

Clatsop COVID cases near 100; no deaths or hospitalizations

The Columbia Press

Clatsop County's COVID-19 infections climbed to 95 on Wednesday, with a male north county resident in his 50s testing positive.

Ninety-one of the county's cases have recovered, with the latest case and three others recuperating at home.

There have been no hospitalizations or deaths in Clatsop County due to the virus.

Other new cases in the past week include a male between the ages of 10 and 19, a female in her 50s and a man in his 70s; all of them live in north county.

Statewide, there had been 25,571 coronavirus cases and 433 deaths as of Wednesday.

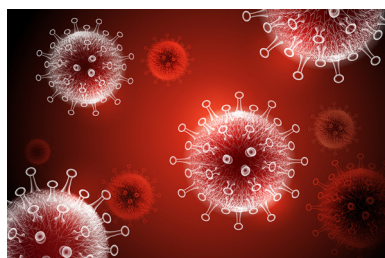
An outbreak of 22 cases was reported last week at Columbia Basin Onion in Hermiston. The case count includes all persons linked to the outbreak, such as household members.

NEW CASES DROPPING

Oregon Health Authority released its weekly report Wednesday, which showed a 13 percent drop in daily cases for the week ending Aug. 23.

OHA recorded 1,704 new cases — down from the previous week's tally of 1,963.

Slightly fewer Oregonians (24,177) were tested during the week. The total includes testing at all commercial labs,



hospital labs and the state laboratory.

The rate of positive tests also dropped to 5.1 percent from 5.4 percent.

The age group most affected by the virus remains those in their 20s, although the elderly are the hardest hit age group.

COVID-19 hospitalization and death rates increase with age; almost half of the 420 deaths have been among persons 80 or older, and 75 percent in persons 70 and older.

REVISED MASK GUIDANCE

Gov. Kate Brown and Oregon Health Authority revised their rules adding private work areas to the spaces where employees must wear face coverings or shields.

Employees in hallways, bathrooms, elevators, lobbies, break rooms, and other common spaces now must wear face coverings unless they're in an individual work space or in meeting rooms where 6 feet of distance from others can be maintained.

The revised guidance also provides an exception for face coverings, allowing them to be removed briefly when in situations where someone's identity needs to be confirmed for visual comparison, such as interactions in banks or with law enforcement.

VIRUS IN THE BLOOD

About 1 percent of Oregonians without COVID-19 had evidence of past infection of the virus in their blood, state epidemiologists have concluded.

The evidence of past infection is about 10 times higher than

the reported rate of infections obtained through conventional testing, according to the study, which appears in the Aug. 14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report."

The epidemiologists found that nine of 897 blood specimens collected from 19 health care facilities around Oregon between May 11 and June 15 contained antibodies against the virus.

The study also suggested that rates of infection increased with age, with no antibodies detected in the blood of those 17 and younger. The rate was

0.4-0.5 percent in those ages 18-64; and 1.6-2.1 percent in those 65 and older.

The results indicate a substantial proportion of Oregonians have had an undiagnosed and unreported COVID-19 infection.

The first case in Oregon was diagnosed Feb. 28.

Through May 31, 4,243 people, or about one of every 1,000 people, had tested positive.

Because the rate doesn't account for people who were infected but didn't seek testing — such as those with mild or no symptoms, or people unable to access testing — the rate is believed to be lower than the state's actual infection count.

Tide gates: Nature Conservancy sponsors survey

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more than 50 organizations and individuals. The partnership has compiled an inventory of tide gates and, earlier this year, announced it had developed engineering tools to help replace aging and inefficient gates, making them fish-friendly and more cost-effective.

CREST, based in Astoria, will evaluate the accuracy of the partnership's inventory.

The field studies will verify specific information on the number of tide gates, their locations, the waterways to which they connect and add or remove tide gates as appropriate to reflect what is truly on the water, according

to CREST.

CREST staff will use public roads, trails and waterways to collect tide gate data on Columbia River tributaries from Gearhart to Portland with an expected completion date of Oct. 31.

The Nature Conservancy will use the data to pinpoint opportunities for future collaborations with landowners. The results also will be used by CREST and other Columbia River groups in their planning, outreach and estuary restoration projects, CREST leaders said.

In Warrenton, removal of tide gates at the Eighth Street Dam by the Skipanon Water Control District led to a dis-

pute with city officials a few years ago. More recently, the city hired a consultant and asked for advice from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether it should replace the gates at Eighth Street.

The city learned state law precludes Warrenton from reinstalling the old gates, which were hinged at the top and made fish passage nearly impossible. A fish-friendly structure would likely cost \$1 million or more.

The Eighth Street Dam was built in the early 1960s. The water control agency first operated the gates in an open position in 2002, and kept them open permanently beginning in 2012. The gates were removed in 2015.

With dissolution of the water control district this year, Warrenton will become owner of the Eighth Street Dam structure.

Warrenton has other tide gates that are aging and need repair or replacement.

In addition to improving natural resources, CREST specializes in environmental planning, ecological monitoring and habitat restoration for fish and wildlife.

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