

County progresses toward 65 percent vaccination goal

Hilary Dorsey

Staff Writer

Tillamook County Health Department relayed during a community update Tuesday, May 25, 18 COVID-19 cases from the last evaluation period, Sunday, May 9, through Saturday, May 22. The county shifts to Lower Risk, effective Thursday, May 27, to Thursday, June 3.

Oregon has new vaccination rate goals in place that will have an effect on risk level movement. Administrator Marlene Putman said statewide, the goal is to reach 70 percent of those age eligible to receive at least one dose of the vaccine. The state is currently at 64 percent, as

of May 24. When the state reaches the 70 percent goal, risk levels will end.

Tillamook County is looking to reach the county goal of 65 percent, Putman added. Tillamook County is at 60.2 percent, as of May 25.

“When counties reach that, they can move to and remain in that Lower Risk category,” Putman said. “Counties moved as early as May 21. We’re not there yet.”

Businesses – not including health care facilities, schools, long term care facilities or when using public transportation – are provided with a choice to verify vaccination history in order to relax mandates for fully vaccinated people or can choose to keep with the mask mandate for

everyone, Putman added.

“If they’re choosing to relax the mask mandates for fully vaccinated people, there’s some requirements that have to be met,” Putman said.

These requirements include having a policy for checking for proof of vaccination status for individuals, requesting proof of vaccination status from each individual, and reviewing each individual’s proof of vaccination before entry into those facilities. If you are fully vaccinated and wish to continue to wear a mask, you may do so, even if the business does not require it.

“People are still getting sick with COVID-19,” Putman said. “If you’re feeling

ill, stay home, reach out to your provider, give us a call if you have questions. Testing is available at no cost.”

Putman said from Tuesday, May 18, to Monday, May 24, there were five new COVID-19 cases in the county. The health department is currently monitoring 12 people. Oregon Health Authority announced Thursday, May 27, a 77-year-old man from Tillamook County who tested positive on April 24 and died on April 28 at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. He had underlying conditions.

The health center’s emergency preparedness coordinator, Ed Colson mentioned a recent announcement of the chance to win the lottery. The

state will pick 42 winners: One person in the state will win \$1 million, one person in each county will receive \$10,000 and five 12 to 17 year olds will receive \$100,000 Oregon College Savings Plan scholarships.

The Oregon Lottery and Oregon Health Authority will pick winners June 28. All Oregonians who have received at least one dose of the vaccine by June 27 are entered to win, Colson said.

As of May 25, 13,342 Tillamook County residents have received one dose, which is 60.2 percent of the population, and 50.9 percent of the age eligible population are considered fully vaccinated.

Nestucca Rural Fire Protection District and the South

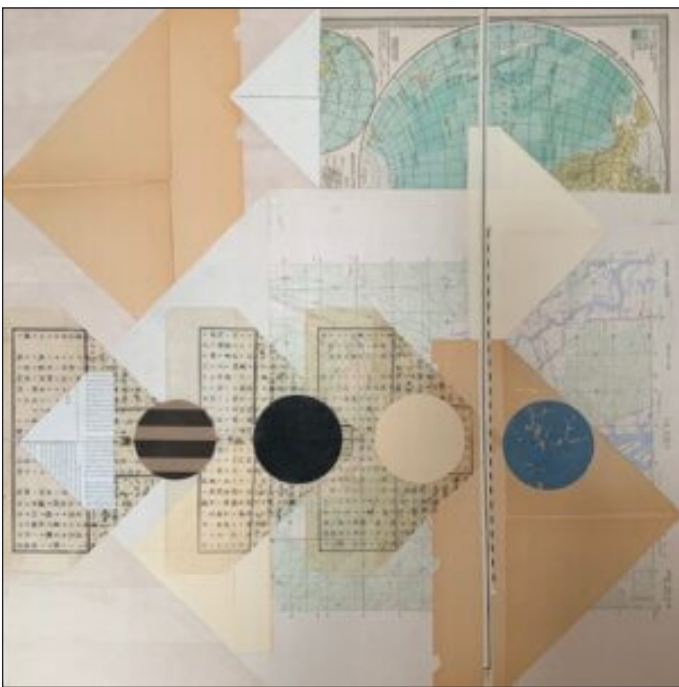
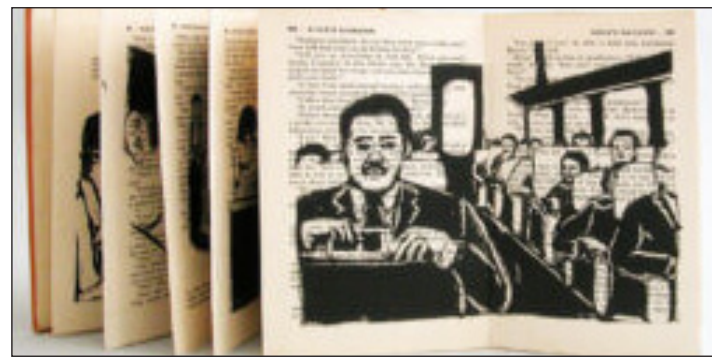
Tillamook County Emergency Volunteer Corps have been holding vaccine clinics at the fire station in Hebo. They are now willing to make ‘business calls’ for those who cannot leave work to get a vaccine and will administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at your business. If interested, email margejoza@gmail.com to make arrangements.

Call to make an appointment for COVID-19 testing at 503-842-3900.

Sign up for a vaccine appointment at <https://tillamookchc.org/coronavirus/vaccines/>

Send comments to: headlightreporter@countrymedia.net

THE ART SCENE



Hoffman Gallery’s June show opens June 3-27

Hoffman Gallery’s June show is open from 1-5 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, June 3-27. The show is free and open to the public. Hoffman Center for the Arts is located at 594 Laneda Ave. in Manzanita.

The gallery will feature the works of Poppy Dully and Emilio Lobato.

Poppy Dully

“My artist’s books are products of discoveries. The images follow the story line and capture visual records of significant thematic moments. Words and phrases surface, catch the reader’s attention and abstractly reinforce the images. I like to explore how we process information. Is it the word or image that you gravitate to first? How does one enhance the other? How does chance change or enhance our understanding?”

The three intaglio prints were made

from drawings made on Grass Mountain, property recently acquired by Sitka Center for Art and Ecology. These coastal subjects speak to my love of nature and my inherent need to explore and record where I go.”

Emilio Lobato

The ocean has long inspired awe, wanderlust, and most significantly, rejuvenation. For over 30 years Lobato has vacationed on the Oregon Coast in pursuit of those very things. For a week or two every year on those family vacations Lobato became enamored of that landscape. The rugged coastline is the exact opposite of the desert Southwest of Lobato’s childhood. It had long been a “bucket list” objective of his to return for an extended period, specifically to create a body of work exploring that experience.

“Flights of Fancy” is a series of collage

and mixed media on panels produced on the Oregon coast in early 2019.

“Flying stunt kites was my wife’s favorite pastime while on vacation,” Lobato said. “Over the years many special memories were created there. I wanted to explore imagery that expressed the whimsy, nostalgia, and expansiveness that the coast inspired.”

Using maps of the northwest, historical documents collected in Astoria, and Japanese rice paper, Lobato fashioned paper airplanes that he then collaged. The childhood pastime of making and launching paper airplanes evokes carefree moments, the desire to soar, and most importantly, to dream.

For more information and to view each artists’ work, visit <https://hoffmanarts.org/events/gallery-show-june-2021-2/>

Vaccine update



County approves COVID-19 vaccine equity plan to submit to OHA

Hilary Dorsey

Staff Writer

Tillamook County Board of Commissioners approved a COVID-19 vaccine equity plan during a meeting Wednesday, May 26. The equity plan accompanies the county’s ability to move and stay in the Lower Risk category once 65 percent of age eligible residents receive at least one dose of the vaccine; the county is at 60.4 percent, as of May 26. The equity plan will be submitted to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

Administrator Marlene Putman said the state’s goal is to reach 70 percent of age eligible residents receiving at least one dose of the vaccine. When this goal is met, risk level assignments will end. The county’s goal is to reach 65 percent of age eligible residents vaccinated with at least one dose.

The county goal is accompanied by the equity plan, Putman said. The equity plan includes an additional goal of an 80 percent vaccination rate for Black, Indigenous and people of color. The health department hopes to reach this goal by the end of August.

“To achieve these goals, the state is providing us with the incentive of if we achieve that 65 percent target, and have our equity plan in place, we can stay at Lower Risk for our county,” Putman said.

Tillamook County is now at lower risk, as of May 27, but reaching the 65 percent target would allow the county to remain in the risk level.

Putman said the equity plan addresses many of the actions that have already been taken in Tillamook County to reach out to people.

“We want to make the vaccine accessible and are trying everything we can to make it accessible to everyone,” Putman said.

Removing barriers to vaccine access is required in the equity plan, such as adding geographically accessible vaccine sites for those who work non-traditional hours, transportation barriers, and more.

The health department and county have reviewed regional data, as well as specific data for the county. The vaccination rate for white people is 41.5 percent, according to the health department. The lowest rate for vaccine is Latino/Hispanic at 23.1 percent. In this plan, the health department estimates 15 percent of the county’s population as Latino.

Send comments to: headlightreporter@countrymedia.net

OSU experts: Vaccinations will require creativity, collaboration

Zack Demars

Country Media

Public health officials will need to be creative to keep pushing the state’s COVID-19 vaccination rate, according to a panel of Oregon State University experts.

Just under 65% of Oregon eligible population has received a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, inching towards the state’s 70% goal, which will

lift most pandemic restrictions in the state, according to state data.

But according to Chunheui Chi, an OSU public health professor, the state needs to see a lot more vaccinations to tamp down the pandemic.

“Let’s just forget any so-called magic number for so-called herd immunity. The ideal is we want to vaccinate as many people as possible, because we have continued to face new variants that are more contagious,” Chi said during a panel this week.

The panel weighed in on the state’s new incentive for getting vaccinated: A \$1 million prize for one vaccinated Oregonian, plus \$10,000 for one vaccinated resident in each

county.

Those dollar amounts could be effective in increasing vaccinations — for some.

“Anything we put funding into, the signaling behind that is the thing behind that thing we are investing in is important,” said Aimee Huff, a business professor who studies consumer behavior. “So I think the implicit signaling in the fact that we’re investing as a state in this financial incentive to encourage vaccination, there’s signaling there that says that this is really something important and worthwhile.”

For others though, the state’s lottery reward remains in accessible.

Oralia Mendez, a community health worker program in-

structor, said some are worried about winning or being a part of the lottery program because there might be a language barrier or they might be asked to show ID or proof of citizenship (though state officials have said any Oregon resident is eligible).

“Those are things our communities see as barriers to being part of that lottery space,” Mendez said.

Instead, Mendez said other incentives might work better for hard-to-reach groups.

“One of the incentives we’re talking about is having maybe a food truck, where they get a vaccine, a shot for a taco,” Mendez said. “More tailoring



Merkley convenes forest management hearing

Zack Demars
Country Media

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley hopes to use his post on a powerful senate committee to increase funding for wildfire prevention efforts.

The Democratic senator this week convened a hearing of an appropriations subcommittee he chairs on the topic of funding forest management. Merkley and the subcommittee questioned U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen about the agency's fire prevention work.

"The 2020 fire year became a call to action. We saw the most acres burned on the Forest Service lands since the Big Burn of 1910. In many places, forests will not come back on their own, which impacts the potential for carbon storage and limits the land's capacity to mitigate

climate change," Christiansen told the committee.

In all, Christiansen told senators her agency needs more money for fuel management programs and to provide higher pay for wildland firefighters.

"Despite the pandemic, the Forest Service sustained our hazardous fuels production work, but we know it's not enough. We need a paradigm shift," she said.

In comments to reporters after the hearing, Merkley laid out his vision for providing those funds through congress.

"Forests of course are absolutely the heart of Oregon's identity. We value the forests. They're headwaters of our clean drinking water, they're the genesis of our salmon runs, they're the backbone of our recreation in our rural economies,"

Merkley said. "And the Forest Service and the professionals that staff it are critical to our state, our people, our economy."

One key program Merkley noted to promote resilient forests was the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, which brings together timber, environmental and other stakeholders in certain forests to collaborate on forest management.

"These collaborative have been just an amazing opportunity for folks who'd (been) considered rivals or almost enemies to come together and work out a plan. And the result is the plans stay out of court, because the stakeholders were there from the beginning talking to each to each other," Merkley said.

He's hoping to get congress to approve \$80 million for the program in the next budget year, doubling its

appropriation.

Merkley also wants the federal government to spend more money on taking care of its forests, by thinning, mowing and burning forests to reduce the risk of the most intense wildfires.

He says there are 2.3 million acres of forests in Oregon which have received environmental review for that kind of cleanup — but that haven't gotten it yet.

"And yet, we don't have the money to do the treatment," Merkley said.

The senator wants to see more funding available to support that work, especially in President Joe Biden's soon-to-be-released jobs and infrastructure package.

Beyond those large programs, Merkley said he's also supporting other wildfire efforts, like funding

for Oregon land and water conservation projects, removing a cap on wildfire suppression spending and establishing year-round firefighting teams to do fire prevention in the offseason.

In all, the senator said forest management will only continue to be more important as the climate continues to change.

"We really have to pay attention to forest management, so that's why I called this first hearing, 'The Future of Forest Management,' and asked the type of questions and pursued these types of programs," Merkley said.

The complete subcommittee hearing is available on the senate's website at <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/rethinking-resiliency-budgeting-for-the-future-of-forest-management>

Happenings at the International Police Museum

Ed Wortman
Executive Director
International
Police Museum

As May turns to June it is both a time for remembrance and rejuvenation. Flowers are bursting into bloom while the local birds are singing and nesting, restarting the circle of life. Remembrance because May contains National Police Week, May 9-15 this year, honoring those who serve, as well as those who have lost their lives in service to their departments, and the families and communities they left behind. Each year there is a candlelight vigil in Washington, DC, at the National Police Memorial. During this time, the names of the fallen officers who have been added to the memorial wall for 2021 are read, with a bell tolling for each death. Police Week officially began in 1962 when President John F. Kennedy signed public Law 87-726 designating May 15 as Police Officers Memorial Day (later changed to Peace Officer)

and the week in which May 15 falls as National Police Week. Locally a memorial is held at the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office in May and the State of Oregon held a ceremony at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) Academy in Salem on May 4, 2021. Attendance at all functions was again impacted by the pandemic, as they were in 2020. IPM honored the fallen officers and their families on Saturday, May 15, with a plaque and a selection of individually wrapped wrist bands.

May is also a rejuvenation of the International Police Museum (IPM) in Wheeler. It is our first full month of operation since March of 2020. This follows the closure of the museum for the pandemic, followed by our rent being increased by the City of Rockaway Beach, notification at the end of October that the building housing IPM had been sold, and our resulting move in December. Anyone who has moved knows the ongoing dilemma of finding

a new space, calculating how the furniture will fit, and deciding what to put in the new location, move to storage, or throw away. Moving a museum has added challenges as the furniture consists of showcases, display items, and artifacts, none of which are considered disposable items.

December was a hectic month for IPM. Boxing, labeling, and storing multiple artifacts was a challenge as many of the artifacts become more fragile with age and even attempts at careful packing can lead to damage. Many paper items become brittle, wood items like the old water pipe, may shrink or become unsecured in displays,

making them difficult to move and store. Fortunately, IPM found space about 8 miles north in Wheeler at the Wheeler Treasures Antique Mall.

The new area provided storage for large showcases and our jail door until we could complete painting, repair displays, and plan a display layout. Masking, cleaning, and distancing requirements posed an additional challenge. How do we arrange the new space to create a natural flow which guides people through the museum and does it in a manner that is neither obtrusive nor obvious. March and April were busy months with the completion of our move to Wheeler Treasures and our soft opening on April 10. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned when pandemic restrictions allow.

While the space is smaller,

and less expensive, Peggy, the "shopkeeper extraordinaire", has been great to work with and extremely helpful in promoting IPM. She and the other shopkeepers have graciously been keeping a hand count of visitors to the museum. This is most helpful and appreciated as we must rely on grants and fundraising to support the museum, most of which require documentation of our numbers. We are excited by the numbers of visitors that Peggy and her crew are reporting and look forward to an increase in that number as we get more word out about our new location. IPM has maintained its policy of free admittance, and we are pleased to see that our average daily attendance and donations exceed 2019 levels. This is especially good news since the pandemic currently prohibits our primary fundraising activities, such as our July 4th auction. We are also fortunate that donations continue to come in for our new can and bottle recycling program.


Future plans may include expansion if additional space becomes available. That would enable IPM to have a larger display featuring Wheeler history. We are currently focused on trying

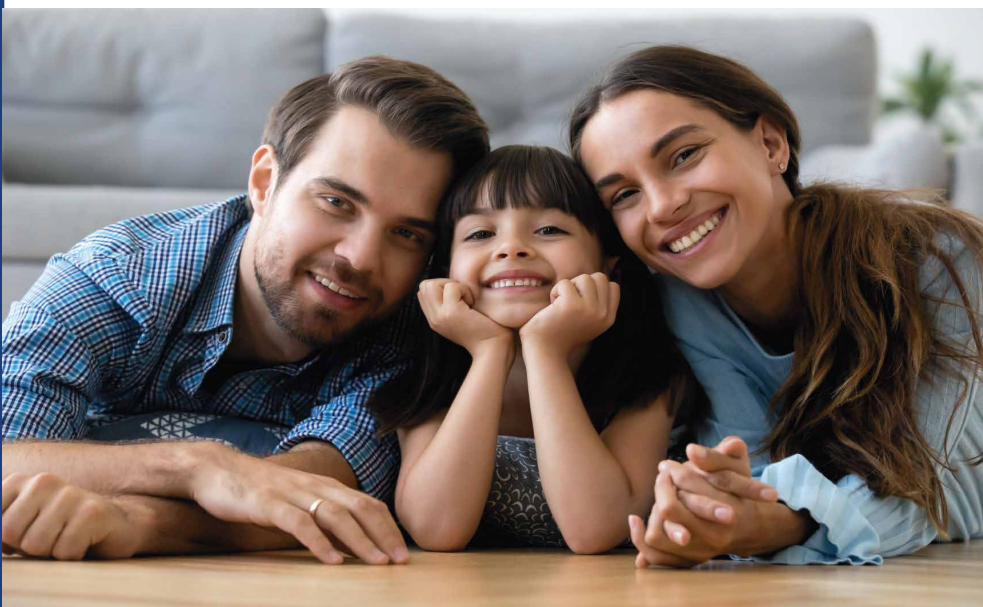
to devise a communication system for children between two locations in the museum, either by telegraph or old fashion telephone, so they can see firsthand how some of the early communication systems worked. This interactive display would emphasize our motto - "It's Not All Guns and Cuffs" - by highlighting some of the tools and activities used by police to help and protect people. Combining an educational opportunity with entertainment increases the likelihood of retention and is always a win for both IPM and the participant. A favorite "photo-op" at our old location was posing a jail cell door, and jail cell from Portland's old Rocky Butte Jail is ready for photos at our Wheeler location.

I want to thank YOU, our readers and visitors, for your support of IPM. I am confident that we will get through the pandemic together, emerging stronger in the coming year. Please take care of you and your families during this trying time in our history.

For more information, contact us at 503 354-4454, via FB (International Police Museum - Oregon, USA) or at info@InternationalPoliceMuseum.org







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Cascade Falls Quilting offers unique quilts

Hilary Dorsey
Staff Writer

Cascade Falls Quilting, located in Tillamook, offers a large selection of quilts for sale for special occasions, such as graduation, a wedding or anniversary. Quilt maker Gloria Guyer also helps local nonprofits by supplying quilts for fundraising raffles.

Guyer was born and raised in Pennsylvania. She started quilting at 17 years old. She got her first machine in Virginia and then moved to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. She was then offered to quilt in Waldport.

“I’ve been quilting in Tillamook for six years and been quilting for 50 years,” Guyer said.

Guyer makes her quilts from her home in Tillamook. She said prices for quilts vary– it can be anywhere from \$450 to \$1,500. Quilts on her Etsy store, jimandglo, range from \$300 to \$950 generally.

“I never charge for time,” Guyer said.

Guyer has shown her work at Garibaldi Maritime Museum and donates a quilt to the museum each year. One of her favorite quilts is a



postage stamp quilt, composed of 3,721 pieces. You can find it on the Etsy store under “Triple Irish Chain With Roses sale.

Another favorite of Guyer’s is an authentic Welsh white whole cloth quilt, designed by a U.K. artist. There are thousands of stitches in the whole clothes. St. Mary by the Sea recently took all the white whole cloth quilts for an auction so they are currently sold out on Etsy.

Guyer said she is currently quilting to be ready for graduates. She usually has 50 quilts on hand in her home

shop. The quilts are made mainly for king and queen-sized beds.

Lay away is an option, Guyer said, as well as PayPal on Etsy. If you are buying from the shop, you will need cash.

Shop Cascade Falls Quilting on Etsy at jimandglo or call Gloria Guyer at 208-649-7147 to make an appointment to see quilts in her home office, located near the Tillamook County Library on Third Street.

Send comments to: headlightreporter@countrymedia.net



(Top) Judy Neimier wood cutter’s Star Glo, photo by Gloria Guyer. (Inset) Postage stamp quilt. Courtesy photo

June Dairy Parade returns to normal this year

The 64th annual June Dairy Parade will feel a little more normal this year.

When recent updates to state and federal COVID-19 guidelines removed the requirement for masks outdoors, it removed one of the largest barriers to allowing Tillamook to celebrate June Dairy Month with a traditional parade. Now, instead of an inside-out model as previously planned, the Tillamook Area Chamber of Commerce will revert back to “normal” with a regular parade, in which parade entries drive down the street, while spectators line the route to view the procession.

“Although we had planned for another inside-out parade, we decided to change back to normal now that guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Oregon Health Authority allow us to,” said Justin Aufdermauer, Chamber executive director. “We want to see things get back to normal as soon as possible, and the community deserves this. It’s going to

be a tight turnaround, but we’re going to give it everything we have.”

The parade route will follow its usual path down Main Avenue, around the Rodeo Steakhouse, down Pacific Avenue, then along Third Street to end at Goodspeed Park.

The Chamber received the necessary Oregon Department of Transportation permits to use that route.

“Once we saw the change in the OHA guidance, we immediately reached out to ODOT and the City of Tillamook. Both have been great to work with and have already issued permits to use our traditional parade route, which has space for plenty of parade-goers, whether locals coming to watch their children’s dance groups perform, or visitors stopping by to learn about Tillamook’s dairy industry,” Aufdermauer said. “We see this as an opportunity to share the June Dairy Parade with many more people than we could last

year.”

Although most of the parade will resemble pre-COVID-19 celebrations, this year will feature a couple of small changes: Entries will not be judged or receive trophies, and there will be no grand or honorary grand marshal.

“Because we only have one month to reorganize the parade, we decided to forego judging entries and marshalling for this year,” Aufdermauer said. “However, we will still host the children’s coloring contest, complete with prizes for the winning artists.”

The parade, which is sponsored by the Tillamook County Creamery Association, will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on June 26. This year’s theme is “As the World Churns.”

“We are grateful for TCCA’s continued support of the parade, and we are doing everything we can to bring the community the best parade possible this year. Now it’s up to the community to get their entries in and get

ready to show off for everyone,” Aufdermauer said.

The deadline for parade entries has been extended to June 11. Those who have already submitted a parade entry, will be contacted by a Chamber representative to adjust their entry as necessary to fit the traditional parade model.

The Chamber encourages anyone else who is interested in signing up to do so online at JuneDairyParade.com. Printable coloring sheets for the children’s coloring contest are also available on that website.

“We are especially excited for the opportunity to include horses and marching bands, which found last year’s inside-out model more difficult to participate in,” Aufdermauer said. “As we return to normal, we really hope to grow the number of entries this year to make this June Dairy Parade our biggest and most enjoyable yet.”



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National Trails Day: Local favorites in Tillamook County

Ariel Slifka
AmeriCorps VISTA Tillamook County Health Center

Tillamook County is home to an abundance of beautiful hikes, beaches, and rivers – and with summer just around the corner, you may be looking for some inspiration on where to start. In honor of National Trails Day coming up on the first Saturday of June, we asked community members what they loved about the trails across Tillamook County:

“My favorite hike is the Kinnikinnick Woods Loop at Sitka Sedge. My cousin and I used to race our horses on those trails when we were kids. I’m so fortunate that it is in my backyard so I still use it, but on my own two feet with my chocolate lab Huckleberry.” (Arica Sears, Deputy Director of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association).

“Short Beach is one of my favorite spots to go hiking because it has an incredible view, it is close to my house and I can take my son to look for fossil rocks” (Angelica Ortiz, National Diabetes Prevention Program Instructor, Tillamook County Family YMCA)

“There are so many great hikes on the Oregon Coast and in Tillamook County alone. One of my personal favorites is Cape Falcon trail in Oswald State Park which is one of the last (northern) stops in Tillamook County. The hike is 2.4 miles

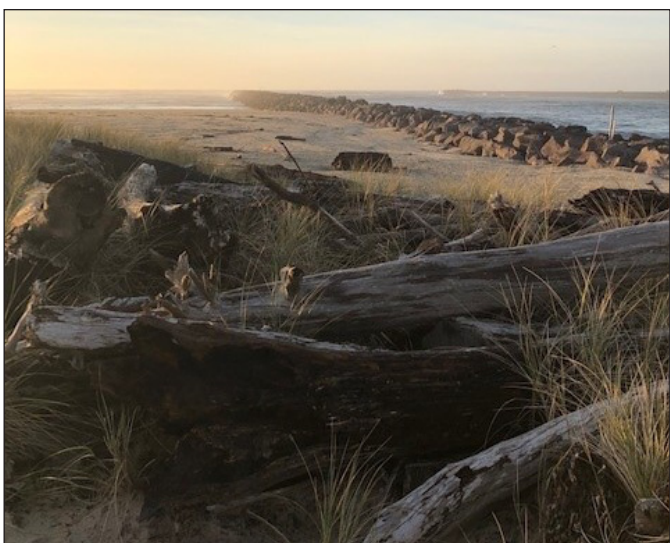
out (4.8 roundtrip) to the top which brings you to a beautiful overlook spot of Short Sands beach. This hike can be pretty busy during the warmer months, I prefer to hike it early morning in fall or winter. There are lots of big roots on this trail, while it can be tempting to be on your phone to capture the beauty of this hike, its best to keep your eyes on the trail!”

(Shelby Porter, Public Health Program Representative at Tillamook County Community Health Center)

“My favorite place? I do love the Neahkahnie Mtn hike. It’s very accessible and the view is unparalleled. I discovered it when I was a kid, exploring with my cousins who lived in Wheeler.” (Jon-Paul Bowles, Executive Director of the Salmonberry Trail Foundation)

“I love Bay Ocean Spit in Tillamook! It’s fun to walk all the way around and see the bay, the bar, and the ocean. Every time I go, it’s a little different. It’s also fun to see the perspective from the other side of the Tillamook Bay.” (Kelly Benson, Sustainable Relationship for Community Health Coordinator, Tillamook County Family YMCA)

“My top favorite is probably the Wilson River Trail: Kings Mtn Trailhead to Jones Creek Trailhead. It offers a great overview of what the Tillamook State Forest has to offer, this route takes you away from the



river and the highway noise, leading you up into the greater Wilson River watershed and the Lester Creek valley, in particular. The route offers some rocky cliffs and outcroppings with fantastic views over the valley, as well as giving an opportunity to hike through several ecosystem types, including drier hillsides and wet red alder groves. You’ll feel truly alone out there, a least until you reach the Diamond Mill OHV Area. Crossing the Diamond Mill footbridge is a treat, as this wooden bridge is a beautiful work of art and showcases the gorgeous North Fork of the Wilson River. You also get a peek at the lovely Lester Creek waterfall on the other side of the river. Excellent in the rain or in the sunshine, this route is a challenge and a pleasure.”

(Samantha Goodwin, NW Youth Corps, GIS Intern, U.S. Forest Service)

If you decide to explore these hikes, consider going off season or on a weekday to avoid over-crowding, remember to stay on the trail, leave wildlife wild, and pick up & carry your trash back out. It is important that we protect these spaces if we want to continue enjoying their beauty. And keep an eye out this summer for the launch of an interactive map of all the trails in Tillamook County on tillamookcoast.com.

For more local health and wellness information, visit www.tillamookcountywellness.org or follow Tillamook County Wellness on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Tillamook County remains in Lower Risk

Gov. Kate Brown announced Tuesday, June 1, updates to county risk levels under the state’s public health framework to reduce transmission and protect Oregonians from COVID-19. Effective Friday, June 4, through Thursday, June 10, there will be 13 counties in the High Risk level, 4 at Moderate Risk, and 19 at Lower Risk.

Tillamook County remains in Lower Risk.

“The science is clear: vaccines are very effective in keeping people safe from COVID-19, and they are the key to returning to normal life and lifting health and safety restrictions statewide,” said Brown. “Thanks to all the Oregonians who have been vaccinated so far, Oregon’s case rates have continued to decline.

“But, COVID-19 remains a serious threat to unvaccinated individuals and communities with low vaccination rates. If you have been waiting to get vaccinated, go get your shot today. It’s never been easier to get vaccinated, and you may just win \$1 million through the Take Your Shot, Oregon campaign.”

On May 11, Governor Brown announced that counties that vaccinate at least 65 percent of their adult residents with at



least one dose and submit documentation on how they will close equity gaps in their vaccination efforts are eligible to move to the Lower Risk level. A county vaccination data dashboard is available on OHA’s website. Please note that the dashboard displays state vaccine allocations only, and does not track federally administered vaccine doses. While additional counties submitted equity plans this week, none of those counties achieved the 65% threshold needed to move to Lower Risk this week. Complete equity plans are available here.

Weekly County Movements

As case rates continue to decline, county risk level changes will be announced

every week. Counties can move to lower risk levels based either on vaccination rates and the submission of an equity plan, or declining case rates and positivity rates. The next risk level changes will be announced on Tuesday, June 8, to take effect on Friday, June 11.

Counties facing moves back up to higher risk levels this week are in a warning week only, giving county health partners an additional week to focus efforts on driving case numbers back down before additional health and safety restrictions are renewed.

When Oregon achieves a first dose 70 percent statewide vaccination rate for residents 18 or older, Oregon will lift all risk level health and safety restrictions. Some restrictions based on CDC guidance for use of masks and physical distancing may remain in place. [Note: Previous announcements had based the 70% vaccination metric on residents 16 or older, however, in order to align state data with CDC data, the Oregon Health Authority is tracking adult vaccination rates for residents 18 and older.]

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Deadline for letters is noon Thursdays.
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• *Basic Obituary:* Includes the person’s name, age, town of residency, and information about any funeral services. No cost.

• *Custom Obituary:* You choose the length and wording of the announcement. The cost is \$75 for the first 200 words, \$50 for each additional 200 words. Includes a small photo at no additional cost.

• *Premium Obituary:* Often used by families who wish to include multiple photos with a longer announcement, or who wish to run a thank-you. Cost varies based on the length of the announcement.

• Obituaries need to be submitted by Friday at 5 p.m. the week prior to publication.

All obituary announcements are placed on the North Coast Citizen website at no cost.

Child Care: Oregon’s ‘deserts’

MOLLY ROSBACH
Guest Article

A new report from Oregon State University shows that as of March 2020, all 36 counties in Oregon qualify as child care “deserts” for infants and toddlers — meaning that there are at least three children under the age of 2 for every available child care slot in the county.

Baseline report

Researchers say the report, based on data collected prior to COVID-19, will serve as a useful baseline to highlight how the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing Oregon families with small children.

“This report confirmed what families understand: There’s not enough child care, period, but there’s really a crisis when it comes to infant

and toddler slots,” said Megan Pratt, an assistant professor of practice in OSU’s College of Public Health and Human Sciences and lead author of the report, published this week. Michaella Sektnan at OSU was her co-author.

The report builds on Pratt’s 2019 comprehensive look at Oregon child care, which showed a similar landscape: All 36 counties were child care deserts for the 0-2 age group, while 25 counties were deserts for kids ages 3-5.

The biennial reports are funded via the state’s Early Learning Division as part of the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership with the purpose of informing state policymakers on the current status of Oregon’s child care supply, particularly the dearth of options for infants and toddlers and the role played by

publicly funded programs in filling those gaps, especially in rural areas.

By the numbers

The new report found that while the state’s total amount of state-licensed child care increased by 588 slots from 2018-2020, and the estimated number of children under the age of 5 declined by about 13,000 statewide, Oregon’s child care supply remains limited. Twenty-five of Oregon’s 36 counties are also deserts for preschool kids ages 3-5, and for infants and toddlers ages 0-2, half of Oregon’s counties qualify as “extreme” deserts, with, at most, one child care slot for every 10 children in that age group.

The numbers show public investment plays a key role in expanding the child care supply in Oregon. Between 2018 and 2020, increased state



funding led to an additional 817 publicly funded child care slots across the state, part of the overall growth. Publicly funded slots now account for 19% of Oregon’s total child care supply.

“This report highlights why Oregon needs to continue to invest in child care and focus on strategies that build our supply of affordable, high-quality child care and ensure our existing programs are supported,” Oregon’s Early Learning Division Systems Acting Director Alyssa Chatterjee said. “Many families are struggling to access high-quality child care, and we can’t wait to address the issue.”

The report culled data from various sources, including regulatory databases for licensing information on child care providers throughout the state, and Oregon’s Early Learning Division, which administers public programs such as Head Start, Preschool Promise and Baby Promise.

Researchers looked at data from March 2020, right before the pandemic hit, and found a continued decline in the number of small, home-

based child care provider slots. This decline has largely driven the overall loss of child care slots, as large child care centers cannot fully make up for the lack of home-based slots.

Critical role

Home-based providers play a critical role in Oregon’s child care supply, Pratt said, with many families seeking out home settings for more culturally responsive care for their children. But providers often struggle financially.

“It’s really hard to make it work business-wise, because providers do not make very much money for what they’re doing,” Pratt said. “It’s hard to get new people to come into the field and say ‘I want to be a small, home-based provider.’”

Pratt said the new report is a good jumping-off point for bigger questions and deeper analysis, as the existence of child care slots is only one hurdle many families face.

“Child care slots can exist, but not be accessible for a whole host of reasons. When other research asks what those barriers are, the primary one is affordability,” she said.


Other barriers to access include a child care center’s hours of operation, which might not align with parents working night or weekend shifts; language and cultural compatibility; and finding care that meets the needs of children with delays or disabilities.


What’s next

Oregon is working to expand access and availability of child care, with legislation like the Student Success Act directing more funding to early learning, and programs like Preschool Promise, which provide child care and education for kids at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

“While this report shows we still have a long way to go, I am encouraged that the critical role of child care is receiving more attention than before,” Chatterjee said. “There’s wide recognition that child care is something we all need to address together.”

Molly Rosbach is a member of the OSU Department of Marketing and Research team. She may be reached at molly.rosbach@oregonstate.edu.





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Experts

Continued from Page 1

towards our communities. So really talking to them, ‘What would work for you, what kinds of things do you need?’”

For other groups, the barriers to accessing a vaccine can simply be timing, according to Dusti Linnell, who works with the university’s extension service, in Lincoln County.

“What we have seen was, where people are saying they probably won’t get vaccinated, really when you think that won’t be resistance or

hesitance, but really what we’re seeing is it’s a denial of access. For people who live in Lincoln County who are Latino, Hispanic and Indigenous they mostly work in tourism or agriculture where their hours are very long,” Linnell said.

In those cases, pop-up vaccination clinics at businesses can help get employees vaccinated, as can bands or other activities at sites to attract interest.

What’s more, many rural areas need better access to interpretation services to reduce barriers, Linnell said.

“We’ve been hearing consistently from our communities, especially where I serve on the coast, that the access to interpretation’s a major bar-

rier, they don’t feel like they can trust the locations because there are not people who can speak their language,” Linnell said.

And Brett Tyler, an OSU scientist who’s been tracking the virus’ variants, said those variants still create risk.

Unchecked spread could create additional variants that are more contagious or more deadly, Tyler said. That’s why he advocates for as much vaccination as the state can accomplish, and cautious behavior in the meantime.

“I think there’s a very significant risk to people who are not vaccinated and who are taking off their mask. I think that also flows through to concerns about children,” Tyler said.

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