

# NE Oregon Joint Information Center

*Union and Wallowa Counties*



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For Immediate Release

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**La Grande, Oregon** – The Union County Board of Commissioners met in an emergency session today to consider the Union County Reopening Plan prepared by the local Incident Management Team (IMT). The Commissioners agreed to submit the Plan to Governor Kate Brown for approval. Receiving Governor approval of the Plan is the first step towards an incremental reopening. The Plan will be emailed today, however, the IMT will begin immediately revising the Plan to meet new criteria presented this afternoon by the Governor in a regional conference call. The new guidance contains both county level and regional level requirements that must be met in order to move into Phase 1 or reopening. Regional level requirements include benchmarks for hospital capacities and broad testing availability. The state will be preparing Phase 1 guidance for individual business sectors such as bars and restaurants, child care and retail to name a few. The Governor’s Prerequisites for Phased Reopening of Oregon, Union County Reopening Plan, and State of Oregon supporting guidance is available for viewing at <http://union-county.org/commissioners-to-consider-union-county-reopening-plan/>.

In a press conference this morning, Governor Kate Brown announced Oregon Health and Science University will begin conducting a COVID-19 research study to involve 100,000 randomly selected Oregonians. The data obtained from the study will assist leaders with essential information needed to move towards reopening Oregon. The study will provide critical information of asymptomatic COVID-19 carriers, while also effectively managing the potential for future COVID-19 outbreaks. Governor Brown also released new details on how the state plans to expand COVID-19 testing and tracing of individuals who have been exposed to the coronavirus. Both social distancing and the research study are crucial to reopening the economy, which the Governor said could start happening in some regions of the state as soon as May 15.

The La Grande Farmers Market announced today they will open their 2020 season on May 16 with certain restrictions. According to their Facebook post, they have “implemented significant measures to protect the health of our customers, our vendors, and our community.” A complete list of the safety and health measures taken by the Farmers Market can be found on their website. <http://www.lagrandefarmersmarket.org/>.

Some restrictions include:

- Space vendor booths 10 feet apart.
- Control the number of shoppers allowed in the market at one time for physical distancing.
- Ground markers to indicate 6-foot spacing at every booth and in high traffic areas.
- Cancel music, kids programming, special events, and communal seating until further notice.

Union County remains at four confirmed cases of COVID-19, of which three have been classified by Oregon Health Authority as recovered. Wallowa County remains with one confirmed case, who has also been classified as recovered. Umatilla County Public Health reported their first COVID-19 death today. According to their press release, the patient had underlying health concerns. Umatilla County is reporting a total of 59 positive cases. Oregon Health Authority announced 69 new positive cases today, bringing the statewide total to 2,579 confirmed cases. Of the 69 positive cases, Malheur County has two, Morrow has two and Umatilla has seven.

Today at approximately 5:00 p.m. there was a reverse parade honoring Chief Brian Harvey for his dedicated service to the citizens of La Grande. Congratulations Chief. Your leadership, mentorship, and guidance will be sorely missed. Happy retirement, you’ve certainly earned it!

The next update will be provided on Monday, May 4.

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