

# NCW, Chelan County fairs canceled for 2020 because of COVID-19

## Okanogan, Ferry fairs remain a go — for now

WATERVILLE — The North Central Washington Fair is canceled for 2020.

The fair staff, fair board and Douglas County commissioners agreed the annual event should not be held this year because of coronavirus concerns.

“All possible avenues or changes were explored but none could solve the problems created by Washington’s Safe Start reopening plan,” a statement from the fair said Wednesday morning.

“We want you to know that this decision was a very emotional one to make and wasn’t taken lightly,” officials said. “Aside from the obvious health risks, and making sure that our staff, volunteers, youth and visitors are all safe, the restrictions for having an event

during this pandemic in Washington make it impossible.

“We do not have the means to temp check each visitor, to have social distancing in our food lines, vendors or our carnival area,” the statement said. “We cannot ask our race and rodeo fans to sit six feet apart or limit the amount of attendees.”

The fair also noted the difficulties of social distancing for the Granger Smith concert and sanitizing carnival rides after each person.

“We owe it to our visitors and fair family to give you the very best fair that we can and in the safest environment possible,” fair officials said. “Unfortunately, this is the right decision to make no matter how hard it is.”

Fair organizers are working to organize a livestock show of some sort and

will be in touch with local 4-H leaders and FFA teachers.

### Chelan County Fair

The Chelan County Fair — originally set for Sept. 10-13 — is also calling off plans for this year’s fair.

“We want you to know that this decision was a very difficult one to make and wasn’t taken lightly,” the fair said late Thursday night. “We put quite a bit of planning into this year’s fair and had some great entertainment lined up that we know everyone would have enjoyed. Unfortunately, a major percentage of our volunteers are over the age of 65, and there was no way we could manage the crowds expected and still adhere to the social distancing

See **FAIRS**, page 2



BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle*

Youngsters show goats at the 2018 North Central Washington Fair in Waterville.

## Pearl droplets



AL CAMP | *Special to The Chronicle*

Rain settles into pearl-like droplets on leaves of lupine plants near Buzzard Lake southwest of Okanogan. Several varieties of wildflowers are in bloom now in the Okanogan Valley and at higher elevations.

## Planned highway closure averted

CHELAN — A planned June 15 closure of Highway 97A between Entiat and Navarre Coulee Road has been averted.

A rock scaling project was completed late last week, so a daytime closure on Monday between Entiat and Highway 971/Navarre Coulee Road will not be needed, said the state Department of Transportation.

An emergency closure at Knapp’s

Hill tunnel, because of rock slides, remains in place.

Granite Construction will begin work Monday, June 15, within the closed segment of roadway, so there will be no change in travel impacts while the work proceeds, said department officials. The closure will remain in place through completion of the project, probably in early July.

The closure is between mileposts

223 and 230.

Motorists traveling between Wenatchee and Chelan are asked to use Highway 97 on the east side of the Columbia River and then travel up Highway 150 at Chelan Falls. Those traveling between Chelan and Entiat can use Highway 971 over Navarre Coulee, but that route is not recommended for large vehicles.

# Schools wrap up graduation ceremonies

COULEE DAM — A modified in-person commencement ceremony, with a pre-recorded component, is planned tonight, June 13, for Lake Roosevelt High School seniors.

School officials say they will follow coronavirus guidelines from health officials, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Social distancing will be enforced.

Ten students at a time will be allowed on the school’s football field during the ceremony, which starts at 7 p.m. Other students are asked to wait in their vehicles.

Photographs will be taken, with images combined for a larger class photo.

Speakers and other aspects of the ceremony will be pre-recorded. People will be able to listen via radio or digital stream. Class speakers are Megan Abel and Jonathan Cante.

Co-valedictorians are Ellie Hansen, daughter of Steven and Hope Hansen, Coulee Dam, and Brianna Whybark, daughter of Warren and Nevada Whybark, Coulee Dam.

Co-salutatorians are Wensdae Antoine, daughter of Gretchen Nelson Whitelaw and Brandon Whitelaw, and Donovan Antoine, Grand Coulee,

and LorRinda Richardson, daughter of Wayne and Mary Richardson, Nespelem.

Class colors are cardinal and gold. The motto is “As each of us follows our path of life we will remember these years. We will remember our friends, the laughter, and the pain. Our smiles reflect the memories locked deep within our hearts. Future dreams shine like bright stars against distant nights. We have grown so much and yet we will grow forever.”

In Republic, seniors will flip their tassels during a drive-in graduation ceremony this afternoon, pending Tri-County Health District approval.

The ceremony is set for 1 p.m. today, June 13, in the Republic Elementary School parking lot, 30306 Highway 20.

According to the district, the ceremony will be for immediate family only, and will be videotaped and available online at republic309.org after it is edited.

The class motto is “If at first you don’t succeed, you’re not us.”

Class colors are gray and aqua, and the class flower is the pink rose.

Jordan Starr is valedictorian. He is the son of Phillip and Danielle Starr.

Johnna Jensen, daughter of Jon and Shannon Jensen, is salutatorian.

## County gains eight new COVID-19 cases this week

### Okanogan has 74 confirmed cases

OKANOGAN — Okanogan County gained eight new cases of COVID-19 this past week.

As of Friday morning, the county had 74 confirmed cases of the virus, including two deaths.

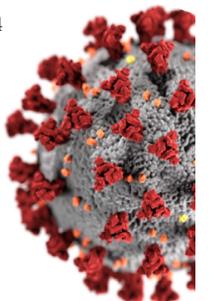
South county (Pateros to Malott) and north county (Riverside to Oroville) saw the largest increases in cases with the south end gaining five new cases, and the north valley gaining two cases.

Of the 74 confirmed cases, 55 are recovering. Distribution includes Colville Indian Reservation, 11; Methow Valley, five; central

Okanogan Valley (Malott to Riverside), 14; south county (Malott to Pateros), 39, and north county (Riverside to Oroville), five.

Overall, 1,894 samples have been sent for testing with 1,774 negative test results. Another 46 are pending.

A 44-year-old woman died April 18. Okanogan County picked up its second COVID-19 death in May with the death of a man in his 60s.



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