U.S. to reopen land borders in November for fully vaccinated

BY ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

The U.S. will reopen its land borders to nonessential travel next month, ending a 19-month freeze due to the COVID-19 pandemic as the country moves to require all international visitors to be vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Vehicle, rail and ferry travel between the U.S. and Canada and Mexico has been largely restricted to essential travel, such as trade, since the earliest days of the pandemic. The new rules, to be announced Wednesday, will allow fully vaccinated foreign nationals to enter the U.S. regardless of the reason for travel starting in early November, when a similar easing of restrictions is set to kick in for air travel into the country. By mid-January, even essential travelers seeking to enter the U.S., like truck drivers, will need to be fully vaccinated.

Fernando Llano/AP

A man rides his bike on Sept. 24 past the closed main entrance of the international border bridge that connects the cities of Del Rio, Texas, and Ciudad Acuna, Mexico.

Senior administration officials previewed the new policy late Tuesday on the condition of anonymity to speak ahead of the formal announcement.

Both Mexico and Canada have pressed the U.S. for months to ease restrictions on travel that have separated families and curtailed leisure trips since the onset of the pandemic. The latest move follows last month's announcement that the U.S. will end country-based travel bans for air travel, and instead require vaccination for foreign nationals seeking to enter by plane.

Both policies will take effect in early November, the officials said. They did not specify a particular date.

The new rules only apply to legal entry to the U.S. Officials cautioned that those seeking to enter illegally will still be subject to expulsion under so-called Title 42 authority, first invoked by former President Donald Trump, that has drawn criticism from immigration advocates for swiftly removing migrants before they can seek asylum. One of the officials said the U.S. was continuing the policy because cramped conditions in border patrol facilities pose a COVID-19 threat.

Advice shifts on aspirin preventing heart attacks

BY LINDSEY TANNER
Associated Press

Older adults without heart disease shouldn't take daily low-dose aspirin to prevent a first heart attack or stroke, an influential health guidelines group said in preliminary updated advice released Tuesday.

Bleeding risks for adults in their 60s and up who haven't had a heart attack or stroke outweigh any potential benefits from aspirin, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force said in its draft guidance.

For the first time, the panel said there may be a small benefit for adults in their 40s who have no bleeding risks. For those in their 50s, the panel softened advice and said evidence of benefit is less clear.

The recommendations are meant for people with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity or other conditions that increase their chances for a heart attack or stroke. Regardless of age, adults should talk with their doctors about stopping or starting aspirin to make sure it's the right choice for them, said task force member Dr. John Wong, a primary-care expert at Tufts Medical Center.

"Aspirin use can cause serious harms, and risk increases with age," he said.

If finalized, the advice for older adults would backtrack on recommendations the panel issued in 2016 for helping prevent a first heart attack and stroke, but it would be in line with more recent guidelines from other medical groups.

The task force previously said certain people in their 50s and 60s may want to consider a daily aspirin to prevent a first heart attack and stroke, and that they might get protection against colorectal cancer, too.

Doctors have long recommended daily low-dose aspirin for many patients who already have had a heart attack or stroke. The task force guidance does not change that advice.

Pass

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The pass was not offered with any season-pass packages and comes after the resort eliminated the 12-day pass option, Cochrane said.

"They are continuing to strip away local options for people to ski affordably and instead going the other direction to cater to the wealthy and offer expensive add-ons to cut past the local pass holders," Cochrane said.

Leigh Capozzi, director of brand and communications at Mt. Bachelor, said the pricing for the Fast Tracks pass will be the same for season-pass or single-day ticket holders. Fast Tracks ticket holders will have a dedicated lane at each chairlift, she said.

"Fast Tracks will have a capped inventory each day, and we anticipate the limited quantity sold will have minimal impact — if any — on wait times," Capozzi said.

Capozzi did not say how many fast-pass tickets would be available each day.

In a press release Monday, the ski resort announced its opening day for the winter season will be Nov. 26 and it will start selling its fast-pass tickets starting Nov. 1. The pass will be available in advance online or in-person at the resort's ticket window or guest service locations.

The pass allows visitors to skip the line at Pine Marten, Sunrise, Skyliner, Cloudchaser, Outback, Northwest, Summit, Red Chair and Little Pine chairlifts. Early Riser, Alpenglow and Rainbow lifts will not offer a Fast Tracks lane, according to the resort.

Cochrane understands Powdr Corp., the company that owns Mt. Bachelor, introduced the fast pass at its other resorts.

Those resorts are more geared toward tourists and do not have the same passionate local crowd that has been coming for decades, Cochrane said.

"We have gone through a lot of growth in the past 20 years, but it's still a small town and you have a core element of longtime riders, like myself, that have been here for decades," Cochrane said.

Cochrane worries the fast pass will create division on the mountain. He's already heard from people who are threatening to interfere with the fast pass lanes and blow air horns in protest, he said.

"They are really setting up for some very ugly feelings on the hill," Cochrane said. "It's splitting the community at a time when we need community more than ever before."

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DeBone

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"I'm open, honest and approachable, and willing to listen and very engaged," DeBone said.

In a written statement, DeBone mentioned accomplishments during his time as commissioner, including the opening of the stabilization center and the Veterans Village project, which will house homeless veterans in temporary housing starting Veterans Day.

He also mentioned the success of the mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic, which was held at the Deschutes County fairgrounds.

When asked to respond to criticism raised by his opponent, Tatom, about his lack of leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, DeBone said "time will tell" how good of a job the commission has done.

If elected again, DeBone said his priorities would be to address homelessness and manage growth in Deschutes County.

He said even with some industries increasing wages, housing remains cost prohibitive in Deschutes County. He said he advocates for more land to become available to create more opportunities for starter homes, but said it is also important to keep cities urban and rural areas rural.

In his written statement, DeBone also mentioned finding a location for a new landfill in Deschutes County and expanding the courthouse as priorities in the near future.

"Justice delayed is justice denied, and I am happy to know that we are able to add capacity (that is) needed," DeBone wrote.

Before being elected to the commission, DeBone was the chair of the La Pine Park and Recreation District. DeBone also owns Little d Technology, an information technology and computer services business.

He holds a bachelor's degree in electronic technology and robotics from Northern Michigan University.

The seat held by Commissioner Patti Adair, a Republican, is also up for election. Adair has told The Bulletin she intends to run for reelection. Morgan Schmidt, a Bend pastor, so far is the only Democrat who has filed to run against her.

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