



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File  
**Motorcycles fill a portion of the parking lot at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston on Dec. 5, 2020, following the Echo Toy Run. Good Shepherd Health Care System, which operates the hospital, received \$2.6 million in 2021 through an American Rescue Plan program for rural hospitals.**

# COVID-19 relief program sends nearly \$8 million to Northeastern Oregon hospitals

**Program for funding rural hospitals also provides \$29.4M to Portland hospitals**

By ALEX WITTMER  
 EO Media Group

A bevy of local hospitals and providers are receiving more than \$7.8 million in funds through the American Rescue Plan via a program specific to rural hospitals.

While the fund allocated \$118 million to hospitals across the state, nearly 25%, or more than \$29.4 million, was sent to hospitals in Portland — mostly to Providence, a hospital chain that serves the Willamette Valley and coastal regions of Oregon.

The largest single payment in Northeastern Oregon went to Good Shepherd Health Care System, Hermiston, which collected a little more than \$2.6 million, while Baker City's Saint Alphonsus Medical Center received more than \$1.1 million through the program. The list of providers and suppliers that were awarded funds also includes: Interpath Laboratories, Pendleton; Center for Human Development Inc., La Grande; Wallowa County Health Care District, Enterprise; Blue Mountain Hospital District, John Day; and Morrow County Health District, Boardman.

“Good Shepherd Health Care System did receive the \$2.6 million, and we plan on using it for either of two areas — to be applied to additional COVID expenses we have incurred or to lost revenue due to the COVID pandemic,” Caitlin Cozad, marketing and communications director for Good Shepherd Health Care System, said in an email.

An official with Baker City's Saint Alphonsus Medical Center said the funds will be crucial in renewing depleted resources and hiring temporary staff such as nurses.

The American Rescue Plan Rural payment program pool totals nearly \$7.5 billion in federal funds, and was targeted toward suppliers and providers that serve rural Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicare beneficiaries, according to a release from the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services. “Health care providers in rural communities have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they continue to experience significant financial hardships,” U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a press release. “The infusion of these funds will be critical to ensuring rural communities maintain access to high-quality health care and addressing urgent needs like workforce recruitment and retention.”

Payments ranged from as little as \$500, which went to providers such as individually licensed psychiatrists and social workers, to several million dollars. The largest single award for Oregon went to Central Oregon's Saint Charles Health System, which received more than \$10.5 million.

Of the nearly 500 awards distributed, the most frequent award was \$500, which went to 88 Oregon suppliers and providers.

Provisions in the program allowed providers in the Portland metropolitan area to receive funding, even though there was a separate fund of \$9 billion already earmarked for providers and suppliers in non-rural areas. Clinics and providers in Portland that received funding included Northwest Urology in the Pearl District of Portland, which received just more than \$90,000.

According to U.S. Health and Human Services, providers who serve Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare patients who live in rural communities are eligible for the ARP Rural payments. As well, providers who serve any patients living in Federal Office of Rural Health Policy-defined rural areas with Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare coverage, and who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria, will receive a minimum payment.

Other Portland businesses that received funding include optometrist clinics, acupuncturists, a dentist office, retirement homes and Portland State University — which received just more than \$1 million, though the university does have its own on-campus clinic.

U.S. Health and Human Services did not respond to requests for comment about the requirements for the payments before publication.

**630 S. HWY 395 • HERMISTON, OR**  
**541.567.6151**

Chamber Office Hours:  
 Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

www.hermistonchamber.com

## NEW YEARS EVE BASH!

@ EOTEC  
 For more info call 541.289.9800

**FAMILY EVENT STARTING AT 6PM**

Movies  
 Games  
 Snacks \$5/PERSON

**INDOORS!**

**Parking Lot Tailgate Party**  
 Come anytime after 3pm  
**BYOB**

**Festival of Lights @ 5pm**  
**FIREWORKS AT MIDNIGHT**

## Networking Nights

at the chamber

2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH  
 4:00-5:30PM

# Happy New Year!

JOIN US FOR A

## New Year's Eve

CELEBRATION

**ONE NIGHT ONLY!**  
**TRI TIP OR STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST DINNER**  
**AND**  
**MONTE CARLO BOWLING**  
**8PM- 1AM**  
**\$60 PER PERSON**

+21 & OVER

DINNER & BOWLING CHECK IN @ 7:30PM  
 BOWLING STARTS @ 9PM.

LIGHT SNACK DURING BOWLING, PARTY FAVORS, CHAMPAGNE AND DESSERT AT MIDNIGHT

**DEC 31**  
**8PM - 1AM**

**Desert Lanes Family Fun Center - Hermiston**

Hosted by:

## BUSINESS CONNECTION

Tuesdays at 8:30am KOHU 1360AM

DINOPAY app + Sinclair Card

# Save 30¢

off every gallon.

Get the app today!

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

## HOW ARE YOUR CARPETS LOOKING?

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!

HOME • COMMERCIAL  
 24 HOUR EMERGENCY

**OSO KLEEN**  
 CLEANING & RESTORATION

541-567-3781 • 1-800-238-1223  
 905 Diagonal • Hermiston  
 www.osokleen.com

Complete Collection Service

# CREDITS

INCORPORATED

Licensed • Bonded  
 No Collection • No Fee

Tim Mabry  
 President

461 E. Main  
 Hermiston, OR 97838  
 (541) 289-9107  
 www.creditsinc.com

## Bank of Eastern Oregon

**LOT LOANS**  
**CONSTRUCTION • REMODELING**

Inquire at your Hermiston  
 Bank of Eastern Oregon Branch!

### Hermiston

541-303-8274 • 1475 N. 1ST STREET

## BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

Phone: (541) 289-3000  
 Email: uebcrc@gmail.com

1475 N. First St. in Hermiston  
 Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
 with a lunch closure from 1-2 p.m.

We're here to assist your farm or small businesses with Covid-19 relief.

# KEEP IT LOCAL

541.567.8073  
 53 W Beebe Ave, Hermiston, OR

**ELMER'S IRRIGATION, INC.**

"Proudly serving & investing in the future of our communities"

**Hwy 395 • Hermiston**  
**541-567-5572**

Complete Collection Service

# CREDITS

INCORPORATED

Licensed • Bonded  
 No Collection • No Fee

Tim Mabry  
 President

461 E. Main  
 Hermiston, OR 97838  
 (541) 289-9107  
 www.creditsinc.com

## P4 & MORE COMPUTERS

541-567-6562  
 115 W. Hermiston Ave., Ste. 150  
 Hermiston Oregon

**NEW LOCATION:**  
 630 South Hwy 395  
 Hermiston  
 541-567-6151