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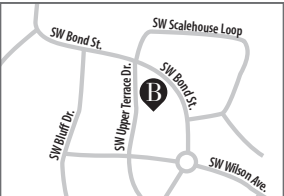
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

COVID-19 data for Wednesday, Jan. 5

Deschutes County cases: 27,945 (716 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 215 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 3,767 (37 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 60 (zero new deaths)

Jefferson County cases: 4,601 (77 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 69 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 441,648 (6,203 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 5,719 (9 new deaths)
COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Wednesday: 29 (3 in ICU).

The Bulletin had been tracking the seven-day average case count based on state data since local cases were first reported, until 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.

Senate President Courtney is retiring

Oregon's longest-serving lawmaker will hold seat until election

BY DIRK VANDERHART
Oregon Public Broadcasting
Senate President Peter Courtney, the longest-serving lawmaker in Oregon history, is retiring.

After months of speculation that leadership of the Senate may come up for grabs in 2023, Courtney informed colleagues shortly after 2 p.m. on Wednesday he would not seek reelection this year. His office confirmed his decision.

"I am not going to be running again for the Legislature," Courtney, D-Salem, said in a

text message to fellow senators.

"I will serve out the remainder of my term. It has been an honor and a privilege to have been allowed to serve locally on the Salem City Council and for all these years in the Oregon State Legislature. I hope I've helped."

Courtney's departure creates questions about who best can follow in his footsteps after two decades wielding the Senate gavel.

That matter will likely wait until soon after the November elections, when members

of the majority party — likely to remain the Democrats — will meet to discuss their pick.

By turns taciturn and animated, Courtney has long been one of the more captivating and mercurial figures in Oregon politics.

He runs his chamber with a mixture of browbeating insults and heartfelt concern for the institution.

Courtney's departure is not the only leadership vacuum coming to Salem. In



Courtney

the House, longtime Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, is serving her final term in the role as she mounts a run for governor. Two House Democrats also said Wednesday that House Democratic

Leader Barbara Smith-Warner, another Portland lawmaker, had informed them she would be stepping down from that position.

Currently in his 38th year as a lawmaker, Courtney served in the Oregon House for a decade before jumping to the Senate. He won election as Senate president in 2003, and

maintained control ever since, often winning praise from minority Republicans who see him as an evenhanded leader. More recently, he's also seen rising angst from an increasingly liberal caucus that sometimes chafed at his consensus-driven style.

Among those processing the news on Wednesday was state Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Portland, a longtime ally.

"I am incredibly grateful to him for his decades of service to the state," Steiner Hayward said.

"He's made invaluable contributions to the Legislature."

Democrats tap 3 nominees for gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson's vacant Senate seat

SEASIDE — The Democratic Party of Oregon has selected three nominees to fill the state Senate District 16 vacancy left by Betsy Johnson in her independent run for governor. Democrats met Monday night at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center to make selections from a list of eight candidates. County commissioners within the district — Clatsop,

Tillamook, Columbia, Washington and Multnomah — will interview the nominees and vote on who will fill the seat in a joint session on Jan. 14.

Melissa Busch, a home health nurse from Warren, was the first selected nominee, receiving 73% of the weighted vote in the first round of balloting.

Rachel Armitage, also from Warren, was selected as the second nominee, receiving 64% of the weighted vote in the second round of balloting.

Nadia Gardner, the chairwoman of the Clatsop County Planning Commission, was selected as the third nominee, receiving 74% of the weighted vote in the third round of balloting.

— The Astorian



ODOT

Trucks block the east travel lanes on Interstate 84 Wednesday.

Santiam Pass reopens; I-84 closed to the east

Bulletin staff and wire reports

Crashes, spinouts and winter weather closed U.S. Highway 20 across the Santiam Pass at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday, but the Oregon Department of Transportation reopened the pass by 11:30 a.m.

Interstate 84 shut down Wednesday east of Pendleton. Major highways around Crater Lake National Park also remained closed. Multiple disabled vehicles closed U.S. Highway 395 near La Grande late Wednesday morning, and Hoodoo Ski Area said it is also closed Wednesday. On Mount Hood, both Timberline and Mt. Hood Meadows opened Wednesday after being closed the previous two days.

The closures were the latest

in a week where that saw numerous roads closed due to winter conditions. Previous closures affected I-84 through the Columbia River Gorge, and U.S. Highway 26 over Mount Hood.

The westbound lanes of Highway U.S. 20 were closed early in the morning because of crashes on the uphill climb near Suttle Lake, just east of the pass. Eventually, the Oregon Department of Transportation closed all east- and westbound lanes at the intersection of state Highway 22, just west of the pass, because of continued blowing snow and crashes.

There was no word on an estimated reopening time. Check TripCheck.com for the latest in road closures and chain or traction device requirements.

Police: Woman escapes alleged kidnapping

A Redmond man is facing attempted murder, rape and other charges after a woman said she was held for weeks against her will.

Around 9 a.m. Monday, Redmond Police responded to a report of a domestic violence assault in a home in the 2800 block of SW Peridot Avenue in Redmond. A person told police that Bernardino Martinez Jr. had been holding a woman against her will for several weeks and that he'd threatened to kill her if she tried to leave.

Redmond officers contacted the alleged victim via phone and told her to leave if she could and they would pick her up, according to Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel.

"Redmond PD then saw

the victim run from the residence, and they picked her up," Hummel told The Bulletin. "The victim had visible injuries."

Martinez Jr. was arrested Tuesday night when a vehicle he was riding in was stopped by police. Assisting in the arrest was the regional SWAT team, the Central Oregon Emergency Response Team, according to a statement by Redmond Police.

Martinez Jr. was arraigned Wednesday afternoon on 18 criminal counts, including first-degree rape, first-degree kidnapping, coercion and attempted murder.

His indictment states he allegedly threatened his victim with a handgun and struck her knowing she was pregnant.

Martinez Jr.'s next court date is Wednesday.

— Bulletin staff report

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A household is defined for the purposes of the Lifeline program as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Lifeline service is not transferable, and only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain Lifeline telephone or broadband service can be punished by fine or imprisonment and can be barred from the program.

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