

UPDATES

Feds release \$30 billion in funding for small business

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The Small Business Administration announced on July 28 that nearly \$30 billion in new Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan funds have been approved to help small businesses in the Pacific Northwest.

According to the news release, the SBA approved \$1.6 billion in the Pacific Northwest and \$28 billion nationwide for all of 2019. So far this year, Oregon has received nearly \$9 billion, spread out over 152,809 loans.

The last day the SBA can accept new PPP applications is Friday, Aug. 8.

However, SBA Pacific Northwest Regional Administrator Jeremy Field advises local businesses and eligible organizations to start the PPP application process this week to make sure they have enough time to connect with a lender, complete the paperwork and give the lender time to submit the application by that date.

Paycheck Protection Program loans can be forgiven if borrowers follow the rules of the loan, which include limiting spending to payroll, utilities and rent. More information on PPP forgiveness is available at www.sba.gov/paycheckprotection.

The SBA also continues to accept EIDL applications as another financing option for small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Hallways at Armand Larive Middle School and other schools throughout Hermiston will be empty to start the school year as the district looks to begin the school year with distance learning.

ONLINE ONLY

Hermiston schools will start later to give staff time to prepare

By NADA SEWIDAN
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STAFF WRITERS

In addition to an online-only start, Hermiston School District will also start school later than usual in the fall.

During their Monday, July 27 meeting, the school board adopted an updated 2020-21 school year calendar that includes a few schedule changes, including delaying school starts from Monday, Aug. 24, until Tuesday, Sept. 8.

The decision to delay the first day of school comes after the district announced on Thursday, July 23, that it will begin the school year with distance learning only, as a result of Hermiston's rise in COVID-19 cases.

Hermiston School District likely wouldn't be able to start the school year with in-person learning whether the board voted to or not. On Tuesday, July 28, the Oregon Department of Education released new guidelines for when schools are allowed to hold in-person classes. The guidelines state that counties must have a less than 5% positive rate of tests, and 10 or fewer new cases of COVID-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Student drop-off lanes at Armand Larive Middle School and other schools throughout the Hermiston School District will be empty of cars as the district transitions to distance learning for the fall.

19 over a seven-day period, three weeks in a row, before in-person classes will be allowed.

According to a spreadsheet compiled by Rachel Alexander of the Salem Reporter, Umatilla County had 465.6 cases per 100,000 the week of July 21-28, and 420 the week before that.

Oregon must also have a less

than 5% positive rate for COVID-19 tests, which has not happened in the month of July.

"The metrics released today will give our public schools, private schools, and communities the opportunity to make sound decisions based on the latest science and health data," Gov. Kate Brown said in a news release. "They make

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

More information will be released at a later date on how and when Chromebooks, routers and Wi-Fi hotspots can be checked out. For now, the district asks everyone who checked out devices in the spring to return them for cleaning and upgrades. Devices may be dropped off at the district offices July 28-30 from noon to 7 p.m. or Aug. 3-6 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

a clear connection between the spread of the disease in a community, and statewide, and when a school may resume, or must halt, in-person instruction.

Superintendent Tricia Mooney said pushing the start day for schools will give educators an extra two weeks to prepare for the shift in teaching style. Surveys provided to teachers will help identify specific professional development needs that can be addressed within the two-week period.

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Staff photo by Jade McDowell, File

The Union Club in downtown Hermiston announced it is closing for now in response to new restrictions on operating hours for bars.

Hermiston businesses try to adjust to new restrictions

By NADA SEWIDAN
STAFF WRITER

The new government mandated restrictions under Phase 2 have affected some businesses in Hermiston.

Gov. Kate Brown announced on Wednesday, July 22, additional statewide restrictions under Phase 2 of reopening plans that went into effect on Friday, July 24. Some restrictions include closing restaurants and bars by 10 p.m. instead of midnight and requiring a face covering for all gym users during their workout. According to Brown,

the decision to add restrictions is a result of rising COVID-19 cases throughout Oregon.

Following the restrictions to scale back hours, Union Club in downtown Hermiston closed its already limited hours of operation.

"We're closing the shop due to the new COVID-19 requirements," stated a July 23 Facebook post. "Union Club will reopen to serve you as soon as we are able to resume business as usual. Stay safe! See you on the other side of the morning."

Union Club is not open for takeout either but people are

still able to inquire about renting the event space to host private parties. There are currently no plans for when the coffee by day, bar by night establishment will reopen.

People also are now required to wear face masks at the gym while working out. Roger Adams, manager at the newly-opened Hermiston Athletic Club, said since the new restrictions they have received some resistance, but that for the most part, everyone is complying.

"We had some push back

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