

House Majority
State of Utah

LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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JUDGES ON THE BALLOT

Across Utah, 59 judges will be on the ballot this November. Though sometimes overlooked, the question of whether or not to retain a judge in office is an important one. The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) helps citizens cast informed votes by providing valid information about the judges appearing on their ballots. Please visit judges.utah.gov to learn more.

HOUSE MAJORITY
NEWSLETTER

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POLICY PRIORITY- TRANSPORTATION

Each week, we will highlight a legislative policy priority. As Utah continues to grow, the need for improved and innovative transportation has become increasingly apparent. Transportation is a key aspect of a strong and robust economy. In 2020, HB 396 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Amendments created a public-private partnership with Rocky Mountain Power that invests in a statewide electric transportation infrastructure. This will not only help our roads and drivers but will greatly improve our state's air quality. Additionally, widening roads is no longer enough. A comprehensive transit system is an essential aspect of our future. The Legislature has worked to fund the double tracking and electrification of the Frontrunner to create more frequent and quicker trips.



In 2018, lawmakers ran SB 136 Transportation Governance Amendments, updating the way in which transportation projects are selected and prioritized. Subsequently, Transit Transportation Investment Funding, or TTIF, was created as Utah's first ongoing funding source for transit and transportation. The Legislature recognizes the importance of a strong transit and transportation system and has required the integration of transportation into moderate-income housing plans at the city level.

PROVO AND OREM MOVE TO ORANGE

Speaker Wilson issued the following statement regarding the decision to move parts of Utah County to orange:

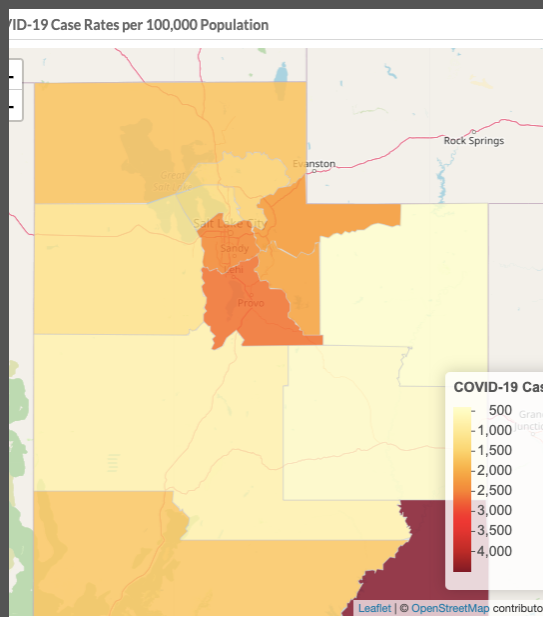
"In the months since we have encouraged Utahns to be diligent in practicing social distancing and wearing a mask in public, it has become evident these small sacrifices in comfort have an outsized, positive impact on our public health.

I share the governor's strong concern with the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in Orem and Provo, which trace overwhelmingly to university students now living in that area. The restrictions of Orange status will have a real and negative impact on businesses in those cities and the families they support, which is all the more unfortunate because of how avoidable this spike was.

The citizens of our state invest heavily in our universities, which serve as the training grounds for those who will lead our state in the years and decades to come, and we rightfully call upon our college students to rise to the occasion to protect themselves, vulnerable members of our community, and our economy.

These changes to Orange status for parts of Utah County, while Rich County transitions to Green status, highlight the reason I have not supported a statewide mask mandate. Such a policy imposes a one-size-fits-all solution when a more targeted approach, led by local leaders whenever possible, is effective without forcing counties where cases are lower to operate under the heavy hand of government.

Like all Utahns, we are anxious to have life return to normal. In many respects, our state has made tremendous progress in combating the pandemic. However, achieving our collective goal remains elusive when we see inconsistent commitment from key segments of our community. We are in this together and I encourage all Utahns to do their part as we redouble our efforts to decrease our daily case rate."



COVID-19 UPDATE

Utah's COVID-19 Case Counts from September 8 - September 11
Monday, September 21

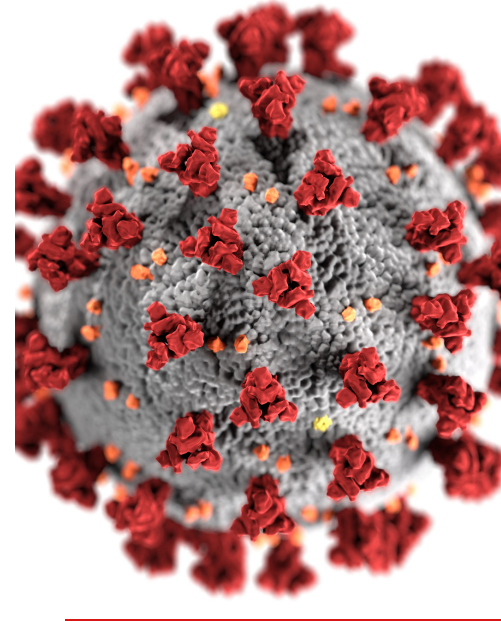
- 64,394 positive cases, an increase of 622 from the previous day
- 3,886 new tests administered
- 144 current hospitalizations
- 441 total deaths, 1 more than the previous day
- 13.6% positive rate

Tuesday, September 22

- 65,044 positive cases, an increase of 650 from the previous day
- 6,908 new tests administered
- 161 current hospitalizations
- 443 total deaths, 2 more than the previous day
- 51,945 recovered cases
- 13.9% positive rate

Wednesday, September 23

- 65,921 positive cases, an increase of 877 from the previous day
- 775,858 total tests administered 171 current hospitalizations
- 444 total deaths, 1 more than the previous day
- 52,357 recovered cases
- 14.2% positive rate



Thursday, September 17

- 67,119 positive cases, an increase of 1,198 from the previous day
- 9,117 new tests administered
- 188 current hospitalizations
- 444 total deaths, 0 more than the previous day
- 52,860 recovered cases
- 14.2% positive rate

Friday, September 18

- 68,530 positive cases, an increase of 1,411 from the previous day
- 10,242 new tests administered
- 184 current hospitalizations
- 448 total deaths, 4 more than the previous day
- 53,360 recovered cases
- 14% positive rate

Utah's 7-day rolling average for positive tests is 960 per day. The rolling 7-day average for percent of positive laboratory tests is 14%.

It is now more important than ever to practice social distancing, wear a face mask, wash your hands, and stay home when sick. Please do your part to protect yourself and those around you.

To see updated data and accurate information, visit the new Unified Response Scoreboard [here](#).

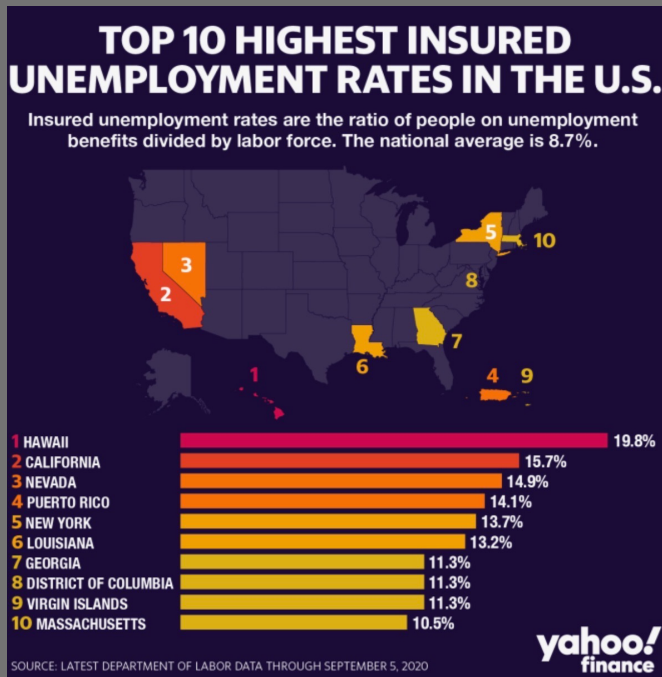


UNEMPLOYMENT UPDATE

Below is the latest news release from the Department of Workforce Services on Utah's unemployment insurance claims:

We saw a slight uptick in new claims, we do expect some seasonal increases in claims. However, weekly claims continued to decline. A few additional points to highlight from last week (September 13-19):

- Traditional unemployment insurance new claims increased by 11% from the previous week to 2,552 claims
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance new claims increased by 3.5% from the previous week to 734 claims
- Extended Unemployment Claims increased by .4% from the previous week to 1,191 claims
- Total new claims for all three programs ended the week at 4,473 (see claim graph below)
- Combined weekly claims for all three programs was at 47,839
- Total combined numbers from March 15 to September 19
 - New claims: 304,705
 - Benefits paid: \$1,508,398,088 (includes Lost Wages Assistance payments)



We have now paid out the six weeks of Lost Wages Assistance to eligible claimants. In total, this program brought an additional \$70 million to Utahns whose wages have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Utah's unemployment rate as of August 2020 is the lowest in the nation at 4.1%. In comparison, the average unemployment rate in the U.S. is 8.4%. You can see the highest unemployment rates across the nation in the graphic to the left.

RENT

Struggling to pay rent? The Utah Housing Assistance Program helps renters who are struggling to pay rent and utilities due to hardships from COVID-19. Please click [here](#) to learn more.



UTAH HERITAGE AND ARTS PODCAST PART 2



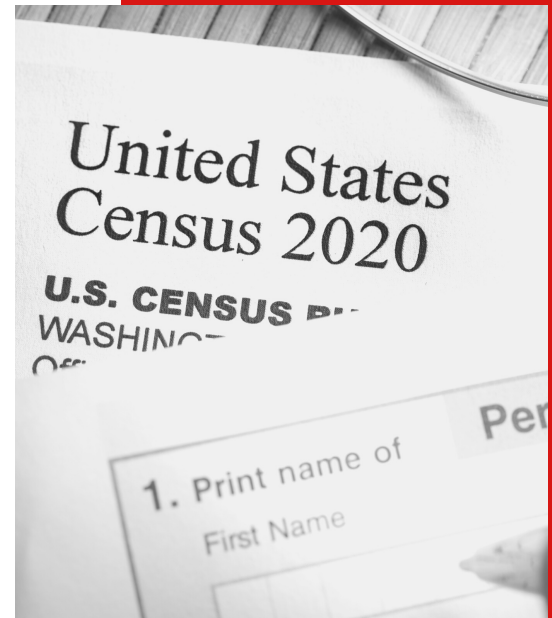
Many museums and culture-related organizations are providing free activities during this fall and winter. Find out which activities you can join! Listen to this week's podcast, featuring Victoria Bourns, Director of Utah Division of Arts and Museums to find out more.

[Listen here!](#)

CENSUS UPDATE

Complete the 2020 Census! Spread the word to your family and friends. Visit <https://census2020.utah.gov/> to fill it out and learn more!

“The census plays a part in every day for Utahns from education and roads to healthcare and politics. The outcome of the census can determine electoral representation down to the local level, including school boards and city councils. Infrastructure decisions and funding, from road repairs to transit development, use information based on census counts. Public safety uses these numbers to guide decisions about service areas, fire stations, police precincts and hospitals. The census impacts every part of life in Utah, so be counted because you matter.”



ELECTION INFO



Ballots will be mailed out the beginning of October. You should expect your ballot to arrive in the mailbox around October 13. Make sure you are registered to vote at <https://vote.utah.gov/>.