



HOLIDAY FREEZE

Restaurants move back to takeout only as of Nov. 18

By JADE MCDOWELL
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This week was déjà vu for Hermiston restaurants as they trotted out the same signs and Facebook posts they have used multiple times this year.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the notices state, the restaurant is returning to takeout only.

This time it's not just Umatilla County being put in a timeout to curb rapidly rising COVID-19 cases. The entire state of Oregon is being put on a "two-week freeze" from Wednesday, Nov. 18, to Wednesday, Dec. 2. Gov. Kate Brown said some counties may be frozen longer if their cases are still going up at the end of the two weeks.

During that time, restaurants and bars must close their dining areas and offer delivery or takeout only.

Gyms and other fitness facilities, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and event venues are closed entirely.

Grocery stores must limit capacity to 75% of the shoppers they are usually allowed. Churches and other faith-based organizations are limited to gatherings of 25 people indoors or 50 outdoors.

Everyone is asked to work from home to the greatest extent possible.

And all social gatherings involving more than one household are limited to no more than six people from no more than two households — including Thanksgiving gatherings.

Luz Escalante, of Ixtapa Mexican Restaurant in Hermiston, said closing their dining area is hard on the business, but they will fol-

TRACKING COVID-19

County, state and federal health departments provide daily updates on COVID-19 data to the public.

On a county level, information about COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, demographics, ZIP codes and the "epi-curve" that tracks the onset of symptoms can be found for Umatilla, Morrow, Union, Baker and Malheur counties on the Regional COVID-19 Dashboard at co.umatilla.or.us/health/COVID_Regional9_Dashboard.

On a state level, the Oregon Health Authority has set up a website tracking COVID-19 cases, workplace outbreaks, school metrics and other data at <https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>.

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracks cases and deaths at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker>.

low the rules and revert to takeout only.

The restaurant installed a drive-thru window in its building during the last shutdown, she said, so people don't even have to get out of their car now when picking up the orders they phoned in.

Luckily, she said, the people of Hermiston have been generous and supportive to the restaurant during times of takeout only in the past, even if sales have dropped off some.

"Hopefully people continue to support our business," she said.

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Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

A sign advises pedestrians to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing in downtown Hermiston on Oct. 24, 2020.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File

A sign along Southgate in Pendleton advertises takeout and delivery only following Gov. Kate Brown's ban on dine-in restaurants in March 2020. Oregon is being put on a "two-week freeze" in an attempt to curb the rapid spread of COVID-19, Gov. Kate Brown announced at a press conference on Nov. 13, 2020.

Good Shepherd improves COVID-19 handling, administrators say

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

As shutdowns rippled across the world in the spring, they were implemented under the rallying cry of "flattening the curve" of new infection rates to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed and buy health care providers time to learn how to treat the virus's sick-est patients.

That time has been valuable, say administrators at Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston.

"(Health care workers) were doing the best we could when this started, and the inroads that health care has made in the last seven, eight, nine months has just been amazing," CEO Brian Sims said. "The science has really caught up and we have learned to really use what's there and available, and as of this morning it was announced there's another vaccine that shows potential that's shown a 95% success rate. I think as we continue to go down this road we're just going to continue to get better."

Brian Patrick, vice president of nursing, said the Good Shepherd has used what it has learned to put together a physically shielded, well-ventilated COVID-19 area that can quickly add and subtract beds as needed.

"This is how we're managing it



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

A sign advises visitors of limited visitation at the Good Shepherd Health Care System campus in Hermiston on Monday, Nov. 16, 2020.

now and it's working very well," he said.

Patrick came to Good Shepherd from a southern California hospital in September, and Sims came to Good Shepherd from Iowa in October. Both said Good Shepherd, and Oregon in general, v in comparatively good shape compared to the situation in other parts of the country.

Patrick said Good Shepherd

hasn't faced the level of personal protective equipment shortages many hospitals have, for example. One innovation the hospital adopted early on was using P100 respirator masks instead of N95 masks. The P100 mask filters don't need changed nearly as often as an N95 mask would need replaced, Patrick said, allowing supplies to last longer.

According to the Centers for

Disease Control, P100 masks are also more effective at filtering out viruses than the N95 masks typically used in health care.

"I can tell you, because I have a new perspective from the outside, as Brian (Sims) does too, the position we're in here at Good Shepherd is outstanding compared to a lot of other places," Patrick said of the hospital's PPE supply.

He said the hospital has also

been able to maintain needed staffing levels by utilizing Premium Staff, which supplies registered nurses to backfill gaps in staffing.

Good Shepherd hasn't been immune to the challenges of maintaining a large workforce during the pandemic. According to the Oregon Health Authority's tracking of workplace outbreaks, since the start of the pandemic Good Shepherd Health Care System as a whole has had 64 cases of COVID linked to it, most recently on Nov. 3, either through staff testing positive or close contacts of those staff, such as family members whose cases were traced back to the positive employees. The health care system has more than 700 employees.

Earlier in the year, the *Oregonian* quoted nurses at Good Shepherd who were unhappy that Good Shepherd was moving away from handling contact tracing and notifications of exposure internally. They said the change put them at additional risk of spreading the virus to others before they knew they were exposed.

Patrick said some people came away from that with the impression that Good Shepherd employees weren't being notified at all about contacts with the virus, but

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