

State provides updated mask guidance

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Announcements by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Governor Kate Brown last week signaled a move toward fewer COVID-19 restrictions as the pandemic begins to wane in the United States.

On Thursday, May 13, the CDC updated its guidance for vaccinated individuals, stating continuing research indicates vaccinated individuals can safely go without masks in most settings, not just outdoor areas and small gatherings where everyone is vaccinated.

Governor Kate Brown responded in a video address, stating that Oregon would be following the same guidance, allowing fully vaccinated individuals

two weeks past the date of their final shot to go unmasked in most settings, while continuing the mask mandate for those who are unvaccinated and therefore at risk for serious or fatal cases of COVID-19.

“Oregonians now have a choice of how to protect themselves and others from COVID-19: either get vaccinated, or continue wearing a mask and following physical distancing requirements,” she said.

On Tuesday, May 18, OHA released new guidelines for businesses, stating that those that wish to allow vaccinated customers to not wear masks must verify customers’ vaccination status at the door. Indoor businesses that do not wish to do that must require everyone to mask.

OHA also stated that the mask mandate is lifted for everyone outdoors, although it strongly recommends those who are unvaccinated continue to wear a mask and social distance while in crowds outdoors.

All students and staff at schools are required to continue wearing masks in the classroom for now.

Some Oregonians responded to the updated guidelines on social media by stating that a business asking to see their vaccine card is a violation of HIPAA, or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. But according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers HIPAA, the act only restricts certain health care entities — mainly hospitals, medi-

cal clinics, care facilities and health insurance providers — from sharing a patient’s medical records. It does not restrict people from asking questions or talking about others’ health outside of those limited restrictions.

“Many organizations that have health information about you do not have to follow these laws,” the department states on its website. “Examples of organizations that do not have to follow the Privacy and Security Rules include life insurers, employers, workers compensation carriers, most schools and school districts, many state agencies like child protective service agencies, most law enforcement agencies and many municipal offices.”

As for other COVID-19 restrictions, Brown

announced that Oregon could expect the lifting of most restrictions — including bans on indoor dining and rules reducing capacity for businesses — once 70% of Oregonians age 18 and up have had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. According to Oregon Health Authority, that number currently stands at 62%.

“Thanks to you, Oregon, it looks like we’ve crossed the tipping point of the fourth surge,” Brown said in a news release. “Our hospitalization rates have stabilized. Our infection rates are on a downward trajectory. And in the race between vaccines and variants, our efforts to vaccinate Oregonians are taking the lead. We still have some work to do to reach our 70% goal, but I am confident we can get there

in June and return Oregon to a sense of normalcy.”

Brown also said individual counties could apply to have their restrictions lifted sooner if they reached a 65% vaccination rate of residents age 16 and up before the state as a whole hits 70% of residents age 18 and up. According to OHA, Morrow County is currently at 38.4%, while Umatilla County remains the second lowest in the state at 32.7%.

Both counties have turned down new shipments of the vaccine in recent weeks after seeing a significant reduction in demand. Umatilla County has indicated a renewed interest in the Pfizer vaccine, however, after the FDA and CDC approved the vaccine for use in children ages 12 to 15 last week.

Hatrockhounds dig nature’s treasures

HERMISTON HERALD

After a one-year hiatus because of the global pandemic, members of the Hatrockhounds Gem & Mineral Society are looking forward to their annual rock and gem show.

Nature’s Treasures Under Foot: Rock & Gem Show 2021 is Saturday, May 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will be held at Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for ages 60 and up and free for children 12 and under. Safety protocols will be observed, including masks and social distancing.



Hermiston Herald, File Members of the Hatrockhounds Gem & Mineral Society staff the silent auction table during the 2018 Rock & Gem Show. After a one-year hiatus, the event returns this weekend at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, Hermiston.

The show features more than a dozen dealers selling rocks, gems, jewelry, bead supplies, mineral specimens and more. Also, it includes silent auctions throughout each day, door prize drawings every 30 minutes and a special children’s corner with games, fun and prizes.

The Hatrockhounds Gem & Mineral Society is a non-profit group that meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 775 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston.

For more information, visit www.jall23.wixsite.com/hatrockhounds or email show chairman Mike Filariski at stonemorlin1@net-cape.net.

Maxwell Market set to open for season May 27

By KATY NESBITT
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

The Maxwell Market opens for the 2021 season on Thursday, May 27, at the Maxwell Siding Event Center and Pavilion in Hermiston.

The seasonal market, open Thursdays from 4 to 8 p.m. through Oct. 7, features 15-20 vendors a week selling produce, preserves like jams and salsas, fresh flowers, handmade soaps and jewelry. Popular vendors of prepared food offer barbecue, baked goods, cotton candy and handmade chocolates.

According to Maxwell Event Facility Manager Miranda Torres, freeze



Hermiston Herald, File A child eats a strawberry at the Maxwell Farmers Market in 2019, at the Maxwell Siding Pavilion. The market returns for its 2021 season on May 27, 2021.

customers should look for their favorite seasonal fruits and vegetables as the summer wears on, like strawberries in June, melons in July, tomatoes in August and apples in September.

Torres said she recommends market customers keep an eye on the market’s Facebook page, Maxwell Market Hermiston Oregon, and their Instagram site, Maxwell Event Center and Pavilion, to check out the live music schedule, which will be posted soon.

“We are gearing up for our fourth year and hope everyone comes out and supports their local vendors,” Torres said.

The pavilion is at 255 S. First Place, Hermiston.

Free COVID-19 testing coming to Umatilla County thanks to the University of Oregon’s RADx-Up team.

FREE CONFIDENTIAL COVID-19 TESTING

NO INSURANCE/IMMIGRATION STATUS NEEDED

- Local drive-through model promotes safety.
- Testing every Saturday & Sunday thru August.
- Free and confidential; no insurance or immigration status required.

SCAN TO REGISTER

Pre-Registration Available But Not Required. Results in 2 - 4 Days. <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/osjp/registro/>

<p>UMATILLA HIGH SCHOOL: 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.</p> <p>ATKINSON STAFFING: 3 P.M. - 6 P.M.</p> <p style="color: #800080; font-style: italic;">Every First & Third Saturday</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>March 6</p> <p>April 3</p> <p>May 1</p> <p>June 5</p> <p>July 3</p> <p>August 7</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>March 19</p> <p>April 17</p> <p>May 15</p> <p>June 19</p> <p>July 17</p> <p>August 21</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>March 6</p> <p>April 3</p> <p>May 1</p> <p>June 5</p> <p>July 3</p> <p>August 7</p>	<p>March 19</p> <p>April 17</p> <p>May 15</p> <p>June 19</p> <p>July 17</p> <p>August 21</p>	<p>UMATILLA ELECTRIC: 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.</p> <p style="font-size: small;">HERMISTON OFFICE</p> <p>STANFIELD ELEMENTARY: 3 P.M. - 6 P.M.</p> <p style="color: #800080; font-style: italic;">Every Second & Fourth Saturday</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>March 13</p> <p>April 10</p> <p>May 8</p> <p>June 12</p> <p>July 10</p> <p>August 14</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>March 27</p> <p>April 24</p> <p>May 22</p> <p>June 26</p> <p>July 24</p> <p>August 28</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>March 13</p> <p>April 10</p> <p>May 8</p> <p>June 12</p> <p>July 10</p> <p>August 14</p>	<p>March 27</p> <p>April 24</p> <p>May 22</p> <p>June 26</p> <p>July 24</p> <p>August 28</p>
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Umatilla Electric Boardman Office: 3 P.M. - 6 P.M. Every Second and Fourth Friday