

New Umatilla and Morrow county worksites added to OHA outbreak list

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

The COVID-19 virus continues to make its way into new worksites and long-term care facilities in Hermiston.

According to the Oregon Health Authority's weekly report, which contains data up to July 26 and was released on Wednesday, July 29, Sun Terrace in Hermiston was added to the list of congregate care facilities in Oregon that have had three or more confirmed COVID-19 cases. The report listed six cases linked to the facility.

Pam Carrier, who is the community relations director for the assisted living facility, said they are working with the county health department and other agen-

cies to address the outbreak, including regularly checking residents' temperatures and carefully monitoring them for symptoms. She said for now residents are being kept to their rooms other than necessary trips, such as doctor's appointments.

"Our residents are being troopers, they truly are," she said. "But it's been hard on them."

OHA also reported worksite outbreaks for the week. The list covers workplaces with 30 or more employees that have had at least five cases linked to them through employees testing positive or close contacts of those employees testing positive after being exposed to the employee while they were ill.

OREGON AUTHORITIES REPORT WORKPLACE OUTBREAKS

The OHA's latest weekly COVID-19 workplace outbreaks report for Umatilla and Morrow counties were:
Lamb Weston, Hermiston, 161 cases
Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton, 69 cases
Medelez Trucking, Hermiston, 43 cases
Shearer's Foods, Hermiston, 33 cases
Columbia River Processing, Boardman, 32 cases
Walmart Distribution Center, Hermiston, 28 cases
Atkinson Staffing, Hermiston, 22 cases
Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla, 19 cases
Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, 17
Walmart store, Hermiston, 15
JM Eagle, Umatilla, 10 cases
Smith Frozen Foods, Weston, 10 cases
McDonald's, Hermiston, 10 cases
Threemile Canyon Farms, Boardman, 10 cases
Marlette Homes, Hermiston, 8 cases
Lamb Weston, Boardman East, 8 cases
Family Health Associates, Hermiston, 7 cases
Home Depot, Hermiston, 5 cases

Shutdown:

Continued from Page A1

"Honestly, I have been in contact regularly with the local county commissioners. I would prefer to do things collaboratively, but in this case, it has become a crisis," Brown said.

As local government leaders reacted to the decision, Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann published a copy of a letter he sent to Brown, telling the governor that closing, opening and then reclosing businesses caused serious harm to them.

He said in some cases those jobs would not come back, causing "lasting adverse consequences for years to come." Drotzmann said he had spoken with the governor previously about the fact that cases would rise after more things opened up.

"However, if you drill down on the data, you will see we only have 314 active cases, 13 hospitalizations and a total of 23 deaths, most elderly with preexisting conditions," he wrote. "Also, the data demonstrate the highest prevalence among the 20-40 (year old) age groups."

He went on to say that the door-to-door testing samples conducted by Oregon State University on July 25-26 showed a large number of people were not showing symptoms at the time of their test, which proved the need for widespread testing with rapid turnaround times to help get the virus under control.

"We don't have a lot of white collar or government-based jobs that allow for telecommuting," he wrote. "When our workforce gets shut down, the rest of the state (and the world) doesn't eat. So out of necessity people can't wait 7-14 days on a maybe. We need more certain/rapid answers. Returning to baseline won't work. How many outbreaks are we seeing at restaurants, barbershops and bowling alleys?"

"You want to slow the spread and protect vulnera-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston Cinema lets the public know with its signs that the theater closed temporarily after Umatilla County returned to baseline status.

ble populations? Get us the tools and resources to identify the sick more urgently and let's work together to overcome this crisis."

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, said he would be supportive of the state sending additional financial aid to Umatilla and Morrow counties in light of the shutdowns, and said that with the Oregon Legislature's emergency board still meeting and a special session of the Legislature planned, there would likely be opportunities to do so.

He said it was hard to see businesses that the pandemic "just keeps hammering them."

"It breaks my heart," he said. "I know it's been tough. We've lost businesses already."

He said hindsight is 20/20, but he feels that public health officials in Umatilla County have been doing the best they know how,

with the knowledge and resources they have had.

"They're good people trying to do a good thing," he said.

Oregon Capital Bureau reporter Gary Warner and East Oregonian editor Andrew Cutler contributed to this report.

Testing:

Continued from Page A1

Umatilla County would be placed back to "stay home, save lives" shutdown status starting at noon on July 31. In a statement in OSU's news release she said that the results of the study "confirms what we have feared based on weeks of troubling data from the Oregon Health Authority."

One of several metrics that Brown cited in her announcement of the shutdown was that 45% of Umatilla County's cases in the past week were "sporadic" cases that contact tracers were not able to trace back to a specific person, suggesting a high rate of community spread rather than a few isolated pockets. State epidemiologist Dean Sidelinger said the OSU study — which found that half of the 30 neighborhoods visited had at least one positive resident — confirmed that Hermiston has "wide community spread."

Ben Daziel, a co-director of TRACE COVID-19, said the results were cause for concern because efforts to test and isolate people when they show symptoms will not be enough.

Hermiston's results are significantly higher than the first round of testing in other cities where TRACE has been conducted. In Corvallis, OSU estimated two in every 1,000 people had COVID-19 during the weekend in question. In Bend, that number was one in every 1,000. In Newport, it was 34. In Hermiston, it is an estimated 169 out of every 1,000 people.

At 44%, Hermiston also had much lower participation rates than the other cities, which ranged between 68-80%.

In addition to the test results, OSU also released information about what Umatilla County residents can do to slow the spread of the virus to a level where businesses and schools can reopen.

Staying home while sick is important, researchers said, but the high rate of asymptomatic carriers also shows why it is important to strictly follow guidelines about wearing masks and staying six feet apart from all non-household members, and avoid being around other people more than necessary. People should also quarantine if they were exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Miguel Ascencio, a community health worker with the ConneXions program at Good Shepherd Medical Center, said volunteering as TRACE team member was eye-opening to see how widespread misinformation and misconceptions about the virus were in Hermiston. He urged people to do their part to help protect the community from a virus they might not even know they were spreading.

"The biggest thing they can do is to wear their face coverings," Ascencio said. "It might be annoying to wear it, but they have got to think of their family members — their kids, their grandparents — because they are putting their lives at risk. Wearing a mask can go such a long way when out in public or in the stores."

MORE WINNERS. MORE OFTEN AND NOW...

MORE FUN TO SPARE!

Coming Next Month!

ARCADE	QUAKING ASPENS LANES	FOOD COURT
<p>PLAY, WIN, REPEAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 30 New & Classic Games Rewards Center With Great Prizes Fun For All Ages 	<p>PLENTY OF STRIKES TO SPARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 Lanes 8 Boutique Lanes with 2 Party Rooms Full Service Food & Drink Bowling Lockers & Ball Fitting Advanced Scoring Technologies 	<p>QUICK, EASY & SATISFYING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Delicious New Food Venues Tasty Sweet Shop Dine-In or Take Out

DRAWINGS

Every Friday and Saturday, 7-9:30pm

Prize amounts increase the later you play!

<p>CLUB</p> <p>10pm</p> <p>RIVER GRAND PRIZE</p> <p>\$3,000 CASH</p>	<p>CLUB</p> <p>10:30pm</p> <p>VISTA GRAND PRIZE</p> <p>\$5,000 CASH</p>	<p>CLUB</p> <p>11pm</p> <p>VIP GRAND PRIZE</p> <p>\$10,000 CASH</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------

THE HOTTEST GRAND PRIZES

THREE WINNERS DRAWN - SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

DID YOU KNOW...

Good Shepherd offers support if you're living with a Chronic Condition?

"Living Well with Chronic Conditions" starts Tuesdays, AUG 25 - SEPT 29, 2:30 - 5:00PM

This FREE class consists of weekly small group sessions, where you will learn proven skills to enhance your well-being and quality of life while living with a chronic condition.

For more information or to register, please contact 541-667-3509 or healthinfo@gshealth.org

Working every day to promote a healthy community

Education and Wellness Services 541.667.3509

Like Us On

\$35

PER PERSON

INCLUDES 9 HOLES, CART, BURGER & A BREW

Monday - Thursday 1-4pm

WILDHORSE GOLF COURSE

BURGERS

BREWS &

BIRDIES

CASINO • HOTEL • GOLF • CINEPLEX • RV • MUSEUM • DINING • TRAVEL PLAZA

800.654.9453 • PENDLETON, OR • I-84, EXIT 216, wildhorseresort.com. Owned and operated by CTUIR

Management reserves all rights to alter, suspend or withdraw promotions/offers at any time.

WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO

Goga.6.18 WH062022