

County's COVID risk level reduced; another death recorded

The Columbia Press

Clatsop County drops today from "Extreme Risk" to "High Risk" for COVID-19, thereby lessening some of the business and social restrictions.

Bars, restaurants, gyms and theaters can reopen, although they'll still have to follow various safety protocols.

The designation runs through Feb. 25, at which point the state will review and could change the county's risk category.

The move was announced Tuesday by the Gov. Kate Brown as a result of the county's new case rate dropping below 200 per 100,000 population for the two-week period between Jan. 24 and Feb. 6.

The state introduced the risk level metric in November to impose business and social restrictions based on each county's infection rates. Risk level categories are low, moderate, high and extreme, and the state re-evaluates each county's status every two weeks.

Under the high-risk category,

eateries can offer indoor dining, but at no more than 25 percent capacity. The same restriction is placed on indoor recreation and fitness establishments and indoor entertainment venues. Indoor visits also are allowed at long-term care facilities.

THE CASE COUNT

A sixth county resident has died of the coronavirus, the Clatsop County Public Health Department reported Monday.

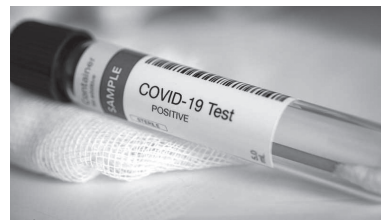
The 49-year-old man died at a Portland hospital.

Clatsop County reported 12 cases in the past seven days ending Wednesday, giving the county a total of 763 cases since March with 18 people hospitalized.

The rest have either recovered or are recuperating at home.

As of Wednesday, 3,121 people had received one or both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been distributed in the county.

Statewide, there had been 2,044 deaths and a total of



148,475 cases.

Statewide, 604,212 people had been inoculated as of Tuesday.

DOSES FOR OCTOGENARIANS

The state shipped 200 vaccine doses to Clatsop County this week earmarked for distribution to residents 80 and older.

Another 200 doses for remaining members of Phase 1a groups and 100 doses for teachers also were expected.

Under the State of Oregon's vaccine roll-out plan, individuals age 80 and older were eligible for vaccination beginning Feb. 8.

Eligible local seniors who have filled out the county's vaccine planning survey will be contacted and given instructions on how to register for a vaccination clinic. These clinics are open only to those with appointments.

To enable the county to contact you about upcoming vaccination events, sign up through the survey, which can be found on the county's website, co.clatsop.or.us. You will be asked to

enter your name, age, contact information and whether you are part of a first-priority vaccination group.

As has occurred through the nation, the supply of vaccine in Clatsop County hasn't kept up with demand.

While the Oregon Health Authority has opened the statewide vaccination effort to seniors, the local vaccination program has yet to inoculate all people in the 1a and 1b groups (health care workers, first responders, educators and child-care providers).

Three dozen vaccination events have been held in the county. Please see the column on Page 7 by vaccine task force leader Chris Laman. Once vaccine shipments from the state are confirmed, those doses are earmarked for upcoming clinics in Astoria or Seaside. Almost all doses are "in arms" within one week of their delivery to the county, he said.

"We have not ended a week with any first doses still sitting in the refrigerator," Laman said.

INMATES AND COVID

U.S. Magistrate Judge Stacie Beckerman recently ordered Oregon to begin immediately vaccinating adults in custody.

"The court's decision is clear,

and the state has decided not to appeal," according to a statement released by the Governor's Office last week.

The ruling adds prisoners to the phase 1a group in the vaccine rollout, giving them the same priority access as those living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. Previously, only correctional employees were included, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

More than 3,486 Oregon inmates have contracted COVID-19 and 42 have died.

ANOTHER GRIM MILESTONE

The state reached another sad milestone late last week in marking the 2,000th death from COVID-19.

The 2,000th death was a 90-year-old woman in Yamhill County who tested positive on Feb. 1 and died on Feb. 2 at her residence.

"At this stage of the pandemic, many of us have seen family, friends or neighbors die from COVID-19, or we know people who have lost loved ones," OHA Director Patrick Allen said. "Many of us at OHA grieve the loss of our own family or friends. Every loss weighs on us. I want to extend my deepest sympathies to every family who's mourned a parent, sibling or child who died from a COVID-19 infection."

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF CLATSOP

In the Matter of the Estate of PAUL FERDINAND FLUES SR., Deceased
Case No.: 21PB00840

NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Paul Flues Jr. has been appointed Personal Representative. All persons having claims against the Estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the Personal Representative c/o Ashley Flukinger, Attorney at Law, LLC, 3645 Highway 101 N., Gearhart, Oregon 97138, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the lawyer for the Personal Representative, Ashley Flukinger.

Dated and first published on Feb. 5, 2021.

Ashley Flukinger, OSB No. 120864

Attorney for Personal Representative

Ashley Flukinger, Attorney at Law, LLC

3645 Highway 101 N.

Gearhart, Oregon 97138

Lunch Buddy: Program will cease operations

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the name Lunch Buddy Mentoring Program was adopted.

The backpack program ceased a few years ago when other groups began providing backpacks full of school supplies to students.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the group to pause its activities, gave board members the opportunity to turn inward, board Chair Jill Quackenbush said.

The group began strengthening policies and procedures, developing a more stable funding source, recruiting

new board members and outlining a way forward that would fit the program's mission and meet the demands of operating a nonprofit volunteer group.

The board worked with local districts to identify a virtual mentoring platform for students and mentors to roll out in the spring.

"However, after careful consideration the board members determined that this was prolonging the inevitable and they made the decision to work toward dissolution," the group wrote in a press release announcing the decision.

"The board would like to express its deepest gratitude to all of whom LBMP has been lucky enough to work with throughout the years. This program could not have operated for as long as it did without the hard work of many community volunteers, donors, and stakeholders."

Natalie Dyroff, a school counselor and Lunch Buddy board member, expressed sadness at the decision.

"I know it works," she said. "I've seen the positive outcomes it has for our students."

Free Obituaries

The Columbia Press publishes free obituaries of community members who pass away.

These free obituaries are 7 to 12 inches long and include a photo. We'll do the writing for you.

Those who want to write their own obituaries to honor a loved one may do so. These are \$7.50 per column inch and can include a photo.

Please call us at 503-861-3331 or send an email to office@thecolumbiapress.com.