

## County's new COVID-19 cases decrease

Umatilla health officials say new caseload in single digits

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County announced nine new confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, Aug. 18, marking the first time in nearly two months that the county's new cases were in single digits.

The last time the county reported fewer than 10 cases in a day was on June 24. The Aug. 18 news release from Umatilla County Public Health listed 2,335 confirmed cases in the county since the pandemic began and 32 deaths of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19. As of Aug. 18, the county also

had 11 COVID-19 patients hospitalized and 142 presumptive cases.

While it is hard to draw definitive conclusions from a single day of testing, Umatilla County's cases have been trending downward overall. During the week of Aug. 9-15, the county reported its lowest number of confirmed cases (145) and recorded its lowest seven-day average of newly reported cases (20.7) since the end of June.

"The trends, particularly over the last week or so, in Umatilla County, have been very encouraging," Oregon Health Authority Director Patrick Allen said during a Friday, Aug. 14, call with the

media. "The case numbers are still high, but they've come down from where they were previously."

Counties pushed back to a lower level of their reopening schedule by the state must wait at least 21 days before being cleared to advance to a later phase. Umatilla County was first sent to baseline on July 31.

The state takes into account not only the number of confirmed cases and hospitalizations each day, but also the percentage of tests coming back positive and the percentage of cases that are able to

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan, File

Umatilla County reported its lowest number of confirmed cases and its lowest seven-day average since the end of June during the week of Aug. 9 through 15.

### UPDATES

#### Local school districts receive broadband funding

HERMISTON HERALD

Two local school districts are set to receive grants from Business Oregon to help boost students' access to broadband internet.

Umatilla School District will receive \$120,879 in funds to support online learning, and Morrow County School District will receive \$119,598 to bring internet access to more students in the district.

Both districts will be starting their school year in an online-only format as Umatilla and Morrow counties remain well above the levels of new COVID-19 cases to gain approval for in-person learning.

"Learning will look different as we fight the spread of COVID-19," Business Oregon Director Chris Cummings said in a news release. "Whether there is access to buildings or not, students throughout Oregon will certainly need access to online resources and to engage with their teachers and classmates."

According to the news release, schools around the state will receive a total of \$1.61 billion in grants as part of the CARES Act stimulus funding from the federal government sent to the states.

Umatilla School District will have Chromebooks available for students to pick up through Aug. 22. Students will be mailed a copy of their schedule and information about their teachers, and are asked to log in to their device sometime between Aug. 24-28 to make sure it is working properly and review welcome messages about what to expect when school begins.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Emersyn Aitkin, 11, takes a moment with her steer before entering the livestock barn at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center to have her picture taken on the second day of the 2020 Umatilla County Fair Modified Youth Livestock Show on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020.

## A show of support

### Youth Livestock Auction on track to raise money for students

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
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A list of Umatilla County Fair Champions, **Page A10**

The 2020 Umatilla County Fair may be over, but the money keeps rolling in for area youths.

The Youth Livestock Auction on Saturday, Aug. 15, raised \$488,311 in direct sales, but bump and add-on money is still accepted through Aug. 25, and local businesses are piling on more money for the FFA and 4-H students who chose to sell their animals at auction after the judging was over.

Auction coordinator Marie Linnell estimated on Monday, Aug. 17, the auction's total would pass \$510,000. Although that's a lower total than the record-breaking totals of the past couple of years, she said, the number of animals being auctioned off was also smaller, at 208 lots compared with 265 in 2019.

"Overall, it went very well," she said.

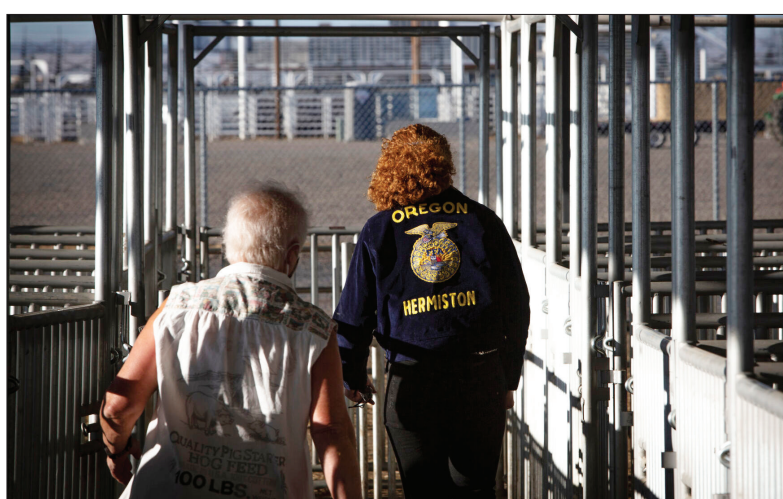
Linnell keeps adding new thank yous to the Umatilla County Fair Youth Livestock Auction page. First was Les Schwab of Hermiston and Pendleton for adding \$50 to every animal at the auction. Beef Northwest, G-2 Farming, Anderson Land & Livestock/Terry Anderson and Buttercreek

Sod/Jordan Bennett Family each added an extra \$50 to each steer. And Simplot Grower Solutions added \$100 to each of the 15 turkeys. Students can use the money for what they wish, from college funds to a new goat.

Prices per animal were mixed, with goats and steers going for a lower average price per pound than in 2019, while swine and sheep were higher. Rabbits went for \$825 — a \$500 increase from the average price of rabbits sold the previous year.

Linnell said some businesses that have been heavily impacted by the pandemic were not able to commit as much money to buying an animal, but there were other businesses that were able to step up and give more than usual. Some people placed bids online, but others simply let the auction committee know what they were looking for and gave the committee the power of proxy to bid for them.

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan, File

A Hermiston FFA member departs after dropping off their animal at the 2020 Umatilla County Fair Modified Youth Livestock Show on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020. Those entering animals for auction weighed their animals and had their photos taken before departing to comply with COVID-19 safety precautions.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Volunteers lead steers into the arena to be judged on the second day of the 2020 Umatilla County Fair Modified Youth Livestock Show on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020.

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