

Court

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“Restrictions on church services are also devastating in that, in light of the effects of the governor’s executive orders, we need our churches more than ever so that people may gather together and pray,” he said in the affidavit.

Sam Palmer told the Eagle he received an email from state Sen. Brian Boquist surprised that the governor’s office bypassed the Court of Appeals and went straight straight to the Oregon Supreme Court.

“I don’t know if that’s

good, bad or indifferent,” he said.

Sam Palmer said he expects the Oregon Supreme Court will rule on the lawsuit by the end of the week.

“I think the laws are pretty black and white, so I feel confident that, if they follow the laws, the places of faith can open back up,” he said.

Two attorneys from the Oregon Department of Justice who are representing Brown asked Shirlcliff to either issue a stay, meaning the preliminary injunction wouldn’t take effect immediately, or to wait 48 hours before entering his decision into the record, which would have the same effect.

Shirlcliff denied both requests, saying he would enter his decision immediately.

The governor’s lawyers, Marc Abrams and Christina Beatty-Walters, sought an immediate review of Shirlcliff’s decision by the Oregon Supreme Court, with a goal of overturning his ruling.

Solicitor General Benjamin Gutman filed a petition with the state’s highest court Monday afternoon.

Abrams said there is evidence that measures in the governor’s executive orders have been effective at curbing the spread of the coronavirus, and that Shirlcliff should delay the injunction as a result.

But Hacke countered that the “issue is not whether it’s working. It’s whether she has exceeded the limits of her authority.”

Since Shirlcliff has agreed that Brown has exceeded that authority, Hacke argued, delaying the injunction would in effect render the injunction moot.

In his written decision, the judge compared grocery stores and other businesses that have remained open, without social distancing guidelines, to churches, writing that churches can use the same precautions during worship services that involve more than 25 people, which

has been the limit under the governor’s executive orders.

In separate statements, both Brown — who appointed Shirlcliff to replace retiring Judge Greg Baxter last fall — and Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum took issue with Shirlcliff’s decision.

“Today’s ruling from the Baker County Circuit Court will be appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court within hours to keep my emergency orders in effect,” Brown said in a press release. “This will ensure we can continue to safeguard the health of all Oregonians — including frontline health care workers, those living in nursing homes, workers in agri-

culture and food processing plants, and Oregonians with underlying health conditions — while the legal process moves forward.”

Rosenblum said: “We will argue that the judge erred in his construction of the relevant statutes and that he abused his discretion in issuing the preliminary injunction.”

In granting the plaintiffs’ motion for a preliminary injunction, Shirlcliff concluded that Brown, by citing a certain state law in some of her executive orders since her original emergency declaration March 8, in effect placed a 28-day limit on the state’s enforcement of those orders.

Open

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little different than a regular sit-down restaurant, and restrictions, such as closing by 10 p.m., are inconvenient for her establishment.

“Yes, there is a component in there under restaurants and bars that all establishments have to close by 10 p.m., and I cannot explain where that came from,” said state Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale during a virtual town hall. “... I would hope to heck that, as we get to this point, we can continue to work on and add some common sense.”

Squeeze-In Restaurant owner Shawn Duncan said she is not sure how reopening is going to go, but her restaurant is ready to go as tables are spread out to comply with the 6-foot requirement.

A benefit of reopening Squeeze-In is that some of Duncan’s employees hadn’t received their unemployment benefits yet and needed to get to work. She said she is glad to have them back to earn money.

Duncan hopes that cases of COVID-19 do not begin to spread and that people traveling to the county do not bring the illness with them.

“My biggest fear of opening this place is that it might spread, and that is why I almost did not open back up,” Duncan said. “We have been lucky, and we want to keep it that way.”

Events

Continued from Page A1

opportunities, in addition to graduation and end-of-year ceremonies, stripped away would be devastating.

“I am just trying to come up with ideas so that we are not shutting everything down,” Dobler said. “I am trying to work inside the guidelines.”

Meanwhile, both Monument and Prairie City have canceled their respective Fourth of July fireworks shows.

The city of Monument posted on its Facebook page: “It is with great regret and sadness that the city has come to this decision, but please know that it was in the best interest of everyone; our community members, our families, elders and businesses.”

Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher said Monday the city council voted to cancel the annual fireworks show at its May 13 meeting.

“I just don’t see how we can have it,” he said. “It’s very sad.”

Monument Mayor Sahara Hyder said the city was holding out on making a decision about the fireworks show, hoping there would be wiggle room under the state’s guidelines. But another obstacle the city faced was getting sponsors onboard.

Hyder said 2020 was supposed to be a big year for Monument. In addition to having to cancel the high school graduation ceremony, they usually hold high school reunions for every graduated class.

Hyder said there would



Eagle file photo

The Whiskey Gulch Gang fires off shots from their float during the 2017 ‘62 Days Parade in Canyon City. ‘62 Days Celebration organizer Colby Farrell said the group is working on a modified plan that would work within the governor’s restrictions on social gatherings of 25 or more people.



Dave Dobler

have been several classes celebrating and that they expected a big turnout.

Colby Farrell of the Whiskey Gulch Gang, which organizes the ‘62 Days Celebration in Canyon City, said the group

floated the idea of an alternate route for a parade this year, but he said the state’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the regulatory agency and the city could not take on the liability.

Farrell said, if the organizers were to try and take on the liability, the Whiskey Gulch Gang could face fines of up to \$70,000 and be stripped of its nonprofit designation.

Farrell said the group is going to try and come up with something at some point throughout the year, but it will not be a traditional ‘62 Days Celebration.

“Hopefully, we come up with something that will rep-

resent ‘62 Days,” he said. “Especially being the 99th (year), we were really looking forward to trying to get something big together for the hundredth next year.”

Farrell said the group’s demolition derby, scheduled to take place July 18 at the Grant County Fairgrounds, is in limbo, but the group is still holding out hope that they can pull it off at some point.

“The drivers put so much hard work into their cars, and for the people here in Grant County, it is one of the biggest turnouts of the year,” he said.

Farrell said, if restrictions ease earlier than expected,

the drivers could be ready for derby in two weeks.

Farrell said people must stay safe and healthy, but he said people need to recognize the cost to the collective mental health of the community if the county is shut down for the summer.

“If we can’t do the things we’ve always done, I mean, it’s gonna take a toll on people’s mental health,” he said. “People need to get out and be a community here. We’ve always been pretty close community.”

Events across Oregon have been canceled — from the Oregon State Fair to Cycle Oregon, which planned rides through Grant County in September, to the BMW Riders of Oregon’s Chief Joseph Rally, which was scheduled in June to take place at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

The loss of Grant County’s summer events will have an impact on its already hobbled economy that relies on tourism to get through the year.

According to a survey from Businesses Oregon, Travel Oregon and the Oregon Small Business Development Center, these businesses are barely holding on.

The survey revealed that 70% of businesses report they have either closed or laid off employees or will have to do so by July if economic conditions do not improve.

Uncertainty and a decline in sales are the most significant challenges facing businesses during the pandemic.

Overall, rural businesses have been hit the hardest: 45% closed temporarily while 3% shuttered for good.



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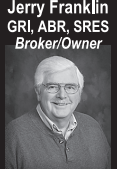
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Hello Grant County!

I hope all of you are well and looking forward to brighter days ahead!

These last few weeks have been difficult and trying for everyone. As usual, I am so proud of how our Grant Countians have persevered through it all!

I am proud of our health care workers and businesses that have been on the front lines working through this to provide for our needs. Thank you all!

With the Phase I opening, several businesses have been able to re-open. Please support them whenever you can!

If the Chamber can do anything for any of you, please let me know! Our businesses are so important to us! We are here for you.

Unfortunately, the following events have been canceled: The Seneca Oyster Feed, 62 Days, The Chief Joseph BMW Rally, Cycle Oregon’s Painted Hills Classic, and many more.

We are waiting to hear if other events will be canceled. Hang in there everyone, it saddens us to see this happen, but we will just enjoy them even more next year!

Take care and stay well!

Tammy Bremner
Manager, Grant County Chamber of Commerce



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Phase 1

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“We need to do what we can to make sure these businesses succeed,” Palmer said. “Because if not, it is unlikely they’ll come back.”

Palmer said, when it comes to a possible spike in cases, he is most concerned about the spread coming from outside of the county, but the county’s reopening plan has measures in place to address that concern.

According to the county’s reopening plan, although it does not border a state, there are still concerns with interstate travel, mainly from tourism and recreational activities.

Grant County will need to operate for three weeks under Phase 1 of Brown’s plan without a significant uptick in cases or hospital usage, while maintaining the ability to track new cases quickly, before it can move on to Phase 2.

Palmer said the governor’s office has yet to release specific details about the next phase, but he said the county is eager to get started on the plan.

“We want to start on Phase 2 today,” he said.

County Health Administra-

tor Kimberly Lindsay said the team at the Emergency Operations Center worked hard and submitted a well-written reopening plan to the governor’s office. She said the county can now look ahead and focus on moving forward thoughtfully.

“We are not immune to this,” she said. “Other rural areas across the country have been hard hit, and we need to move forward thoughtfully.”

A press release from Grant County said the approval was made possible by all the hard work and collaboration of the county commissioners, medical staff, Grant County Economic Development, Oregon RAIN and other community leaders.

“Approval for Phase 1 is a positive indicator of our collective efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Grant County,” said interim Emergency Management Coordinator Dave Dobler in the statement. “We need our community to continue being smart about maintaining physical distance, practicing good hygiene and wearing masks when distancing cannot be maintained so that we can keep our loved ones, neighbors and coworkers healthy.”





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