

**“THEY SAID WHEN THE TRUCK COMES IT WOULD COME WITH MORE THAN JUST PEANUT BUTTER. IT WOULD COME WITH COMMODITIES THAT WOULD BE USEFUL ANYWHERE, BUT THE NEAT THING ABOUT THE PEANUT BUTTER IS THAT THEY SENT STRAWBERRY JAM WITH IT.”**

—George Sintay, Grant County resident



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Jim Spell, left, and Bill Skinner unload pears from the food delivered on March 4.

## Food

Continued from Page A1

“We got a great response, and I feel great to see the food here.”

Tom Sutton, a member of the food bank board of directors, said he was grateful for the donation from the church and the help from volunteers to unload the shipment.

Sutton said he was also grateful to Chester’s Thriftway owner Bob Cowan-Thompson for providing space at to store six to eight pallets worth of food that wouldn’t fit at the food bank.

The semi from Salt Lake City, Utah, had 37,889 pounds of food for the region, including peanut butter, packages of instant mashed potatoes and boxes of macaroni and cheese.

Audrey Smith, the manager of the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank, explained she was happy to see many of these items partly because they are ones often asked for but the Oregon Food Bank — which serves the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank — has not provided.

She noted it has been several months since the Oregon Food Bank sent canned fruit and boxes of macaroni and cheese. And she said this is the first time she recalls ever having anything close to this much jam available.

“I have never received pallets of jam before,” Smith said.

The amount of peanut but-



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Grant County resident George Sintay requested peanut butter and got 15,000 pounds of food on March 4.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom drove the truck that delivered food to food bank in John Day.

ter also is substantial, welcome news because the Oregon Food Bank has been cutting back providing the popular staple.

“There is a peanut butter shortage,” Smith said.

The church shipped the food from its Bishops Central Storehouse in Salt Lake City.

Volunteers and church-service missionaries staff the storehouses.

And the church produced much of the food. This included the many pallets of peanut butter, which came from a cannery the church owns and operates in Houston, Texas, said Chadwick.

## Vaccine

Continued from Page A1

new infections, Lindsay said in a press release that COVID-19 has “a lot of room to roam” in Grant County, and the community cannot afford to let their guard down.

“COVID is still a very real thing in Grant County,” Lindsay said in an email. “It’s easy to get comfortable when we have two weeks of no new cases. Not saying all of this to scare. Not at all. Not my style.”

She said only 11% of the county’s population had received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lindsay said the county is far from reaching herd immunity, a form of indirect protection from infectious diseases that can occur when a sufficient percentage of a population has become immune to infection.

“Those who did have COVID-19 previously are only given a pass from re-catching it for 90 days,” she said. “We are seeing people who have had it prior come down with it again.”

She said some might be susceptible to a “false sense of security.”



Eagle file photo

Kimberly Lindsay, Grant County public health administrator, speaks during a November session of county court.

### Neighboring counties

The county is not too far behind the rest of the U.S., which has vaccinated 15% of the population. Lindsay said 7% in Grant County have received the booster shot to complete their vaccinations.

Harney County, as of Friday, has vaccinated 16% of its 7,360 population — with 915 receiving a second dose and 271 still in progress.

Malheur County, with a population of over 32,000, is at over 3,800 but only 11.9% — with over 1,800 fully vaccinated and over 2,000 in progress.

Baker County is at 18%. Crook County is at 16%.

Lake County, similar to Grant County in terms of population, has vaccinated roughly 16% of its approximately 8,000 people, with roughly 800 people fully vaccinated and upwards of 500 awaiting a booster shot.

### Vaccine perspective

Lindsay said, while many people have yet to get the vaccine, it is premature to determine the county has a high vaccine refusal rate.

She said that could be the case, but until the county is at a point where there is vaccine sitting on the shelf, they will not know.

“Those that want the vaccine have taken every vaccine that we have available,” Lindsay said.

### VACCINE WAITLIST

Email name, date of birth, mailing address, phone number and any chronic health conditions to vaccine@ccsemail.org or call the Grant County Health Department at 541-575-0429 to be added to the waitlist for the COVID-19 vaccination.



Eagle file photo

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at the Grant County Health Department.

## Q&A

Continued from Page A1

the road, the same virus causes shingles. ... The same principle applies: The body forgets how to fight off chickenpox, and then shingles occur.

You do not want to get shingles if you can avoid them. And if you get vaccinated, there is a good chance you won’t get shingles.

### What are your thoughts on the Johnson & Johnson, the new, single-shot COVID-19 vaccine?

It is a good vaccine. It is not an mRNA vaccine (like the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines). It is transmitted through a viral vector, adenovirus virus, a virus that does not cause disease, but is genetically modified and exposes your body to parts of the coronavirus (not the virus itself) that will then recognize and kill coronavirus should you contract or be exposed to it.

The efficacy rate is lower than the Moderna and Pfizer, 94% and 95%, while Johnson & Johnson’s is about 70% — but, in terms of vaccines preventing death or hospitalizations, is equally as effective.

### How, if the efficacy rate is lower, would it be equally effective when it comes to preventing hospitalizations and deaths?

Even though you may contract COVID and you may contract COVID more often ... your chances of dying from COVID with either vaccine are almost none.

### Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter one’s DNA?

The mRNA doesn’t get into the cell’s nucleus ... which I think is one of the fears out there. It has the cells reproduce a protein outside of coronavirus.

When your body is exposed to coronavirus, it has this memory. Even though it’s never seen it before, it quickly recognizes it as foreign and can stop the spread of the virus, stop it from the devastating effects that it has on the lungs.

### Should pregnant women get the vaccine?

I think we’re hesitant to study any kind of medication or vaccine in pregnancy because we don’t know the outcomes yet, and this vaccine has not been studied in pregnant patients. To the extent that pregnant moms are worried about how this may affect their developing fetus, I don’t blame them.

### Have patients expressed concern or shown hesitancy about getting vaccinated?

I have had a positive response. The people I’ve talked to want the vaccine. There are exceptions out there, and some of that has more to do with the fact that the vaccine is relatively new. I think that scares some people. Other people don’t feel like it applies to them and that they’re not going to get sick. And they may not.

The truth is that this virus does not seem to have had a high impact on kids, or even middle-aged folks. We are not seeing those kinds of deaths. Primarily, it has been older folks that have died.

But I think, as a community, one of the things we can do is step up and say, “I’m not getting this vaccine for myself. I’m getting it to protect my grandparents in the community at large because I don’t want COVID to spread here.”

## Timber

Continued from Page A1

small woodland owners, who argued that HB 2379 would be financially devastating to their industry.

Critics said the bill would drive up expenses at a time they’re already contending with damage from wildfires and ice storms, as well as the steadily rising cost of logging.

The tax would be set at such a high rate that harvesting timber wouldn’t be economically viable, pressing landowners to convert their property to agricultural uses or residential development, according to critics.

**“THE LAST THING OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS NEED IS FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS ANY NEW TAXES ON AN INDUSTRY THAT CAN CONTINUE TO OPERATE AND PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED FAMILY WAGE JOBS WITH BENEFITS TO THEIR RESIDENTS DURING THESE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES.”**

—Association of Oregon Counties

“Rural Oregon cannot take any more punches to the gut. This tax only furthers the urban-rural divide that we are seeing ripping across our great state,” Ellie Hilger, a Tillamook County forestland owner.

“I thought the decades-old timber wars were coming to an end with last year’s memorandum of understanding between timber and environmentalists,” she said, refer-

ring to a deal to forestall ballot initiatives over logging rules. “The old battle lines are being redrawn, and once again, families like mine are in the crosshairs.”

Proponents of HB 2379 argue that severance taxes were once imposed on timber harvests in Oregon before getting replaced in the early 1990s, but they’re needed again to pay for firefighting

costs and local government services.

Supporters also claim that Oregon’s timber taxes bring in roughly one-third as much revenue as in Washington, even though that state harvests half as much timber.

Private timberland owners represent 77% of the acreage protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry but only pay 22% of the state’s

firefighting costs, said Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, the bill’s chief sponsor.

Holvey said he tried working with county governments on the severance tax but said they’re opposed to the proposal due to fears of “crossing” the timber industry, on which they’re economically dependent.

“It seems counterproductive to reject that outright,”

Holvey said of the tax dollars counties could receive.

As for “mom and pop” forestland owners, Holvey attributed their opposition to “talking points” from the Oregon Forest & Industries Council, a timber group, and the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, an industry-funded education organization.

“They rely on OFIC and OFRI for their messaging,” he said.

Long before the recent wildfire and ice storm damage, the timber industry has claimed it’s not appropriate to consider additional taxes on logs, Holvey said. “It will never be the right time for someone to be taxed, if you’re the one getting taxed.”

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