

UPDATES

New COVID-19 deaths announced

HERMISTON HERALD

The Oregon Health Authority reported two new deaths of residents who tested positive for COVID-19 in Umatilla and Morrow counties on Tuesday, Oct. 27, according to a press release.

The death from Umatilla County is the 45th reported since the start of the pandemic. According to the Umatilla County Public Health Department, the resident was 62-year-old man who tested positive for the virus on Oct. 4, and then died Oct. 21 while at Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland, Washington.

The death from Morrow County is the seventh reported since the start of the pandemic, according to the Oregon Health Authority. The resident was a 52-year-old man who tested positive Aug. 25 and died Oct. 24 while at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland.

In an earlier press release, OHA also reported the death of a 53-year-old Umatilla County man who tested positive Sept. 7 and died on Oct. 19 at Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center in Tualatin.

There have been 664 people who have died after testing positive for the virus in Oregon.

Between Oct. 21-27 Umatilla County Public Health reported 96 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 among county residents.

As of Oct. 27, the health department reported there were also 173 presumptive cases of the virus, defined as someone who was showing symptoms of COVID-19 after being exposed to a case of it but has not received a test result to confirm or disprove the diagnosis. Seven Umatilla County residents were hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Oct. 27.



Jade McDowell/Hermiston Herald

The Hermiston Warming Station plans to open Nov. 23, 2020, but will have to reduce capacity to meet COVID-19 standards.

Out in the cold

Warming Station capacity may be reduced due to COVID-19

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The Hermiston Warming Station is preparing to open for the winter season on Nov. 23, but its capacity is likely to be significantly reduced due to COVID-19.

Sandy Francis, the warming station's new board chair, said the board is in consultation with Umatilla County Public Health on what will be allowable and how best to protect guests and volunteers at the nonprofit emergency shelter.

"We're looking for different ways we can do 6-foot distancing, but still maximize the space we have," she said.

Since it moved to a house at 1075 S. Highway 395 in 2016, the warming station has had a capacity for about 22 people per night. Francis said they have a sleeping room for men, one for women and one for families. But she said if cots must be 6 feet apart this year, capacity will be more like eight guests.

"Usually we have enough space for 22 people, and we've had some nights where we've had to turn people away because we didn't have room for them," she said.

Francis said they have looked for a bigger space to use this year,



Jade McDowell/Hermiston Herald

A sign on the back door of the Hermiston Warming Station give directions for people wishing to drop off donations.

but so far haven't found a viable option. She said they are concerned about that, and concerned that fears of COVID-19 will prevent people from volunteering for shifts. Last year, the station had to close several times on cold nights because there were not enough volunteers available to staff the site.

Volunteers will be required to wear masks, hand sanitizer stations will be available and the board

has swapped out fabric furniture for items more easily sanitized, and other precautions will be taken to ensure safety. The board is currently looking at installing plastic dividers between cots.

Even if the warming station doesn't have enough volunteers to staff the shelter overnight, Francis said, they are committed to at least

See Warming, Page A14

VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

The Hermiston Warming Station is offering the dates listed below for volunteer trainings. All volunteers must be at least 18 years old, have completed a training and passed a background check. Please RSVP in advance through the warming station's Facebook page.

- Wednesday, Oct. 28,** 7-8:30 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 30,** 6-7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 1,** 12-1:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3,** 7-8:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 5,** 6-7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 7,** 11 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 7,** 6-7:30 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 9,** 7-8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 11,** 12-1:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 13,** 7-8:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 15,** 12-1:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 17,** 6-7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Nov. 19,** 7-8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 21,** 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 21,** 6-7:30 p.m.



Hermiston Herald, File

Claire Miller, a nurse at Mirasol Family Health Center, pauses during a Breast Cancer Awareness Walk at the clinic in 2018. Many of the fall breast cancer fundraisers have been canceled this year because of the pandemic.

This is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By KATY NESBITT
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

In honor of October's designation as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Umatilla County organizations and cancer survivors are sharing their stories to encourage early screening and give hope to those battling the disease.

The members of the Umatilla Police Department know about the battle first-hand.

Kylie Baker, public information officer, said five years ago the department's administrative specialist, Jan Zita, was diagnosed with breast cancer. More recently, Chief Darla Huxel was

diagnosed as well.

"Our whole department has been involved, to a degree, in their treatment and recovery journeys," Baker said.

Every year since Zita's diagnosis, Baker said, the department staff members have followed a tradition of sporting breast cancer awareness pins during the month of October in honor of her, and now Chief Huxel, for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"This year we took it a step further and all the officers received a pink patch shirt to wear in honor of the Chief,

See Cancer, Page A13

INSIDE

A3 ▶ Columbia Development Authority reverses previous vote on industrial land

A6 ▶ Christmas Express is full steam ahead despite obstacles with school closures

A7 ▶ Work is underway on a new subdivision in Boardman

A8 ▶ Morrow County School District reopens schools to all students who want to return