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4/17/2020

Oregon House District 60 Newsletter

Issue #7

News & Information on COVID-19 in Oregon

Friends,

We are continuing the conversation with the Governor regarding putting people back to work in areas of our state that are not seeing the numbers of positive Coronavirus cases as the metro areas are. We can do this while protecting our vulnerable populations and saving lives. Our economy and our health are not independent of each other. We are working on a pilot program for a county re-entry plan that we hope to present to the Governor in the next several days.

Unfortunately, Governor Brown decided to sign onto the “Western States Pact” with Washington and California. The goal is to move the West Coast states toward restarting our economies based upon health outcomes and agreed upon principles. Personally, I feel that we would be better served with an action plan more tailored to our state’s unique regions, as a one-size-fits-all approach will not work in this case. We are not Seattle, Portland, or Los Angeles—we are Frontier Oregon, and Governor Brown must empower our local leaders on these issues more than governors from other States. We need to get people back to work, and that can start very soon in areas with fewer cases as long as a solutions-based plan is in place.

Second Virtual Town Hall

Next week, Senator Lynn Findley (R-Vale), Rep. Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles), and I will host our second virtual town hall meeting to discuss our communities, the impacts of the Coronavirus, and Oregon’s path forward. Our last community conversation had such great discussions, questions, and responses that we have decided to do it again. We have extended the time so we can include more questions from you.

The virtual town hall will take place on Thursday, April 23rd at 5:30-7:00pm (PDT). Registration is required and is limited so please register early using the link [here](#). Registered participants will receive a confirmation email with a password and information to join.

House District 60 Coronavirus Updates

House District 60’s current stats are as follows:

COUNTY	POSITIVE	DEATHS	NEGATIVE
Oregon Statewide	1,736	64	33,202
Baker	0	0	34
Grant	1	0	38
Hamey	0	0	44
Lake	0	0	50
Malheur	5	0	163
Source: https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19			
OHA Last Updated: 4/16/2020 @ 8:00am			

Lake District Hospital in Lake County was one of three hospitals that received COVID-19 rapid testing instruments in the first round of distribution from the State, along with Curry General Hospital in Curry County and Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Morrow County.

Oregon Rural Legislators Coalition

Speaking of hospitals, as part of the newly-formed Oregon Rural Legislators Coalition, I signed on to a bipartisan, bicameral letter to Governor Brown last week in support of funding for rural hospitals. This group consists of legislators with Districts stretching from Oregon's Eastern border all the way to our northern and southern coasts. Allowing rural hospitals to be forced to close during a pandemic would be a travesty. These hospitals have limited revenue coming in due to the ban on non-emergency surgeries and procedures, and many have not seen the influx of COVID-19 patients they were told to prepare for. The Oregon Rural Legislators Coalition is coordinating this message with the Association of Oregon Counties and the Eastern Oregon Counties Association. The Coalition is discussing many other issues and how we can be a united voice for rural Oregon.

Education

Governor Brown has made the decision to cancel physical attendance at schools statewide for the remainder of the 2020 school year, however online education is now mandatory for students in Oregon. If you have not already heard from your individual school district, please reach out to them directly.

Food Banks

With more people than ever needing the assistance of our local food banks, they could use your cash or goods donations. Oregon has allocated \$8 million the Oregon Food Bank, whose network includes 21 regional food banks and more than 1,400 food assistance sites around the state. The state expects to receive a 75 percent reimbursement from FEMA for these funds.

Cap & Trade

Many of you have reached out to request that Governor Brown delay in the implementation of the Cap & Trade roll-out that was invoked through an Executive Order and will be implemented via administrative rule changes within 19 different agencies. This leaves a lot up to unelected officials that cannot be held accountable. The Oregon Manufacturers and Commerce association is a coalition of allied business groups that sent a letter to the Governor this week expressing their belief that the implementation of Cap & Trade will put an enormous burden on state agencies, businesses, and constituents who are already hurting due to the Coronavirus pandemic. They have requested that the Governor "recognize the necessity of suspending this [Executive] Order's implementation until the COVID-19 crisis subsides." We support this message and will be sending a letter to the Governor asking her to prioritize her efforts and her agency efforts to stopping the spread of COVID – 19 and getting our economy going, not Cap & Trade.

Small Business Resources

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has launched the "Save Small Business Fund" to provide financial relief for small businesses and chambers of commerce that are suffering from the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic. Businesses with between 3-20 employees can apply for a one-time, short-term relief payment of up to \$5,000. The fund will "go live" on Monday, April 20th at 12:00pm. To apply, [click here](#) on Monday.

Non-profits: The Oregon Community Foundation has started a funding program for non-profits affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Find more information [here](#).

SAIF Coronavirus Safety Fund: Re-opened with an additional \$15 million, after the initial \$10 million was quickly dispersed. Applications can be found [here](#).

Hunting & Fishing Restrictions

The Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife has halted all non-resident hunting and fishing, effective April 10. This effectively closes recreational hunting, fishing, crabbing, and clamming to all non-Oregonians. Idaho and Washington have instated similar bans. It does not apply to Oregonians pursuing these activities within our state boundaries.

Federal Updates

President Trump has launched the “#AmericaWorksTogether” social media campaign to highlight Americans helping one another during the outbreak. The idea is to promote companies, people, neighbors, health care workers, and others that are helping others during this crisis. The President encourages people to utilize this hashtag to highlight these positive examples on social media.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and Federal Reserve Board have announced \$2.3 trillion in financing through the Main Street Business Lending program and a Municipal Liquidity Facility to support the flow of credit to American workers, businesses, states, counties, and cities impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. The Municipal Liquidity Facility will provide up to \$500 billion in direct financing to states, counties, and cities to help with the Coronavirus response. The MLF application can be found [here](#).

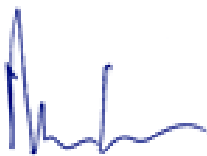
Federal stimulus checks are being direct-deposited into personal bank accounts this week, and hardcopy checks will take slightly longer to show up in the mail. We had several questions from constituents who had heard a rumor that the stimulus funds would be considered as taxable income in Oregon. My staff reached out to the Oregon Dept. of Revenue and was told that it is an advance of your federal tax credit and will not be taxed as income in Oregon.

Also, have you filled out your 2020 Census yet? Go to my2020census.gov and use the Census ID you should have received in the mail. This information is important—many of our state program funding, federal funding, etc., are based on the Census data.

I hope you are finding these updates informative and helpful. We are continuing the conversation about when it will be considered safe to begin re-opening our businesses, putting people back to work, and getting our economy restarted. The Governor’s recent announcement regarding this tri-state alliance does not detract from the need for a plan to move forward.

Again, my office is available to help in any way we can. Contact us at: rep.markowens@oregonlegislature.gov.

Be safe.



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Frontier Oregon—The Best Part of the State

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