

### UPDATES

## Tax relief available for local businesses hit by COVID-19

HERMISTON HERALD

The Oregon Department of Revenue is reminding businesses that have been demonstrably affected by COVID-19 that relief is available for the Corporate Activity Tax.

The deadline to make estimated payments for the second quarter is July 31.

According to the department, it will honor “a business taxpayer’s good-faith efforts to comply with the CAT and not assess penalties if they document their efforts to comply, including how COVID-19 has impacted their business.”

The news release stated that the businesses should make a good faith effort to pay but will not be penalized if they fall short because they don’t have the financial ability to make the estimated payment.

They should be able to provide documentation of their inability to pay or estimate payment, and registration for the Corporate Activity Tax is still required within 30 days of reaching \$750,000 in Oregon commercial activity in a calendar year.

The Corporate Activity Tax was instituted by the Oregon Legislature in 2019 to help fund education through the Student Success Act. It taxes business activity in excess of \$1 million per year within Oregon for all business types.

For more information visit [oregon.gov/dor/programs/businesses/Pages/corporate-activity-tax.aspx](http://oregon.gov/dor/programs/businesses/Pages/corporate-activity-tax.aspx), email [cat.help.dor@oregon.gov](mailto:cat.help.dor@oregon.gov) or call 503-945-8005.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Masked shoppers leave Walmart in Hermiston on Monday, July 6, 2020. The state of Oregon put in place a mandate last week requiring people in indoor public spaces to wear a mask.

# Time to mask up

## Hermiston businesses encounter a mix of compliance, resistance

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

**W**hile masks have been encouraged by public health experts at organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they are now mandatory in Oregon.

Local business owners say some people have given them trouble over their request to mask up, but most customers have been understanding.

When announcing her requirement that Oregonians mask up while in indoor public spaces, such as grocery stores, laundromats and workplaces, Gov. Kate Brown said enforcement would be through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Oregon Liquor Control Commission, with penalties for businesses that don’t comply.

“For businesses that refuse to comply, OSHA and OLCC staff are empowered to take administrative action, including issuing citations, fines, and Red Warning Notices if necessary,” she stated.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A sign advising of the mask requirement adorns the front door at Neighborhood Books and Gifts in downtown Hermiston.

*“I HIGHLY BELIEVE IF THERE IS A WAY WE CAN GET MORE MASKS TO MORE PEOPLE AT A VERY LOW COST IT COULD POSSIBLY INCREASE USAGE.”*

— Krystal Dunagan, store manager of Rue 21 in Hermiston

A Red Warning Notice can cause a business to be closed until the “hazardous condition” identified by OSHA — in this case, a lack of masks helping protect

employees and customers from COVID-19 — is resolved.

Jessica Narain, manager of the Hermiston Denny’s and the Best Western hotel next door,

said someone from the OLCC did visit Denny’s on July 3 to check if the restaurant was in compliance. She said the inspector sat at a table and observed for a while, and was “satisfied with our new procedures at work.”

She said so far they have only had a small handful of issues with guests who didn’t want to wear a mask when asked to do so. She said those who say they have a medical condition that makes it too difficult to wear a mask are asked to briefly hold a napkin over their mouth as they pass by others’ tables on the way to their own.

“People understand and they get it,” she said.

Krystal Dunagan, store manager of Rue 21 in Hermiston, said in response to a Facebook post by the *Hermiston Herald* about the mask requirement that a few people didn’t want to wear a mask out of principle, but she was also seeing some customers say they simply didn’t own a mask. She said she gave out the ones she had on hand and had requested more.

“I highly believe if there is

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A concrete mixer pours a foundation at a housing development along Powerline Road in Umatilla on Monday, July 6, 2020.

# Umatilla housing boom continues

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

In 2019 Umatilla City Manager David Stockdale predicted the city would see about 100 new homes a year for the next five years, and so far that prediction is on track.

“Similar to a year ago, we continue to see not only those numbers, but even more than that,” he said.

Hayden River Estates, Cheryl’s Place and Vandelay Meadows — subdivisions by Columbia Basin Development each containing 26 homes — are in various

phases of construction currently on the south side of Umatilla. Lots are also being sold for new home construction at Riverwood Estates in McNary.

Stockdale said the city is working with a developer on a master plan for a larger subdivision, and with another developer on a plan for more than 100 new condos that would run between \$98,000 and \$145,000.

“We’re talking to several other interested home builders right now, and I know those home builders

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