

The News-Review

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Voting early

More than half of Douglas County voters have already returned their ballots



MICHAEL SULLIVAN/NEWS-REVIEW PHOTOS

Douglas County elections assistant Michael Kiepert organizes ballots at the Douglas County Courthouse in Roseburg on Tuesday.



CARISA CEGAVSKE
Senior Staff Writer
The News-Review

More than half of Douglas County voters have already turned in their ballots.

If you're not one of them, elections officials are warning it's too late to count on the mail. Instead, bring your ballot to one of the drop sites around the county or directly to the Douglas County Clerk's Office, Room 124, Douglas County Courthouse, 1036 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg.

Ballots continue to pour in at higher rates than seen during the 2012 or 2016 presidential elections, Douglas County Clerk Dan Loomis said.

"Many consider voting the defining act of citizenship. It is so very encouraging to see the voters of our great Douglas County continuing to cast ballots at very high rates," Loomis said in an email.



Keith Fonsen of Myrtle Creek drops off a voting ballot at the drop-box in front of the Douglas County Courthouse in Roseburg on Tuesday.

Loomis said 43,672 ballots had been received by Tuesday evening. That's 51.94% of the total sent out, which is 14.58% ahead of the participation rates for the same point in the 2016 presidential election and 13.86% ahead of the 2012 presidential election.

About 38% of voters have so far cast their ballots by mail. About

23% brought them directly to the Douglas County Courthouse, and the rest of the ballots were taken to one of the county's official ballot drop sites.

Ballots must be received by the Douglas County Clerk's Office by 8 p.m. Nov. 3 to be counted.

VOTING, A2

COVID-19

Emergency declaration extended amid spike

Another 60 days added to order as Douglas County reports nine new cases

DONOVAN BRINK
The News-Review

The Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team reported eight new confirmed and one presumptive case of the coronavirus Tuesday, for a total of 360 cases since March.

As a result of the increase in COVID-19 cases statewide in recent weeks, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown extended her state of emergency declaration Tuesday for an additional 60 days, through Jan. 2, 2021.

"As early as January of this year, the Oregon Health Authority began its COVID-19 preparedness efforts as cases spread overseas. Since then, more than 600 Oregonians and over 200,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 — and last week, we set a daily record with 550 new cases," Brown said in a press release Tuesday.

"Extending the COVID-19 state of emergency is not something I do lightly, but we know all too well that not taking action would mean an even greater loss of life. The second wave of COVID-19 has arrived in the United States, and this time it is hitting all of our communities.

"My goal is to keep Oregon on track to open more schools for in-person instruction for our students — and to continue to reopen, and keep open, our businesses, communities, and economies. Oregon is not an island. Without safety precautions in place, we could quickly see our case counts spike as well," Brown said.

Local hospitals are treating three county residents who are displaying symptoms of coronavirus.

The county's response team reported Tuesday that there were 300 area residents being monitored either in isolation (51) or quarantine (249). Isolation is classified as those who actively have tested positive for or are presumed to be carrying the virus, while quarantine is recommended for those who have been in close contact to patients with positive test results or are presumptive cases.

The Oregon Health Authority reported nine new deaths and 391 confirmed and

COVID-19, A2

County case rate could impact schools

Increase in COVID-19 cases, up to 31.2 cases per 100,000 residents, may force county schools to close their doors

SANNE GODFREY
The News-Review

The rising number of COVID-19 cases in Douglas County may impact schools as early as next week.

Douglas County had 35 new COVID-19 cases in the week ending Oct. 24, or 31.2 per 100,000, according to data released Monday by the Oregon Health Authority.

This means that — while schools can remain open this week — if that number doesn't go down, schools could be forced to close their doors next week and start, or restart, distance learning.

Roseburg Public Schools Superintendent Jared Cordon sent a letter Monday afternoon to the families of students in kindergarten to third grade, who

are currently able to attend in-person classes in Roseburg.

"The current metrics mandated by the state include a contingency plan for schools that have reopened to in-person learning," Cordon wrote. "The current plan states that if cases reach 30 or more per 100,000 people in a county for two weeks in a row, then schools will need to transition back to remote learning. The county's case numbers released today were 31.2 per 100,000. If next Monday, we again reach 30 or more cases per 100,000 then we will need to prepare to transition back to remote learning."

Cordon added that families will be informed as soon as the district makes a decision on how to proceed.

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Knee said, "Cases in Douglas County have been on the rise and we want our students, staff and families to be prepared for the possibility of returning to remote learning in the event it is necessary. It is our goal to keep K-3 students in school in person and ultimately bring all of our students safely back to our buildings."

There have not been any reported outbreaks among students in Roseburg Public Schools.

Other schools have seen students who have tested positive for COVID-19, but there has been no confirmed spread.

Douglas County Public Health Officer Bob Dannenhoffer said: "We have seen several local school cases, but have not seen any confirmed spread in schools. All of these cases seem to have been part of family spread, that is a family member gives it to the student, and the student goes to school either

before they have symptoms or after they have symptoms. We are carefully monitoring the number of cases in the county, and in schools and at this time, do not recommend any change in school openings. I do strongly recommend that parents do not send their kids to school if they are sick with any symptoms: fever, cough, diarrhea, stomach upset, runny nose or sore throat. If kids are sick, they should stay home until the symptoms resolve, plus another day."

Douglas Public Health Network released a video on Saturday that addresses some of the commonly asked questions regarding the coronavirus and schools. The video can be seen on the DPHN's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The Oregon Department of Education's health metrics released earlier this year state that if there are more than 30 cases per 100,000 for more than one week schools will

need to initiate distance learning. Schools would also need to initiate distance learning if the county test positivity rate is above 10%, but that number was at 3.9% last week.

However, Oregon Department of Education Director Colt Gill said schools that opened under an exception will not need to close.

"For schools that have opened under any one of the exceptions to the public health metrics for reopening schools for in person K-12 instruction, including the K-3 exception, they should consider the spread of COVID-19 within schools and the broader community in deciding to temporarily return to Comprehensive Distance Learning," Gill said.

In Douglas County, many schools opened under exceptions including all elementary schools in the Roseburg school district.

SCHOOLS, A3



INSIDE, B1
Los Angeles Dodgers win first World Series title since 1988

HIGH: 67
LOW: 39



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