

**CORONAVIRUS
OUTBREAK**

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Students presented a wide variety of research that focused on topics such as rainwater, intermittent fasting and more.

The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

SCIENCE FAIR

Event prepares Grant Union students for the future

Hall wins best of fair with project focusing on food and athletic energy

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

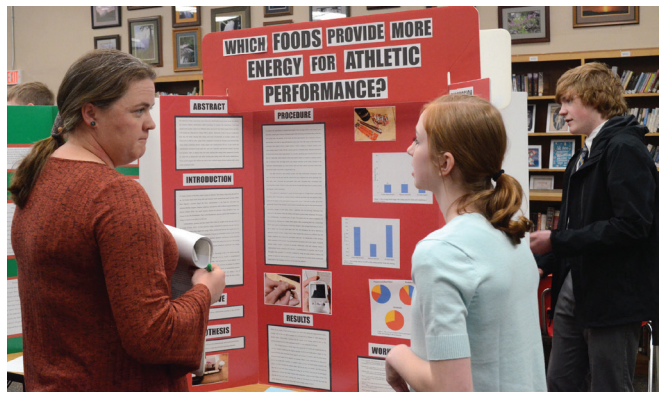
Grant Union high school students presented a wide array of research topics during a science fair in the school's library March 12.

Students from Sonna Smith and Randy Hennen's classes participated in the competition, which also con-

tributes to their honors diploma. Hennen said his advanced biology students and Smith's chemistry students were required to participate in the fair.

Hennen said this was a great experience for students, and he enjoyed giving them an opportunity to shine beyond an A on a report card.

See Science, Page A16



Freshman Amelia Hall presents her project to judge Amy Stiner during the Grant Union science fair March 12.

The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

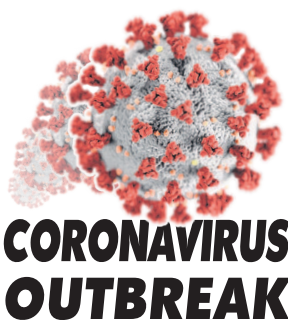
Grant County prepares for coronavirus

Emergency operations center established as public health officials urge people to take virus prevention seriously

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

As statewide cases of the new coronavirus continue to climb, Grant County residents are adjusting as their lives have slowed to a near halt with school and restaurant dining closures, bans on gatherings of over 25 people and a variety of other community cancellations.

The outbreak has been declared a global pandemic and a national emergency, and state officials estimate it could infect 75,000 in less than a month if mea-



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asures aren't taken to slow the spread. The state saw its first fatality over the weekend and more new cases every day, bringing Oregon's number of cases to 65 across multiple counties — none yet in Grant County.

Pam Bruhn, the director of infection control at Blue Mountain Hospital District, said the new virus can spread very easily from person-to-person contact (roughly within 6 feet) through droplets in the air and on surfaces from a cough or sneeze from an infected person.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new virus, can take between two to 14 days to appear and include fever, a dry cough, fatigue and difficulty breathing or shortness of breath. Milder cases may resemble the flu or a bad cold, but people may be able to pass on the virus even before they develop symptoms.

COVID-19 PREVENTION

The CDC and the WHO recommend the following basic steps to help prevent the spread of the new coronavirus:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Do not touch your face.
- Do not travel if you have a fever or cough.
- Do not wear a face mask if you are well.
- Never visit someone at a hospital or long-term-care facility if you have a fever or cough.

Bruhn said there is no vaccine or treatment to combat the virus except supportive care and fever-reducing medicine, like Tylenol and other over-the-counter drugs.

What to do if you're sick

Rebekah Rand, director of Emergency Medical Services and emergency preparedness at the hospital district, said to avoid showing up at the hospital without calling first, as this runs the risk of spreading the virus.

Rand said people experiencing symptoms such as a fever, cough or difficulty breathing should call the Strawberry Wilderness Clinic at 541-575-0404.

"Our goal is to prevent the spread, and we know

COVID-19 is spread through close contact," Rand said.

Rand said, over the phone, the staff will ask a series of questions that follow guidelines set by the CDC, such as whether the patient has traveled internationally or been in contact with someone infected with the virus.

Jessica Winegar, clinic manager at the county health department, said they are asking their patients to follow the same process and to call 541-575-0429.

"It is best practice to use these precautions year round," Winegar said. "We always ask that people call the office before coming if they believe they are sick."

According to the CDC, See Coronavirus, Page A16

First person dies from COVID-19 in Oregon

By Les Zaitz
Oregon Capital Bureau

A 70-year-old veteran died Saturday at a Portland hospital from COVID-19, the first known fatality in Oregon as the number of people testing positive for the disease continues to increase.

Oregon officials said the patient, who had underlying health conditions, was diagnosed on March 10 and died at the Portland Veterans' Affairs Medical Center.

"The individual had no known contact to a confirmed case and had not traveled to a country where the virus is circulating," the Oregon Health Authority said in a statement Saturday.

The Health Authority announced Tuesday 18 more individuals were infected with the disease, bringing Oregon's total to 65. The state was awaiting results from another 184 tests as of Monday, and 352 people who may have had contact with individuals are being monitored for symptoms.

One new case was reported on Sunday from the Edward C. Allworth Veterans Home in Lebanon, the ninth so far from there. The home cares for 151 veterans.

Leaders again implor-

Oregonians to help stop the spread of the coronavirus by following basic health tips and avoiding mass gatherings.

"I ask you to join me in honoring this person's memory by taking the steps we know are necessary to prevent the further spread of this disease," Gov. Kate Brown said in a Saturday night statement. "We must do all we can to slow the spread of this disease: avoid large events, follow social distancing protocols and, above all, stay home when sick."

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state health officer, said the community spread of the disease "is something we've been expecting. It's a good reminder to take steps to protect yourself, and vulnerable friends and family members by washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes and staying home if you're sick."

The developments came as Oregon took a sharp turn to living in an era of a communicable disease that state officials say now could strike 75,000 Oregonians.

With all public schools closed effective Monday, March 16, school districts across the state cobbled together plans to provide free food to make up for

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