

# Good Shepherd pilots drive-thru testing

Hospital staff hope to offer more testing opportunities in future

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

Good Shepherd Health Care System tried out its first drive-thru testing event on Monday, July 13, and hopes to provide more such opportunities in the future.

The event offered 160 slots for anyone interested,

regardless of whether they were showing symptoms or had been exposed to a known COVID-19 case. Spokesperson Caitlin Cozad said people pre-registered for all of the slots, and Good Shepherd was able to get everyone who registered swabbed, with the exception of a few no-shows.

“Many of the individuals are needing to test in order to be able to return to work safely and some simply wanted to confirm their

suspicion of symptoms and/or recent exposure,” she wrote in an email. “Our staff have worked tirelessly to be able to bring this COVID-19 testing event to our community safely and efficiently, and we hope to offer more drive-thru testing opportunities in the near future as resources and capacity allow.”

She said Lab Corp, which Good Shepherd contracts with to process the tests, takes anywhere from

two to 10 days to return results.

People who participated and need a copy of their test results or their test results sent to their employer can request that by visiting [gshealth.org/request-medical-records](https://gshealth.org/request-medical-records) or by calling Good Shepherd’s Medical Records Department at 541-667-0621.

The preferred way for someone to request testing for COVID-19 is to call their primary care provider, but some organiza-

tions are starting to offer drive-thru options.

Benton-Franklin Health District has been offering COVID-19 testing on a first-come, first-served basis at the Toyota Center in Kennewick and the HAPO Center in Pasco, Washington.

Those testing sites are open Tuesday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

No referral by a doctor is necessary, and testing is free, but patients should

bring their medical insurance information if they have insurance.

The Oregon Health Authority is hosting a live question and answer session about COVID-19 testing and data on Wednesday, July 15, at 12:30 p.m. on its Facebook page.

Frequently asked questions and other testing information also are available on the health authority’s website at [govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19](https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19).

## IN THE WORKS



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

A new sign advertises the doughnut shop coming to Umatilla.

## New businesses coming soon to Umatilla

When I spoke with Salud Campos of the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce recently, she told me the chamber is planning several grand openings for new businesses in the Umatilla area.

“Things are changing in Umatilla, and I’m excited to see it,” she said.

One of the new businesses is actually an old business reborn, which the *Hermiston Herald* reported on recently. The former Riverside Sports Bar is having a grand reopening as The Bridge on Saturday, July 25. The business is changing from a sports bar with adult entertainment to a more family-friendly bistro.

Umatilla residents can also look forward to a new doughnut shop in town. Campos said Raelynn Gallegos, owner of Rae’s Dayz Diner in Umatilla, is planning on opening the doughnut shop in the original Rae’s Dayz building at 1290 Sixth St. in Umatilla. After its opening at that location in 2017, the diner has since moved next door to 1226 Sixth St.

Campos said the date for a grand opening for the doughnut shop hasn’t been set in stone yet, but look for a story on the new business in the *Hermiston Herald* once that date is set.

Campos said the chamber of commerce is also working with Evangeline, a new gift shop, to set up a grand opening celebration.

The gift shop is one of three new businesses in the building at 1201 Sixth St.

in Umatilla. The building, which previously housed the Hunny Bunz strip club, was purchased by Kyle and Heidi Sipe in 2019 and turned into a space to lease for small local businesses. The other two spaces in the building now host the barbecue restaurant Lite ‘Em Up BBQ and the brand new Fruteria Piqui frozen dessert stand.

The businesses, like others in downtown Umatilla, are currently facing construction in front of their building as the Oregon Department of Transportation completes an overhaul of Sixth Street, but they are still open.

**Editor’s Note:** *In the Works* is a regular column discussing new economic development projects coming to west Umatilla County and north Morrow County. To submit tips, email [editor@hermistonherald.com](mailto:editor@hermistonherald.com), call 541-564-4536 or send a letter to 333 E. Main St. in Hermiston.



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## Some restaurants switching back to takeout

By NADA SEWIDAN  
STAFF WRITER

Some restaurants in Hermiston, Umatilla and Pendleton have voluntarily halted dine-in options in response to the surge of COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County.

Restaurants, such as Lawan’s Thai Garden in Hermiston, Rae’s Dayz Diner in Umatilla, and Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery in Pendleton, have closed down or switched back to takeout only.

Lawan’s Thai Garden announced on June 29 via their Facebook page that they plan to reopen their dining room with limited seating. However, on July 3 they announced they would be scaling back to takeout only.

“Due to the growing COVID-19 cases, we will continue doing to go order only,” the post stated.

Some Hermiston restaurants have let customers know via Facebook that they were temporarily shutting down out of an abundance of caution after being notified employees had been exposed to the virus. Ixtapa posted on June 23 that they were closing down to clean and to test employees after being notified their staff had been exposed to someone who had tested positive for COVID-19. They reopened on July 5.

“Due to the recent COVID-19 outbreaks in the Umatilla County, we took a break to try and ensure the health of our customers and employees,” they wrote. “Our team here at Ixtapa strongly urge you all to stay at home if you are not feeling well, caring for the safety of yourself and others.”

Restaurants in other parts of the country have also begun to voluntarily close their doors or switch back to takeout only.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Rae’s Dayz Diner in Umatilla was one of several Umatilla County restaurants that briefly closed out of caution after finding out that an employee had possibly been exposed to COVID-19.

In some cases, it’s a result of staff members testing positive for COVID-19, according to the online publication Restaurant Hospitality. In other cases, the closures are temporary while they test employees, sanitize facilities and increase health and safety protocols. Some restaurant owners are limiting foot traffic in hopes of preventing any staff member from contracting the virus.

This is the case with Rae’s Dayz Diner in Umatilla. The restaurant had closed down because an employee’s family member had tested positive for COVID-19, according to owner Raelynn Gallegos.

Gallegos said that she decided to shut down her business to sanitize and test all of her employees, but said she later found out that there had been a mistake, and the person notified that they had tested positive had not tested positive after all.

“We took a few days to sanitize and make sure it was safe for us and safe for the public,” she said. “We take this very seriously and care about our community and we would not want to take a chance in any shape or form to hurt anybody.”

Rae’s Dayz Diner will reopen Friday, July 17.

Kelli Bullington, a representative at Oregon Grain Growers, said the company decided to close their dine-in service on July 3 following increasing COVID-19 cases in Umatilla County.

“We decided with the uptick of COVID-19 cases in our county and number of travelers we were seeing for the holiday weekend that it was in the best interest of our staff and our cus-

tomers to reduce risk and roll back to curbside and takeout only,” she said.

Bullington said the company feels it is best to roll back to curbside and takeout only instead of remaining open for dine-in services and risking a staff member contracting COVID-19.

“From a financial standpoint, being open for curbside and takeout is a better solution than having to shut down the restaurant completely,” she said. “This was a group decision at the Distillery to put the health of our staff, customers, and community first.”

Oregon Grain Growers does not currently have a dine-in reopening date planned.

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