



# DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

---

## JOINT INFORMATION CENTER PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2020

### DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM - DAILY LOCAL UPDATE

**(Douglas County, Ore.)** Douglas County Commissioners participated in a conference call with the Governor on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 to discuss the plan for reopening Douglas and other counties. The virtual meeting, held via Zoom, was attended by all three Douglas County Commissioners: Board Chair, Chris Boice, Tim Freeman and Tom Kress. Dozens of elected officials from other counties also participated – including Josephine, Jackson, Curry and Coos, the four other counties that co-signed a letter to the governor last month asking her to allow them to begin reopening.

In the Zoom call, county leaders learned they would have to fill out an application and have the application approved by the state in order to begin Phase One reopening. The Governor's office will begin accepting applications this Friday, May 8. If approved, some counties may be allowed to lift some restrictions as soon as May 15, 2020. The governor has stated that the prerequisites for reopening include: Sufficient hospital capacity and enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to handle a surge in COVID-19 cases; the ability to conduct widespread testing; and a strong system in place for contact tracing to determine who may have come into contact with individuals who test positive for the virus.

County leaders believe Douglas County meets those requirements and is well-positioned to reopen, thanks to the extensive collaborative efforts of local partners through the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team.

*“We’ve done the work over weeks and weeks to make sure that when this date came we were ready, and we believe we’re ready,”* Commissioner Tim Freeman said in a radio interview today. *“We are now waiting for the final application process so we can get it submitted, and we can get it approved, and get the county’s businesses back open.”*

Details of exactly how the reopening will occur are still in the works, but safety requirements will likely include ongoing physical distancing and other precautions.

*“There are lots of sector requirements. Certain businesses have to do certain things, the County has to do certain things, and the State has to do certain things,”* Freeman said. *“We are working through all of that. Believe me, we are using every County resource possible and working as hard as we can.”*

For those that have stated that the County Commissioners can just reopen the County, please know that our County Commissioners are limited by state statutes and laws, and we cannot launch a reopening against the Governor’s orders. Freeman noted that the County has reopened everything it has authority over, including County buildings and parks, with some limitations and conditions. Freeman said the County is in good shape to reopen largely because of the efforts of the collaborative Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team. Members include the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas Public Health Network, Mercy Medical Center, Umpqua Health, Aviva Health, Evergreen Family Medicine, Lower Umpqua Hospital District, Adapt, the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office and Search and Rescue, the Roseburg VA, Douglas Forest Protective Association, and the Red Cross. The County and the DCCRT will keep residents informed of all developments related to the reopening timeline and requirements for businesses, once those details have been determined.

#### **Douglas County COVID-19 Test Results**

The good news continues as there are **NO** new cases and only 3 active cases of COVID-19 in Douglas County today. There has only been one positive case reported in the last 16 days, and that case was reported as recovered before their test results were returned.

Here are the current numbers for Douglas County:

New Cases as of 12:00 pm May 6, 2020	Total Residents That Have Tested Positive	Total Active Positive Cases (of those that tested positive)	Total Recovered Cases (of those that tested positive)	Total Deaths Related to COVID-19	Total Currently Hospitalized (of those that tested positive)	Total Negative Test Results	Total Presumptive Cases
0	24*	3	21	0	1	1258	0



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Roseburg VA Health Care System



American Red Cross  
Southwest Oregon Chapter

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has expanded their reporting for COVID-19 case management and will now include presumptive COVID-19 cases. DPHN will also be reporting presumptive cases and will use the OHA's definition of presumptive as having had close contact with a known, confirmed COVID-19 case, showing symptoms and not yet having a positive nasal swab/PCR test for COVID-19.

DPHN continues their epidemiologic investigations, identifying individuals who may have had close contact with individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19 and advising quarantine. The majority of the individuals who have tested positive earlier have now recovered. DPHN defines recovery as an end to all symptoms after a positive test for COVID-19.

### **Get Tested & Testing**

The next drive through clinic in Roseburg will be Friday, May 8th, 2020. If you are having symptoms of COVID-19 including cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches and pains, diarrhea, sore throat or decreased sense of smell and taste, talk to your health care provider about being tested for COVID-19. The first drive thru testing site was piloted in the county on March 17, 2020, there have been 435 people tested in the drive through clinics alone, additional testing continues in hospitals, urgent cares and clinics simultaneously.

The drive through clinics are led by DPHN, in conjunction with partner agencies including; Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team, Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Douglas County Public Works, local volunteers and local health professionals.

### **Oregon COVID-19 Case Update**

Oregon Health Authority reports new cases once a day on its website at [www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus](http://www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus). The Oregon Health Authority is also releasing the daily situation status report, which is produced jointly with Oregon Office of Emergency Management. It details the overall picture of the COVID-19 outbreak within the state and the response across government agencies. [Read more here about the daily situation status report](#).

### **Douglas County to Still Honor Fallen Law Enforcement Officers**

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating May 15 as Peace Officer Memorial Day and the week in which it falls, National Police Week. Across the United States, ceremonies are held to remember those serving in law enforcement who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Board of Commissioners and local law enforcement agencies traditionally hold a local Peace Officer Memorial Ceremony on the front steps of the Douglas County Courthouse to pay tribute to the five law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty:

- **Officer Donald DeSues - Roseburg Police Department - EOW - August 7, 1959**
- **Special Deputy Ronald H. Terwilliger - Douglas County Sheriff's Office - EOW - July 23, 1985**
- **Corporal Virgle D. Knight Jr. - Douglas County Sheriff's Office - EOW - July 23, 1985**
- **Sergeant Gerald G. Chirrick - Douglas County Sheriff's Office - EOW - July 23, 1985**
- **Deputy Morris L. Taylor - Douglas County Sheriff's Office - EOW - September 14, 2002**

In light of current social distancing recommendations due to COVID-19, a public memorial ceremony not be held this year. Instead, a small contingent of law enforcement Honor Guard personnel will raise a memorial flag, place wreaths at the memorial wall beneath the flag pole and pause in memory of all who have given their lives in the line of duty. In a press release earlier today, Sheriff Hanlin asked the community to take a moment to remember all of our fallen law enforcement officers and their families. Their service and sacrifice to our communities cannot and will not ever be forgotten.

*"I want the families of these men to know that their memory will not fade from our thoughts as we continue the service they dedicated their lives to," said Sheriff Hanlin. "This County is forever grateful for their sacrifice and we vow to honor their memory, even in times like this."*

### **Douglas County Public Works: Road Construction and Work Zone Safety**

As the weather warms up, Douglas County Public Works (DCPW) crews are gearing up to start summer road construction projects, and we wanted to remind citizens to slow down and exercise caution as they travel through construction zones and detours. Safety is always a priority for the motoring public, as well as the road construction workers, construction equipment operators and flaggers. We are asking citizens to pay extra attention and obey all posted signs, warnings and flagger instructions. Please plan ahead and seek alternate routes whenever possible.

As a part of this, DCPW announced a railroad crossing project today that will include the temporary closure of a railroad crossing and Hwy 99N near Sutherlin, Oregon. DCPW in conjunction with Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad will be working on a railroad crossing project on Old Highway 99 North (Oakland-Shady Highway/South Calapooia Street) about 1.3 miles south of Sutherlin, Oregon from 7:00 am on Monday, May 11 through 7:00 pm Tuesday, May 12, 2020. The project will include the replacement of existing rail ties, the releveling the tracks to meet their standards for safety and adjacent road approach paving.

The project will require the closure of Old Highway 99N where the road intersects the railroad tracks, and motorists will be asked to detour their route during this period. Due to the road closure at the railroad tracks, southbound motorists are asked to detour from Hastings Avenue to Taylor Street to Comstock Road in Sutherlin. Likewise, northbound traffic is asked to detour utilizing Comstock Road in Sutherlin. [Click here](#) to read the complete story.

## **DCCRT Partner Spotlight: Douglas Forest Protective Association**

Douglas Forest Protective Association (DFPA) typically focuses on wildfires, but its expertise at setting up incident command structures has come in handy in Douglas County's response to COVID-19. DFPA is a private nonprofit corporation formed more than a century ago by local landowners for the purpose of wildfire detection, prevention and suppression. It has 17 full-time employees and 110 seasonal workers whose priority is to protect more than 1.6 million acres of forest and grazing lands within Douglas County. DFPA is part of the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) complete and coordinated system of fire protection and has employees who serve on each of ODF's three All-Hazard Incident Management Teams. When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, DFPA was called in to participate in the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team (DCCRT).

*“We were initially asked to come down to the Emergency Operations Center and help do some coaching on incident command systems,”* DFPA District Manager Pat Skrip said.

While a virus is not the same as a wildfire, an effective response to any crisis involves organization and communication, and DFPA worked quickly to put those things into place for Douglas County's COVID-19 response. DFPA staff facilitated briefings, generated a daily incident action plan, and provided coaching and other assistance.

*“The first order of business is to bring order to chaos,”* Skrip said. *“You get a battle rhythm going, then they're up and running, and each day they stay true to their process.”*

Skrip said it's important to have a clear mission and role. Otherwise, things get confusing and there can be unwanted surprises. He said he acted as “that little voice in the background,” reminding fellow DCCRT members to stay true to the objectives outlined by County Commissioners. He said DFPA was happy to help out.

*“This is a great way we could leverage local knowledge. I believe the best answers come locally,”* he said. *“I hope they found value in our participation.”*

When KC Bolton took over as co-incident commander along with Teresa Mutschler of Douglas Public Health Network, Bolton asked Skrip to stay on as deputy incident commander. DFPA has also taken internal measures to keep its employees safe during the pandemic by providing personal protective equipment and maintaining social distancing. Many workers are telecommuting. Meanwhile, fire season is quickly approaching with early forecasts pointing toward another busy fire season for the majority of the state.

*“We've been working with state and federal partners in figuring out what a busy fire season looks like while maintaining that social distancing, and what we can do to mitigate that exposure,”* Skrip said. Visit DFPA's [Facebook page](#) to follow updates about wildfire season.

## **How to Apply for Food, Child Care and Cash Assistance from Home**

The state Department of Human Services (DHS) wants to get the word out that Oregonians can apply for food, child care and cash assistance from home. The all-in-one online application, available in several languages, can be found on [DHS' website](#) along with instructions for applying. DHS said Oregonians are facing “unprecedented economic instability and food insecurity” due to COVID-19.

Assistance is available in the form of SNAP benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Refugee Program and the Child Care/Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). The online application experiences heavy traffic between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and may be unavailable intermittently during that time period, DHS noted. If you are unable to apply online, DHS can send you the application via email or regular mail. You can also apply for benefits over the phone.

Douglas County residents can call the local DHS offices in Roseburg or Canyonville for more information. The Roseburg DHS office can be reached at (541) 440-3301, and the number for the Canyonville office is (541) 839-6901. Additional food resources are available on the [website](#) of Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. Residents can also call 2-1-1 or email [help@211info.org](mailto:help@211info.org) for information on local food pantries or child care providers.

## **Stay Informed with the Accurate Information**

Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Dannenhoffer and the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team have been working hard to cooperatively provide accurate and timely information and a response to Douglas County residents in March 8, 2020. **If you have questions about resources available, call the COVID-19 hotline, staffed by local volunteers at (541) 464-6550.** Stay up to date on COVID-19 in Douglas County on the DPHN website at [www.douglaspublichealthnetwork.org](http://www.douglaspublichealthnetwork.org). Find additional information on state or federal COVID-19 response from the following websites: [Oregon Health Authority](#), [Centers for Disease Control](#), and by calling or logging onto [211Info](#).

*\*Local case data includes all tests done in the county, and are not exclusive to DPHN testing. Further, reporting numbers are accurate as of time listed on this release. These numbers may not match other organizations, who report at different times of the day.*

###

Contact [Tamara Howell](#), Public Information Officer, Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team, (541) 670-2804 cell/(541) 957-4896 [tjhowell@co.douglas.or.us](mailto:tjhowell@co.douglas.or.us)  
Contact [Vanessa Becker](#), Public Information Officer, Douglas Public Health Network, (541) 817-6552 cell / (541) 440-3571 [vanessa@douglaspublichealthnetwork.org](mailto:vanessa@douglaspublichealthnetwork.org)