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Jackson Co. holding PPE drive for farm employers Wednesday

Local News Top Stories Video July 28, 2020 Madison LaBerge

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MEDFORD, Ore. — With harvest fast approaching, agricultural employers are trying to keep farm workers safe during the pandemic.

“Agricultural workers are a high risk group by nature of the work itself,” said Jackson County Public Health Officer, Dr. Jim Shames, “by nature of the fact that they may belong to a group that is high risk.”

Dr. Shames said it’s important for farm workers to be properly to prevent a workplace outbreak, that’s why the Jackson County Emergency Operations Center and Health and Human Services are holding a personal protective equipment drive Wednesday to support local workers.

“These workers do everything from pruning to planting, to harvesting to pest control, boxing and shipping to get the food where it needs to go,” said Bianca Ballará, a regional environmental justice organizer with Beyond Toxics, a statewide organization that advocates protection of frontline workers. “From what we understand, those standards haven’t changed,” she said, “because the amount of food that people eat in the state of Oregon and beyond hasn’t really changed either.”

Ballará said state-provided protective equipment and proper sanitation is key to keeping some of our most essential workers safe. The PPE distribution drive is Wednesday July 28, at the Jackson County Expo in Central Point.

“They can’t really stop because it’s an essential need,” Ballará said.



MADISON LABERGE NBC5 News reporter Madison LaBerge graduated Magna Cum Laude from Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Madison is originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

She is excited to live in the Pacific Northwest. She can't get over "how green everything is!" When Madison is not at work, she looks for new and exciting cooking recipes and explores Southern Oregon.

Feel free to send her story ideas or the address of your favorite Mexican food restaurant!

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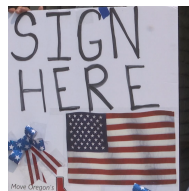
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