



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Dave Meade, the owner of Columbia Harvest Foods in Umatilla, updates a sign limiting shoppers to two packages of each variety of meat available at the store. Shoppers are limited to no more than two packages per family of beef, pork, and chicken.

UPDATES

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY

Oregon's primary election is next week on Tuesday, May 19. If you are a registered voter, you should have received a ballot by now.

Ballots can be mailed without a stamp, but must be received, not just post-marked, by 8 p.m. on May 19 to be counted. You can also drop off ballots until that deadline at secure drop boxes at:

- **Hermiston City Hall**, 180 NE Second St. in Hermiston
- **Umatilla City Hall**, 700 Sixth St. in Umatilla
- **Stanfield City Hall**, 160 S Main St. in Stanfield
- **Echo City Hall**, 20 Bonanza St. in Echo
- **Morrow County Boardman annex**, 101 NW Boardman Ave. in Boardman
- **Morrow County Irrigon annex**, 205 NE 3rd St. in Irrigon

If you believe you should have received a ballot but did not, you can check on your voter registration status and the status of your ballot by visiting www.oregonvotes.gov and clicking on "My Vote," or calling 1-866-673-8683. It is not too late to request a new ballot if yours was lost.

It is too late to register to vote in this election, but if you register now through the website above you can be eligible to vote in the general election in November. You can also use the "My Vote" feature to change your party affiliation or update your address or other information at any time.

Election results will be posted online Tuesday evening on the Hermiston Herald's website at www.hermistonherald.com.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

COVID-19 outbreaks at meat packing plants disrupt supply

By ANNIE FOWLER
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

What's for dinner? "It depends on what's available at the local market" is going to be the answer for a while.

Consumers of beef, chicken and pork are being limited to how much they can buy during their trip to the grocery store, as processing plants have been shut down or have limited staff because of COVID-19 safety measures.

"This time of year, the 14 major (beef) processing plants would do about 640,000 animals a week," said Pat Mallon, owner of Pat-N-Tam's Beef in Stanfield. "Last week, it was 420,000. There's a lot of cattle, but beef processing is down a third."

That has people reaching out to privately owned businesses, such as Mallon's.

Mallon, who sells to local establishments like the Broken Barrel in Stanfield, and Prodigal Son Brewery and Pub in Pendleton, also does a brisk



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
A sign limiting shoppers to two packages per family on freshly packaged pork, beef and chicken hangs in the deli aisle at Columbia Harvest Foods in Umatilla on Monday afternoon.

business selling to individuals. And, they will deliver your order.

Mallon raises his own beef, and has it processed through smaller U.S. Department of Agriculture-inspected plants. With the COVID-19 issues, plants are running at less than 100%, and it's taking longer than normal to fill orders.

"They are totally booked," Mallon said. "Right now, we are out of specific cuts. We are selling more sides of beef, and we have a burger and roast program, which has 60 to 80 pounds of meat. We are figuring out ways to address our

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Business owners call for lifting all COVID-19 restrictions in Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

As the first phase of reopening businesses in Oregon approaches on May 15, some Hermiston business owners want to see the government go much farther.

They have coalesced around a Facebook page called "Reopen Hermiston & Eastern Oregon." There, Hermiston-area residents share YouTube videos that support putting an end to social distancing — some of which have since been removed from social media platforms that say they spread false information — and news stories

about business owners in other parts of the country that have defied shutdown orders.

The group had more than 900 members as of Monday. Members have been talking about holding an in-person rally in Hermiston in defiance of restrictions on large gatherings, and Colin Hodges, who runs the page, said the date they are currently looking at is May 30.

"Where our heads are really at with this thing, is we'd like to see congregations come back, gatherings come back," Hodges said. "Things like charity dinners, lifestyle events, the fair and rodeo." Umatilla County has

submitted a reopening plan to Gov. Kate Brown, which county commissioners have agreed won't happen without state approval. That plan calls for allowing businesses, such as hair salons, to reopen with social distancing requirements in place on May 15. A second phase would open up schools and allow gatherings of up to 50 people, while the third phase would allow gatherings of up to 250 people.

Brown has stated that counties will only be able to move on to the next phase once they have shown a steady decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations and emergency room visits for



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
The Pheasant Bar and Grill is among a group of Hermiston businesses and residents pushing to reopen the town.

respiratory illnesses over 14 days. She said the ban on mass gatherings, such as fairs and sporting events, will stay in place until at least September.

The idea behind a slow

rollback of restrictions is to keep cases from rising to the point that hospital resources are overwhelmed and there are not enough ventilators or ICU beds to treat everyone who needs

them, as has happened in some parts of the country. Fatality rates of the virus have been higher in those circumstances.

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