

Coronavirus

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patient are subsequently monitored.

As of Tuesday, the Oregon Health Authority reported 232 people were being monitored. Another 302 were no longer being monitored after medical professionals determined they didn't have symptoms or weren't at risk. So far, 213 people have tested negative, and 67 tests are still pending.

The coronavirus is spread through person-to-person contact through coughing and sneezing, close contact such as touching or shaking hands or touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching the face, according to health officials.

Most people who contract the virus will have symptoms similar to the common cold, but in some instances the illness can produce serious effects and lead to death. So far, 28 people have died of COVID-19 in the U.S.

On Sunday, county health officials urged those who may be ill to avoid visits to individuals in long-term care facilities or hospitals and those with chronic medical conditions.

They stopped short of recommending that people avoid group events. Across the U.S., event organizers have begun postponing or canceling major events.

In Oregon, state officials Sunday urged that schools at all levels take extra precautions but said closing should be "a measure of last resort," according to a joint statement from state and health education officials.

"The guidance recommends against closing schools and campuses where no cases of COVID-19 are present," the statement said.

The officials noted that schools provide the "only ready access to health care and food" for many students, noting Oregon has an estimated 22,000 homeless students.

Schools should instead increase efforts to promote good handwashing, clean high-traffic areas more often and take steps such as "staggering recess and lunch periods to reduce the number of students coming

into close contact with each other," the statement said.

Meantime, state officials are pursuing additional funding to support efforts to track and contain the coronavirus. The state Emergency Board granted a request on Monday for an extra \$5 million, and Brown is awaiting word on whether her request for at least \$7.5 million in additional federal funding would be granted.

Allen, the health authority director, said he expected "resource stresses" across the state, including in urban areas.

The state's 62 hospitals "are committed to providing critical inpatient and community health services to respond to this evolving situation," according to a statement from Becky Hultberg, president of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

The hospitals have more than 6,000 patient beds, with 33 hospitals having 50 or fewer beds and 12 of them at least 20 miles from a neighboring hospital.

"We are working with the state administration to address important issues such as inpatient capacity, additional supplies and equipment to keep our workers and patients safe, regulatory relief to ensure adequate staffing and clarity around changing requirements," Hultberg said.

Allen said the state expected to relax rules governing telemedicine, particularly to boost the capability of rural medical professionals to provide care without overloading medical facilities. Such long-distance care can be effective to evaluate and direct treatment, Allen said.

In her declaration, Brown directed state agencies to provide as necessary guidance to businesses "regarding appropriate work restrictions" and urged consumers who believe there has been price gouging for essential supplies to report that to the state Justice Department.

She also directed her order at all Oregonians.

"All citizens are to heed the advice of emergency officials with regard to this outbreak. In order to protect their health and safety," her order said.

Books

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are exposed to 1.8 million words per year," Cobb said.

She said that on the school's computer there is a quote that reads, "A child who reads will be an adult who thinks."

"We are trying to build children up to be adults who think," Cobb said.

Stargel, a fifth-grade teacher, said her students have become much more enthusiastic about reading and much more informed of current events.

She said one of the selected books, "Malala: My Story of Standing Up for Girls' Rights," a memoir of a teenage Pakistani girl who risked her life for the right to go to school, exposed the kids to worldly events they otherwise would not have been aware of.

Stargel said the selection of books includes new titles as well as classics, such as Beverly Cleary's "Ramona the Pest," and Lois Lowry's "Number the Stars."

Bailey, a fifth grader, said, because of the battle, she wants to be a writer and a teacher.

She said she likes to be able to reread books and get suggestions, and the competition gives her an opportunity to do both.

This year will be her second year competing in the battle. She said the team made it to the top four in the regional tournament, but lost by just a few points.

Fourth-grader Adie Judd



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Adie Judd eagerly raises her hand to answer a question Friday during a Battle of the Books session Feb. 28. Judd and four other classmates will compete at the regional contest March 14.

said she reads about an hour a day. Her favorite book is "Number the Stars," a work of historical fiction about a Jewish family's escape from war-torn Europe during World War II.

"I like how it is about the Holocaust," she said. "I am really interested in history."

She said she hopes to have fun at the competition in Bend.

Bristol Bailey, a fifth grader, said this is her second year competing in the battle.

Bristol said the battle has encouraged her to read more and play less video games.

"My mom is very proud of me," she said.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Teacher Anna Stargel, left, and librarian Shanley Cobb go over mock questions for Battle of the Books with the students Feb. 28. Students will compete at regionals March 14.

Water

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"No drones on ODA's part," she said.

Page said the department gives its best evaluation to identify "potential concerns."

Page said, in the event of a potential violation, the department does not make a final determination until they are invited onto the property by the landowner.

"We respect private property rights, and that is a core value of our agency," Page said.

After the meeting, Moore said he still thinks it is wrong to use publicly available information.

"It is an invasion of our privacy," Moore said.

Pat Voigt, rancher and soil and water district chairman, said another concern

the landowners have is a lack of baseline data and benchmarks that the area needs to hit in terms of water quality and fish habitat.

Voigt said, while he appreciated ODA taking the time to come out and hear the concerns, he said they "danced around" the questions surrounding baseline data and benchmarks.

"We realized that is how it was going to be," Voigt said.

Page said the purpose of the program is to gather the data and bring it to legislators, conservation groups and policy makers.

She said that less than 1% of the properties they have looked at have had potential concerns. Page said that only 12 fines have been issued in the history of the program.

She said one of the more egregious cases came out of Lane County, where a landowner had large piles of manure near a watershed and ignored the agency's concerns. Page said the landowner was fined \$600.

"When we have presented this information about the strategy and about the results, we have gotten to the legislators, the folks who have the power to change laws in the state, it is a pretty great story," Page

said. "That is really what we are trying to do."

She said the water quality management program was at a point in the 2010s, back when the approach to compliance was complaint based, that there was not an efficient way to capture data to prove out compliance.

She said this is how they can best tell "ag's story."

Voigt said another concern that people have is that the soil and water district, whose purpose is to help landowners come into compliance on a voluntary basis, will over time become regulators.

Page said the plan is not changing in respect to ODA deeming the district as a regulatory agency.

District board treasurer Roger Ediger, who at the start of the meeting encouraged others to speak up but do so respectfully and with civility, said that government oversight continues to become more intrusive and far-reaching since the water quality legislation was passed back in 1993.

Ediger said Tuesday that the meeting did not assuage his concerns about the upcoming rollout of the SIA in the Grant County area.

Grant County resident Wayne Overton said, with

the back and forth in the state capitol over the cap and trade bill and the potential adverse consequences it would have on rural Oregonians, that it is "easy to get heated up about the state coming at us."

"We're private people," Overton said. "And all of these regulations feel like a game of whack-a-mole."

Phillip St. Claire asked if legacy issues — inherent, historical land management issues that put a landowner out of compliance — are taken into consideration.

Page said ODA does consider those issues, and the agency, along with the districts, are there to help landowners address those issues.

Sanchez said that upwards of \$125,000 is available in grant funding for technical grants to address compliance issues and an additional \$25,000 is allocated for landowner outreach under the plan.

Voigt said, if one positive came out of the meeting, it is that from here on out ODA will include local stakeholders, landowners and the community when they make amendments to the plan.

"From here, the landowner will be in on a plan on the first step and not the sixth," he said.

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