

Umatilla County approved for Phase 2

By ALEX CASTLE
STAFF WRITER

Umatilla County is back at Phase 2.

According to Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock, Gov. Kate Brown informed the county of its status in an unexpected phone call the morning of Friday, Sept. 11.

"We knew that we were really in good shape and in the position for it to happen, but we feared that perhaps with all the eyes on the

incredible devastation that's going on with the forest fires that maybe it wouldn't get addressed," Murdock said. "But it did."

In Phase 2, indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment venues, such as movie theaters and pools, are able to reopen, in addition to restaurants and bars being permitted to stay open until 10 p.m. and large gatherings being capped at 50 people.

Brown and the Oregon Health Authority denied

the county's petition for Phase 2 the week prior to the announcement, citing three of six case metrics the county hadn't met and a prevalence of COVID-19 cases above 100 cases per 100,000 people. Those metrics were uptrends in hospitalizations over the last 14 days, uptrends in positive test rate in the last week and an uptrend of more than 5% in new cases over the last week.

While returning to Phase 2 after the state sent Umatilla County back to the base-

line of reopening on July 31 was a necessary milestone to reach, the county is urging residents to remain diligent in protecting themselves and others from the virus.

"Almost week to week we're hearing more chatter of vaccines and different treatment methods they're looking into," Umatilla County Public Health director Joe Fiumara said. "That's all promising stuff. But until we've got it, all we've got is the physical distancing and face coverings. That's what

we've got right now and it's working."

A week after no new workplace outbreaks were reported in Umatilla or Morrow counties, the Oregon Health Authority's weekly report published Sept. 10 included a new workplace outbreak of five cases reported at Ranch and Home in Hermiston.

Guardian Angel Homes in Hermiston was also reported as having 18 cases of the virus and one death of a resident positive for

COVID-19. Another Hermiston assisted living facility, Sun Terrace, was readied to the active outbreak list with 10 cases and one death among its residents.

The Oregon Health Authority report includes a list of workplaces with at least 30 employees that have had at least five cases of COVID-19 linked to them, either through employees testing positive or confirmed cases being traced back to those employees as the most probable source.

Morrow County students earn art contest honors

HERMISTON HERALD

Two Morrow County students were honored during a virtual reception held earlier this week. Their artwork was selected among 643 entries submitted to a calendar art contest sponsored by Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

This year, artwork was submitted by K-6 students across the state in public, private, charter and homeschool education systems featuring Oregon agriculture and natural resources. The entries received celebrated a wide variety of Oregon's 220 agricultural commodities, according to a news release.

The two Morrow County winners attend Lone Community School and Heppner Elementary School.

Isabelle Ogden, a fifth-grader from Lone Community School, submitted artwork featuring sheep grazing in an open field with luscious green grass, and can be viewed on the March page of the calendar. In describing her artwork, Ogden said in the news release, "I chose to draw sheep because when I did 4-H I had a sheep. Sheep provide food and fiber in the state of Oregon."

Fourth-grade Heppner Elementary School student Kathryn "KC" Anderson drew a chicken, which can be viewed on the February page of the calendar. Anderson stated in the release, "I chose to draw chickens because I like the detail on their feathers and they produce eggs and meat for Oregon." She added, "We have nine free range chickens at my house. Some of the chickens are Golden Laced Wyandotte. I based my drawing off one of these and her name is Super Chicken."

The 13 students selected to be featured in the 2020-21 calendar received a \$50 award and certificate. The winning artwork is displayed on the AITC website. Calendars are free to Oregon teachers, and can be ordered for just \$4 on oregonaitc.org/shop.

"The calendar contest is



Contributed photos
Above, lone fifth-grader Isabelle Ogden's winning artwork shows sheep grazing in a field. At left, Kathryn "KC" Anderson, a Heppner fourth-grader, submitted a winning entry of a chicken for the Agriculture in the Classroom calendar art contest. Both pictures will appear in the AITC 2020-21 calendar.

a great project for teachers and students to assign as a fun project during this time of distance learning," said Jessica Jansen, AITC executive director, in a press release.

Downed power lines get the blame for Umatilla fire

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla Rural Fire Protection determined that power lines knocked loose by high winds were the cause of the Monday, Sept. 7, fire that caused evacuations on the south side of Umatilla.

A news release from the district stated the power lines went down in the "general area of Scaplehorn Road," which connects to the north side of Highway 730 across from the highway's intersection with Powerline Road to the south.

The release stated that the first fire crew on scene, at about 5 p.m., found the Encore Wellness clinic near the road was "experiencing impending flames."

While the fire was brought under control and



Photo contributed by Angie Smith
A grass fire burns near Umatilla on Monday, Sept. 7, 2020.

mutual aid crews were sent home in the early morning hours of Sept. 8, some customers of Umatilla Electric Cooperative and Pacific Power in the area did not see their power restored until Sept. 9.

The fire also knocked out internet to many households, but on Sept. 9 Eastern Oregon Telecom reported on its Facebook page that most services were back online, or "at least partially restored."

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