

Eateries

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to help his employees financially in a more direct way.

Losing four weeks of business will be a blow, amplified by the hit Myers is also taking as the ban on large gatherings has halted events at the Maxwell Siding Event Center and Maxwell Pavilion. But Myers said he is in a financial position to weather the storm, and is focused on being a strong leader for others. He is more concerned about other restaurants in town that don't have the cash to sit closed for a month, and for his employees.

"Our success is because of our employees, and we're not going to hang them out," he said.

On Monday night, customers at Midway Bar & Grill showed up for one last hurrah.

"It had been slow, but it's pretty busy tonight," owner Stuart Rice said. "Everyone's coming in to have one last social time with their friends."

Rice, who also owns Last Chance Tavern, said Last Chance will close completely while Midway will offer take-out.

While the governor's orders are a financial blow, Rice said he wanted to do what was right to help customers and employees stay safe and healthy.

"Everyone in the hospitality industry around here does their best to do what's right," he said.

The continuous announcements about new preventative measures for COVID-19 have been a whirlwind for businesses. Hermiston Chamber of Commerce CEO Kimberly Nevil said the chamber has been focused on helping all businesses in town get the accurate, up-to-date information "quickly and seamlessly" to help them navigate the crisis.

The chamber is sending out regular emails and posting information to its Facebook page regularly, and Nevil said she has been fielding phone calls from local business owners who have questions about what new rules mean for them.

"It has been challenging, but it's also been neat to see the way the community has pulled together," she said.

Updated guidance and specific financial tools for businesses can be found at www.oregon4biz.com/Coronavirus-Information. Business owners can also contact their nearest Small Business Development Center, the Greater Eastern Oregon

Development Corporation or Umatilla County Economic Development Director Gail Nelson to discuss what grants, loans and other aid is available.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said in an email that Hermiston is better positioned than it was in 2007 to weather the effects of the short-term and long-term impacts of the virus. The 16 industry sectors most closely tied to tourism, including restaurants and hotels, make up 7.8% of Hermiston jobs, Morgan said, compared to 11.6% countywide and 11.5% statewide.

Umatilla County announced Monday that there are currently no known active cases of COVID-19 in Umatilla County, after the county's two known cases have both recovered.

In a news release, the county commission stated that there is a "delicate balance" to be found in protecting the health of everyone in the county while also trying to avoid economic damage to its most fragile citizens.

"Umatilla County, which is still emerging from a flood disaster, is well aware of those who need food, shelter, and other support do not enjoy the luxury of long waiting periods while programs are put into place. Their needs are immediate," the release stated.

"Umatilla County's commissioners and community leaders are urging all those involved with providing relief for the situations created in this emergency to act in all haste to provide the relief needed by all those affected by Covid-19."

According to state labor data, businesses employ about 155,000 food service workers in Oregon.

The latest development came as Brown continues to ramp up restrictions intended to keep people out of crowds and away from each other if they're sick.

She urged any business that isn't able to change its services to take-out or delivery methods to evaluate whether they should remain open.

"Each action has a ripple effect across our state, both on a personal level and an economic one," Brown said. "Working together, we can overcome these hurdles in an Oregon way."

On Sunday, Brown told reporters she was considering imposing a curfew or even closing the state's restaurants and bars but on Monday morning, she said she decided against such actions.

Four hours after that, she announced the ban on inside dining.

Sam Stites from the Oregon Capital Bureau contributed to this report.

Closed

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to continue to grow as word spread.

"The good news is we're getting some of our kiddos fed," she said.

On Friday, as Brown held a news conference to discuss her change of mind late Thursday night, she said the Centers for Disease Control has determined that a short closure like the two weeks currently planned has not been shown to slow the spread of disease. Instead, she said, she made the decision because she had heard from some of the state's larger districts that they were having trouble keeping their schools staffed enough to keep them "functionally operational."

Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said Friday that she had had an inkling that a school closure might be coming, but she wasn't expecting it to come right after she got home from a school board meeting to discuss plans for COVID-19 on Thursday night.

The district, which has a high number of economically disadvantaged families, is not only offering free meals for students during the closure, but also meals for adult for \$1 for breakfast and \$2 for lunch or dinner.

"We know a lot of families will be paying for day care they weren't expecting and may have additional financial strain, especially if they are missing hours of work," she said.

Echo School District Superintendent Raymon Smith said the district is complying with the governor's mandate, "whether we agree with it or not."

The district had an emergency meeting on Thursday night to discuss contingency plans for possible closures, and after the governor's announcement later that night, Smith said the school board will have further discussions during Monday's regularly scheduled board meeting. However, he said the situation is so fluid right now that they will probably hold off on making a final decision on what the rest of the school calendar will look like.

"We will plan and put things on paper as far as options,

SCHOOL MEAL LOCATIONS

Hermiston

To-go meals will be served from 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Sunset Elementary School, West Park Elementary School and Hermiston High School. They will also provide meals at 11 a.m. at Sunset Park and 11:30 a.m. at Victory Square Park. Mid-Columbia Bus Company buses will also be delivering meals on the following schedule:

Bus #1

7:20 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Dirt lot on Punkin Center; 7:25 a.m. and 10:55 a.m. Sagebrush and Joy Lane; 7:35 a.m. and 11:05 a.m. Balboa Lane; 7:45 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Punkin Center Trailer Park; 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Stop Joy Lane and Kik Road; 8:10 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. Punkin Center and Overlook Drive; 8:20 a.m. and 11:50 a.m. Vista Park; 8:25 a.m. and 11:55 a.m. Country Squire; 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Sandstone Middle School; 8:35 a.m. and 12:05 p.m. Aspen Apartments; 8:45 a.m. and 12:10 p.m. Dogwood Apartments

Bus #2

7:20 a.m. and 10:40 a.m. Viewcrest and Hacienda West Apartments; 7:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. Northeast 12th Street and West Madrona Avenue; 7:35 a.m. and 10:55 a.m. 12th Street and Ridgeway Avenue; 7:40 a.m. and 11:05 a.m. Northwest 12th Street and Hartley Avenue; 7:45 a.m. and 11:10 a.m. Applewood Apartments; 8:00 a.m. and 11:20 a.m. Chateaubri; 8:10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Buttercreek; 8:20 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. Sunland Apartments; 8:30 a.m. and 11:50 a.m. Highland Manor Apartments; 8:40 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Armand Larive Middle School

Umatilla

Meals for children ages 0-18 are available for free, and adults can get breakfast for \$1 and lunch and dinner for \$2. Senior citizens can also call and request a meal delivered for \$5.

Meal locations are:

McNary Heights Elementary: Breakfast 8-9 a.m., lunch 11 a.m. to noon, dinner 5-6 p.m.; Umatilla High School: Breakfast 8:30-9:30 a.m. and lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Kivanis Park: Lunch 12:30-1:30 p.m.; Marina Park: Lunch 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Triangle Park: Lunch 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Stanfield

Meals are available for students to pick up from 11 a.m. to noon at Bard Park on March 16-19 and March 30-31.

Echo

Meals are available for students to pick up from Echo School from 8-9 a.m. and 11 a.m. to noon.

Morrow County

Meals served by the school district for students during the closure are:

Sam Boardman Elementary School, 9 a.m. to noon; Meal drop off at Wilson trailer park 9-9:15 a.m.; Drop off at Boardman Library 9:20-9:35 a.m.; Drop off at Riverside Jr/Sr High School 9:40-10 a.m.; A.C. Houghton Elementary School 9 a.m. to noon; Drop off at Irrigon Library, 9-9:15 a.m.; Irrigon Elementary School, 9:20-9:15 a.m.; Heppner High School 9 a.m. to noon; Drop off at City Park 9:20-9:35 a.m.; Drop off at Heppner Elementary School 9:40-10:00 a.m.

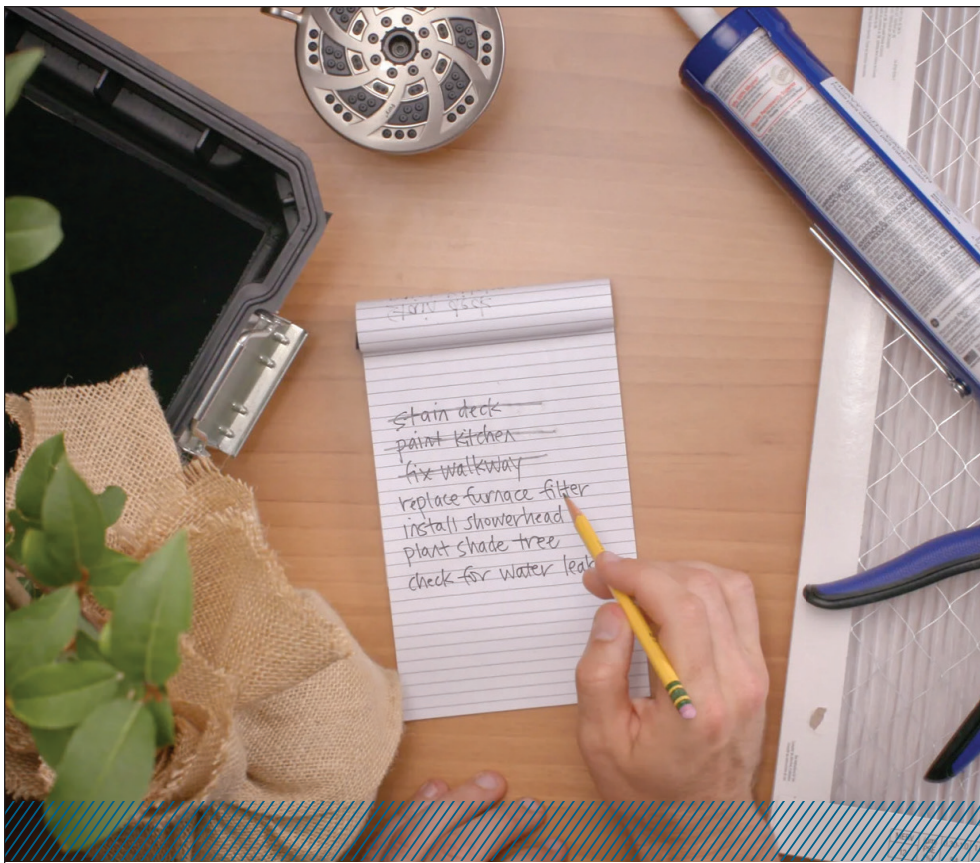
depending on where things go, but I don't think it's the time to make a permanent plan," he said.

Smith said there are still questions about how the closure will affect things like state testing, but "the least of my concerns right now is state testing."

"The physical and mental health of our students is more of a concern to us," he said. "We can figure out the learning piece later."

As school administrators grapple with questions about what will happen if school buildings don't end up reopening this spring, they are reminding the state that distance learning doesn't work well in communities where many students don't have reliable access to internet.

"It's not just getting students devices, you also have to address internet equity," Morrow County School District superintendent Dirk Dirksen said.



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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Eastern Oregon students leading school district's effort to cut energy use



Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe accepts a check from Energy Trust of Oregon

Students in eastern Oregon are learning energy management skills through a hands-on program that prepares them for jobs in the future economy and helps their school district save thousands of dollars per year.

In the Umatilla School District, students take an active role in making their schools more energy efficient. The students are part of the district's energy team, which works with Energy Trust of Oregon, a nonprofit created to make sure Oregonians have access to clean, affordable energy and renewable power.

Through an effort called Strategic Energy Management, Energy Trust provides energy coaches who work with Umatilla students and staff to find no-cost or low-cost ways to cut energy usage. Eastern Oregon customers of Pacific Power, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista can access these energy coaches and the Strategic Energy Management effort.

The students are working on other major efficiency improve-

ments as well. With an approved \$10 million bond measure, plus \$70,000 in incentives from Energy Trust, the Umatilla School District recently completed renovations and energy upgrades at each of its three schools.

These upgrades are now saving the school district an estimated \$30,000 per year in energy costs. And because students are leading the energy efficiency work, the superintendent says they get to weigh in on where the dollars go.

"If funds can be freed up from energy expenditures and invested in learning, that's a huge gain for students."

— Heidi Sipe, Umatilla School District Superintendent.

"We're always looking for ways to increase opportunities for learning," said Heidi Sipe, the district superintendent. "Energy efficiency dovetails with this objective and if funds can be freed up from energy expenditures and invested in learning, that's a huge gain for students."

Students and teachers are realizing that these improvements reach beyond savings. For example, the new heating and cooling systems and new LED lighting create a more comfortable learning environment.

To see more ways energy efficiency and renewable energy are creating better futures and communities across Oregon, visit energytrust.org/this-is-oregon.