

### GRANT UNION STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



**Seventh grade**  
**Taylor Parsons**  
Parents: Tye and Stephanie Parsons



**Eighth grade**  
**Adeline Northway**  
Parents: Chris and Shanna Northway



**Ninth grade**  
**Abbie Justice**  
Parents: Ken and Julia Justice



**10th grade**  
**Max Bailey**  
Parents: Zachary and Heather Bailey



**11th grade**  
**Lauryn Pettyjohn**  
Parents: Ryan and Melissa Pettyjohn



**12th grade**  
**Peyton Neault**  
Parents: Cooper and Kimberly Neault

### Drop in COVID-19 infections will allow state to loosen restrictions

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

Falling COVID-19 infection rates will allow the state to lift some restrictions on businesses and activities over the next three weeks, the state's top health official said Monday.

Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen told the Senate Committee on Health Care that the infection rate in Oregon had dropped to 5.1% for the week of Jan. 17, the lowest rate since late October.

The rate has been steadily dropping since the first week of January and has reached a point where growth in the daily number of cases is expected to stay relatively flat or drop further.

The rates means the state can move more of the state's 36 counties lower on the four-tier risk level measures. The latest two-week ratings will be released in the next two days and will show some counties dropping a level, while no county's risk level is on the rise.

"It's the hard work of Oregonians," Allen told the panel.

Allen said Oregon has the fourth lowest infection rate and

the fifth lowest death rate of the 50 states.

Allen said, if the trend sustains for another two weeks, several more counties will move down the risk level scale, including some with larger populations.

Gov. Kate Brown is also expected to make an announcement this week to allow some gyms and other indoor recreation to operate again.

The lower rate of infection is good news as the state continues to struggle with obtaining enough of the new Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to ramp up inoculations. The two-shot vaccines are the key to ending the pandemic that has killed 420,000 people nationwide, including 1,882 Oregonians.

"Our real challenge right now is just flat out not having enough vaccine," Allen said.

The state has received more than 492,000 doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines that have been approved for use on adults. The vaccines require two shots space about a month apart.

Oregon is currently on pace to get more than 12,000 shots administered per day. Allen said OHA estimates 3.2 mil-

lion adults are eligible for vaccination, meaning that the state will need 6.4 million doses of vaccine to finish the job.

Allen said the state had enough centers for inoculation and qualified workers to give the shots. It just didn't have vaccine to put to work.

There is hope that new vaccines from Astra Zeneca, Johnson & Johnson and others will be approved and increase the flow of available doses across the country.

Allen said, with only the two approved vaccines and the current projected rate of supply coming to the state each week, some Oregonians will not be inoculated until the end of 2021 or beyond.

The state is currently working through the highest priority group: health care workers, plus residents and staff of nursing homes that have accounted for over half of the deaths in Oregon.

Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, a member of the committee, said he'd heard from constituents upset with Brown's decision to vaccinate about 150,000 educators and school workers next as a step to getting schools reopened this spring.

Those over 65 are the most likely to suffer severe illness or die from COVID-19, with fatality rates rising as people get into their 70s, 80s or 90s. After waiting nearly a year in fear and sometimes isolation, the word they will have to wait longer because of a desire to reopen schools is difficult to accept.

"They are very, very unhappy about it," Knopp said.

Allen said the federal guidelines calling for seniors living outside of nursing homes as the next priority are "advisory" with each state being able to make its own decisions.

"We had to ask, what are our priorities going to be?" Allen said.

Moving the schools group ahead of seniors meant the start date for inoculation of older Oregonians living independently was pushed back from Monday to Feb. 8. Even then, only those over 80 can apply at first. The eligibility age will drop five years each week, until those 65 and over are eligible March 1.

Oregon is the only state that has placed educators above seniors in priority for the vaccine.

### Parks and Rec board to meet Jan. 28

Blue Mountain Eagle

The John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation

District board of directors will meet at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28, at the park's office.

### Republican Central Committee to meet

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Republican Central Committee will conduct a quarterly meeting

on Thursday, Jan. 28, from 3-5 p.m. at the Grant County Regional Airport, 720 Airport Road, John Day. The public is welcome.

## OTEC scholarship deadline is Jan. 31

Blue Mountain Eagle

The deadline to apply for one of Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's academic scholarships is Sunday, Jan. 31.

Scholarships are available to high school students, returning college students and adults entering educational and technical programs.

Academic scholarships are in the amount of \$5,000. Four will be allocated to the OTEC-EOU Rural Scholarship Program, a partnership between OTEC and Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Incoming EOU freshman will have the opportunity to have their entire four

years of tuition and fees paid for, if they commit to attend and graduate from Eastern Oregon University.

The other academic scholarships are for graduating high school students, returning college students or adults looking to begin college.

OTEC is also awarding two \$5,000 Lineman College scholarships and four \$2,500 Trade School scholarships. Applications to the lineman and trade school scholarships are accepted year-round and will be awarded until funds are exhausted.

Applications and specific criteria for all the OTEC scholarships are available at otec.coop/scholarships.

## Nomination period open for 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon Teacher of the Year program returns to honor educators in the state.

The nomination period is currently open until Jan. 31, and anybody can nominate a Teacher of the Year for 2022 at oregonteacheroftheyear.org.

The Oregon Education Service Districts will select a winner from each region, and Regional Teachers of the Year will be honored across the state in May 2021.

One of the Regional Teachers of the Year will then be named the 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year in September 2021.

Regional Teachers of the Year will receive a cash prize of \$500 and will be celebrated across the state, according to Robert Waltenburg, the Grant County Education Service District superintendent.

The 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year will receive a \$5,000 cash prize with a matching \$5,000 going to their school.

They will also serve as a spokesperson and representative for all Oregon teachers.

Contact the Oregon Teacher of the Year program coordinator Jenni Knaus at jenni.knaus@state.or.us or 503-947-5860 for questions or more information.

## OTEC is seeking three candidates for board of directors seats

Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is seeking candidates for three board of directors seats in Union, Baker and Grant counties, according to a Monday press release.

The nominating committee recommends qualified candidates for the 2021 OTEC Board of Directors Elections

and said those interested in running for a board position should contact them by Jan. 31 for the May election.

Anyone interested can call the office at 541-524-2831 or visit otec.coop/annual-meeting-board-elections for nominating committee information, qualifications, applications and petition packets.

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*Thank you all, in the memory of our mom, Jessie Lewis.*

*Sincerely, The family of Jessie Lewis*

Your Rural Family Health Clinic

**Grant County HEALTH Department**  
528 E. Main, St. E. John Day

Monday - Thursday 7am - 6pm  
Friday 8am - 5pm

Appointments available

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TOLL FREE 888-443-9104 or 541-575-0429

Services Provided:

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### Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Tuesday .....	45/15
Wednesday .....	44/20
Thursday.....	40/31
Friday .....	36/28
Saturday .....	32/19
Sunday.....	37/18
Monday.....	34/25

24/7 FORECAST

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY

162.500 MHZ

### WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF JAN. 27 - FEB. 2

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Chance of snow	Chance of snow	Partly sunny	Slight chance of snow	Chance of rain and snow	Chance of rain and snow	Cloudy
<b>41</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>