

# Umatilla County moves back to high risk on Friday

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County is headed back to high risk status for COVID-19 a week earlier than expected after COVID-19 hospitalizations in the state surpassed 300.

Gov. Kate Brown announced on Tuesday, April 27, that counties were losing their two-week warn-

ing period out of concerns over hospital capacity and that the much more contagious B117 variant is now the dominant strain in the state.

"If we don't act now, doctors, nurses, hospitals, and other health care providers in Oregon will be stretched to their limits treating severe cases of COVID-19," Brown said in a statement.

"Today's announcement will save lives and help stop COVID-19 hospitalizations from spiking even higher."

The decision moves 15 counties to extreme risk, and nine to high risk, including Umatilla County. Becky Hultberg, president and CEO of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, released a statement in support.

"Oregon has among the lowest overall case counts and deaths of all states, but our cases are now growing faster than almost any other state. We can't let our guard down now. We support the Governor in making tough choices to control the virus in our communities and get us safely through this pandemic," she said.

Moving from moderate to

high risk means many Umatilla County establishments — including gyms, restaurants, museums, churches and indoor youth sporting events — will have to move from 50% capacity to 25% capacity. Indoor social gatherings are reduced from a maximum of eight to a maximum of six, and retail stores move from 75% capacity to 50%.

Morrow County will stay in low risk, although Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said she hopes that people in the county get vaccinated as soon as possible and remain vigilant about safety measures so the state's "fourth wave" doesn't reach Morrow County.

"It doesn't take much to go backward," she said.

## Port:

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to do what it can to promote more housing development so that employees of port businesses have a place to live in the county.

### John Kilkenny

John Kilkenny is running against Stokoe and Tallman for position 1.

Kilkenny said he is a lifelong Morrow County resident, other than a brief stint in Pasco, Washington, and has been farming in the area for 40 years. He has served on a number of local boards, including 12 years on the Morrow County Planning Commission and time on the Morrow County Rodeo Board.

"The port has done a tremendous job of growing and diversifying ... and I'd just like to continue that," he said.

While Kilkenny praised the port's growth, he said there are some areas he would like to focus on improving if elected, including recruiting more small and medium-sized locally owned businesses.

He said he feels the port and county could work better together than they currently do, and would like to see more "synergy" in that relationship.

He also would like to see a stronger emphasis on job training locally, to retain more young people who grew up in Morrow County and are ready to start their careers. He said he knows the port can only do so much when it comes to housing development, but he would like to see the port commission find more

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ways to expand housing options in the county.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people who work in Morrow County don't live in Morrow County," he said.

### Jerry Healy

Jerry Healy is running for reelection to position 3 on the Port of Morrow Commission.

Healy was born and raised in Morrow County and lived there most of his life, other than college and a stint in the Peace Corps. He said he has now been on the Port of Morrow Commission for about 27 years, but is ready to continue his service.

"It's a dynamic position," he said. "It keeps you excited about what you're doing. There are tremendous things we have accomplished for our community and for the county."

Healy said one of the most important things the port commission needs to continue to focus on is how to provide training and opportunities for people already in Morrow County, to encourage them to stay after high school graduation or come back after pursuing their education.

"For decades, our number one export from the county was our young people," he said.

He said the port has already been improving on that through the workforce training center, internships and other programs. He said during his service on the commission, the port has also

done a good job of diversifying its economic base, and of strategic planning — something it is important to continue.

"There are a couple of ports in the state of Oregon that have run out of property, and we don't want to be there," he said.

### Rick Weiss

Rick Weiss is one of two candidates challenging Healy for position 3 on the commission.

Weiss is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Boardman. He said while that wouldn't seem to lend itself to serving on the port commission, past experience would, including time working in public policy in Arizona, experience as a small business owner and his bachelor's degree in political science.

Weiss and his wife moved to Boardman about 18 months ago, he said, and jumped into community involvement, including their instrumental work in starting the Boardman food pantry. He said the Port of Morrow is a significant part of the community, and "it just seems if I'm going to be involved in the community, that is an area where I could have some influence."

He said as someone newer to the county who doesn't own a local business affected by the port's decisions and who doesn't work for a local government entity, he feels he can bring an objective voice to the port commission, focused on what's best for the community as a whole.

"I've got fresh eyes," he said.

He said if elected he would work to bring additional transparency and communication with the public to the port's

proceedings.

### Chandler Schaak

Chandler Schaak is the third candidate running for position 3, but did not return calls and an email sent to the contact information listed on the filing form.

According to the filing form, Schaak lives in Boardman and is an insurance agent.

### Joe Taylor

Joe Taylor, a local farmer who grew up in Morrow County, has served as a Port of Morrow commissioner for 16 years, and is running unopposed for another term.

He said he was actually a little disappointed no one ran against him, as contested races help bring up good ideas and areas for improvement.

Taylor said he was motivated to run again by projects the port has been working on that are not yet complete, that he would like to see through. If reelected, he will also represent the port on the Columbia River Enterprise Zone board for the first time, which he said he looks forward to.

Taylor said he is proud of the work the port has done in recent years, including the transition to a new port manager and the port's strong growth — a trend he said is likely to continue.

"That's going to take some planning and foresight," he said.

Taylor said he wants to see the port continue to do what it can to help bring more housing options to Morrow County.

"It's not a big input we have, but we have a little bit and I think it helps," he said.

## Umatilla School District offers summer learning

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla School District has opened registration for summer learning opportunities, including a six-week summer school.

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade can participate in a mix of traditional summer school and STEAM Camp (science, technology, engineering, art and math) from June 21 to July 29, Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Meals and busing are provided.

Superintendent Heidi Sipe said they will be emphasizing a "screen free summer school" experience, with plenty of hands-on learning, field trips and outdoor activities.

Child care for students from kindergarten through fifth grade is available from June 21 to July 29 from 3:30-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Fridays. It is also available Aug. 1-13 from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Meals are provided.

High school students can participate in credit recovery classes throughout the summer and have an opportunity to apply for summer internships for credit, some of which are paid. High school students interested in applying for an internship should email [williamss@umatillasd.org](mailto:williamss@umatillasd.org).

Summer learning opportunities are being funded by several grants, Sipe said, and there is room for all of the district's students who would like to participate.

Registration forms and more information can be found at [umatilla.k12.or.us/live-feed#1477972](http://umatilla.k12.or.us/live-feed#1477972).

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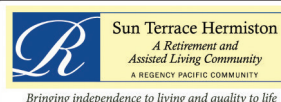
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