Over a decade, Oregon has failed to create cleanup plan for polluted waters

BY KALE WILLIAMS

The Oregonian

An environmental advocacy group is suing Oregon and the federal government for failing to make plans to clean up the state’s most polluted waterways, a requirement of federal law.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday by Northwest Environmental Advocates, alleges the state and federal governments have failed to comply with the Clean Water Act, which mandates states submit to the Environmental Protection Agency a list of water bodies that need cleanup every two years.

That list, ranked by prior-

ity, should form the basis for cleanup plans, along with a timeline for implementation within two years. The EPA is supposed to determine whether the plans comply with federal law.

While the state did submit a list of polluted waterways as recently as 2017, which showed more than 3,000 bodies of water requiring cleanup, the state has not issued any new cleanup plans since 2010 after a previous lawsuit brought by the same advocacy group in the mid-1990s, the suit alleges.

“The last time Oregon produced any new water pollution clean-up plans was over

a decade ago, and those were the direct result of our having sued EPA in 1996,” Nina Bell, executive director, said in a statement. “It’s clear that Oregon only protects water quality in response to lawsuits, so here we are again, heading to federal court.”

Jennifer Flynt, a spokeswoman for the Department of Environmental Quality, disputed the claims in the lawsuit, saying the state has issued plans to bring down nutrient levels and water temperature in the Klamath basin, to mitigate mercury pollution in the Willamette Basin and another for the Columbia River, all within the last two years.

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