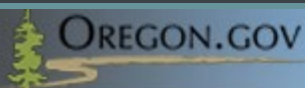


# Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

Oregon Economic News, Analysis and Outlook



CREDIT: MARJORIE TAYLOR

[About](#) [COVID-19 Tracking](#)

## ☰ COVID-19 Tracking

Standard economic data like the monthly employment reports, quarterly GDP, and the like remain the best way to track what is happening in the Oregon economy. However, COVID-19 and the pandemic has been moving so fast that trying to assess the current state of the economy is challenging with backward looking reports. Below are a handful of charts of real-time data points our office is tracking. We will update these weekly, most likely on Thursdays given the data release schedule.

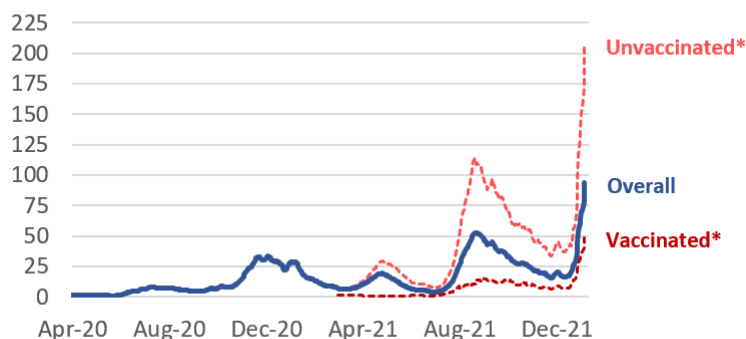
*Updated: Thursday, January 6th, 2022*

### **COVID-19**

First and foremost the economy is still impacted by the pandemic. Shutdowns matter the most economically, as they sideline large swaths of consumer spending and employment overnight. However, continued COVID cases disrupt workplaces and result in productivity losses as more workers are our sick. Today, Oregon's omicron wave is here setting new records in recent days.

### **Oregon's Omicron Wave is Here**

New Cases per 100,000 Population



\*Estimates based on vaccination rates two weeks prior to case counts, adjusts for OHA published breakthrough case counts  
 Latest Data: Jan 5, 2022 | Source: OHA, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

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- [Demographics](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Graph of the Week](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Income](#)
- [Leading Indicators](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)
- [News](#)
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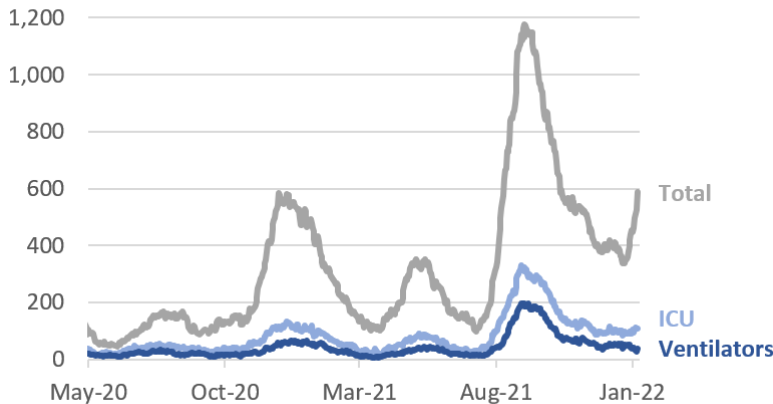
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Hospitalizations are a key public health metric to watch as we do not want to

breach the capacity of the health care system to care for our sick family members and friends. So far during the omicron wave, total COVID hospitalizations are up, and will continue to rise given hospitalizations (and deaths) follow new cases with a lag. The little bit of good news so far is that the number of Oregonians in ICU and/or on ventilators has not really increased. This likely shows the generally more mild symptoms of omicron compared with delta.

### Oregon COVID Hospitalizations



Latest Data: Jan 6, 2022 | Source: Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

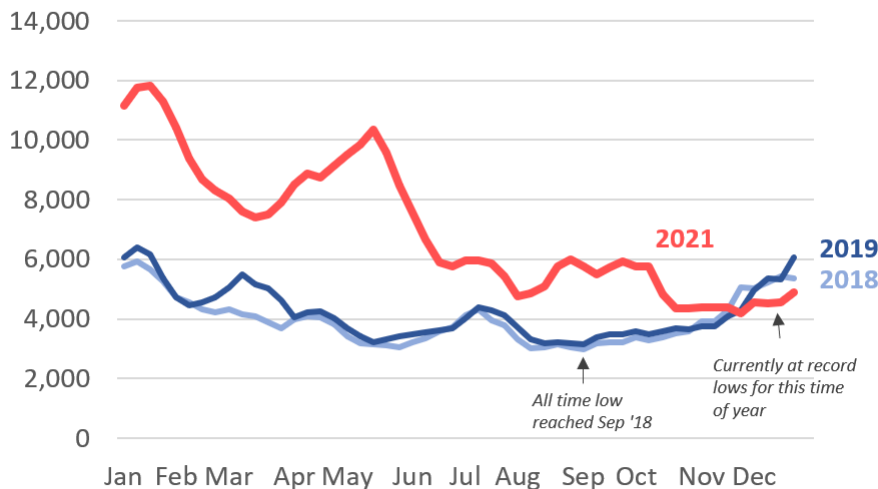
### Economic

#### Initial Claims for Unemployment Insurance

Initial claims are typically one of the best leading indicators we have and are a measure of layoffs happening in the economy. Initial claims had remained elevated throughout the entire pandemic until recently. In recent weeks initial claims are approximately where they were at this time of year back in 2018 and 2019. However they are even lower. We are seeing record low initial claims for this time of year. While not necessarily surprising given the tight labor market, this is still great economic news. In at least this way, the economy has returned to not only normal, but in a record setting way. Data from the Oregon Employment Department can be [found here](#).

### Oregon Weekly Initial Claims

4 Week Moving Average



Latest Data: Dec 25, 2021 | Source: U.S. Dept of Labor, Oregon Employment Dept, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

#### New Business Applications

### TWEETS

#### My Tweets

### OLDER POSTS

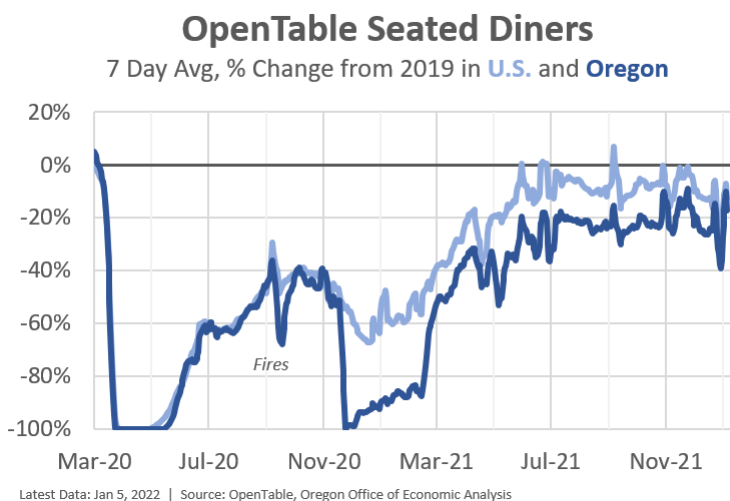
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Business closures are a key concern during the pandemic as the more permanent damage done to the economy, the longer and harder the recovery will be. We lack timely data on closures, however we do have indicators of new business formation. Start-up activity by itself is vital for economic growth. However it is even more important today given we know we will need to replace businesses that closed their doors. So far new start-up activity has remained very strong, which is encouraging. Weekly Census [business application data here](#). Census is now releasing weekly business application data but on a monthly basis, so the updates here will be whenever new information is available. Oregon Secretary of State [monthly filings here](#).



### Going out to Eat

Data from OpenTable [available here](#) is one indicator of how comfortable people are going out to eat, spending money and the like. In the big picture, Oregonians are going out to eat just a bit less than much of the country, especially during the periods of time where we have more stringent public health policies in place to slow the spread of the virus. Overall it is clear consumers appear to be comfortable and confident venturing out. During the delta wave, dining activity flattened out but did not weaken substantially. The immediate reaction to omicron appeared to be a bit more pronounced, although by this measure it dining out has perked back up in early 2022.

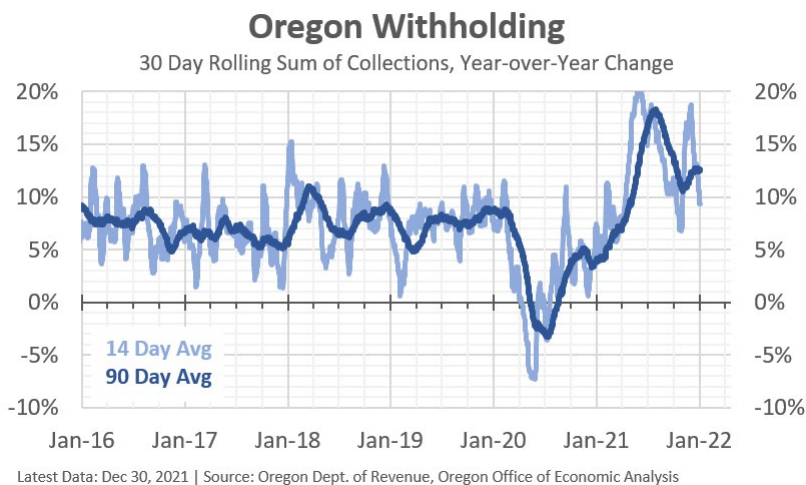


## State Revenues

*Withholding*

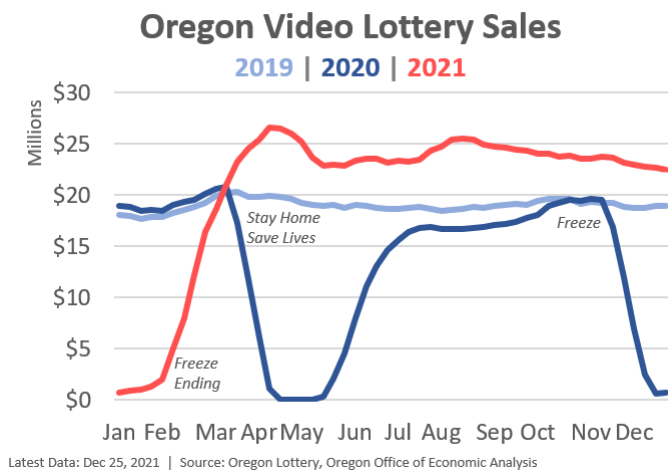
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Withholdings are generally based on wages and are therefore a good indicator of the strength of the labor market and underlying taxable wages. However taxpayers can also withhold from other sources of income such as retirement, bonuses, unemployment insurance and the like. The data is incredibly noisy but a good real-time indicator. Following a brief dip during the shelter in place phase of the cycle, withholdings continue to grow, which is encouraging. Earlier this year year-over-year percentages took off given the shelter in place phase of the pandemic was a year prior. However those base effects are now fading as we head into the fall. Even as withholding growth has slowed, remains quite strong by historical standards.



#### Oregon Video Lottery Sales

Weekly video lottery sales are a timely measure of discretionary consumer spending in Oregon. This year, video lottery sales have set new records pretty much every week. Clearly at a macro level, there is no hesitancy from consumers and households. Many have the income, and the pent-up demand for entertainment and to resume previously restricted activities. Note that overall consumer spending is also increasing strongly, it is not just on gaming. In fact if you look at total, aggregate video lottery sale since the start of the pandemic, they are still down 15-20 percent relative to pre-pandemic forecasts. The records set this year have not fully offset the impact of the shutdowns.

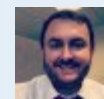


Note that our friends at [OLCC](#) publish [interactive data and chart](#) based on monthly marijuana sales data, and our friends at Department of Revenue publish [monthly marijuana tax collections](#).

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• **Mark McMullen**

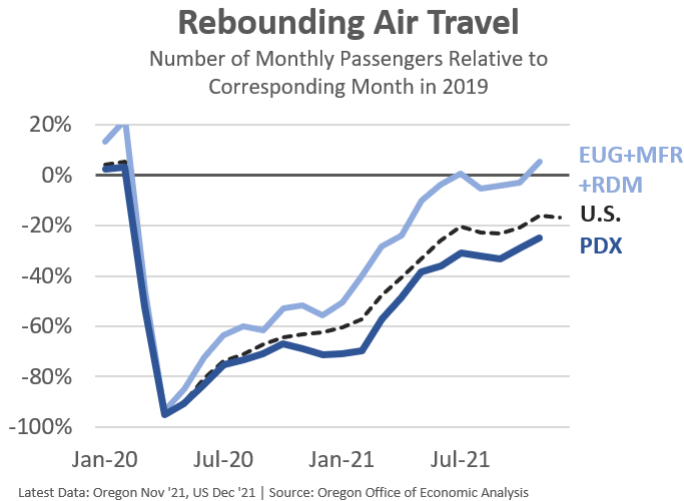


• **Josh Lehner**

## Mobility

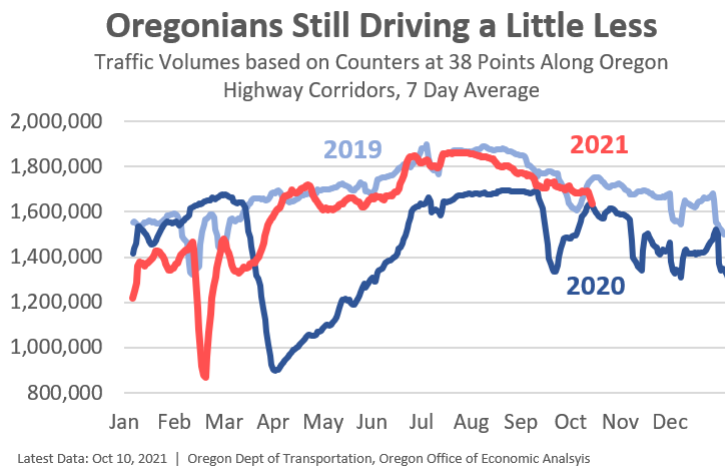
### Oregon Air Travel

Air travel was always one of the last things expected to rebound during the pandemic. The main reasons for air travel are for work or family reasons, or to visit a far-flung destination for fun. Given strong household incomes and pent-up demand for vacations, leisure travel has rebounded. Business travel on the other hand, remains down, impacting larger urban economies across the country. These relative patterns are seen here in Oregon when looking at passenger counts where the regional airports are nearly fully recovered, and PDX showing a less complete recovery to date. Monthly PDX traffic [available here](#), click here for [Eugene, Medford](#), and [Redmond](#), while daily U.S. TSA numbers [available here](#).



### ODOT Traffic Counts

Biweekly reports from ODOT are [available here](#). The data show that Oregonians have largely resumed their pre-COVID driving habits although not completely. Traffic normally peaks in the summer and wanes through the winter. In September, traffic in 2021 averaged 2% below 2019 volumes.



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