



SEASIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Reopening date is elusive

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For Seaside Signal

As COVID-19 cases continue rising in Clatsop County, the return to in-person learning for the Seaside School District remains an elusive and constantly moving target.

“We are ready to move to hybrid instruction when the case counts are in the range to do so,” Superintendent Susan Penrod said during last week’s school board meeting. “We don’t know when that is going to be.”

During the meeting, she presented her recommendation for the district moving forward. Originally, the district had a target date for reopening at the beginning of the second trimester in early December but a couple key changes took place over the past few weeks that called that date into question.

‘WE ARE READY TO MOVE TO HYBRID INSTRUCTION WHEN THE CASE COUNTS ARE IN THE RANGE TO DO SO!’

— Susan Penrod, superintendent, Seaside School District

In late October, the Oregon Department of Education released new statewide metrics that enable schools in Clatsop County to return to on-site instruction if case counts are below 50 per 100,000 people. The metrics also alter the approach for reviewing the data.

“We transitioned from looking at one week at a time over a three-week period to combining our data into two weeks and having a look back,” Penrod said.

On Oct. 30, Seaside would have qualified to make the transition.

“We were excited when we saw that,” Penrod said.

By the following week, that was no longer the case. Data showed the county’s case count for the two-week period ending Oct. 31 was 58.5 per 100,000.

For the Oct. 25 to Nov. 7 period, the case count jumped to 114.4 cases per 100,000, and by Nov. 14 it was 117 cases.

On Nov. 13, Gov. Kate Brown issued a two-week freeze from Nov. 18 to Dec. 2 as a response to the rapid increase of coronavirus cases across the state.

Considering these circumstances, Penrod’s recommendation is to continue monitoring the weekly case count in the county and move to hybrid instruction when the case counts are in the range to do so.

“As has been this district’s commitment, we want to make sure we have the health and safety of our students and our staff and our community at the forefront,” she said.

Hybrid model

If case counts are too high to resume on-site instruction by Dec. 8, the district can still begin limited in-person instruction at Pacific Ridge Elementary School

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MEALS ON WHEELS



Senior Meals volunteer Kari Douma delivers a hot meal to a client at the Bob Chisholm Community Center meal site.

Katherine Lacaze/For Seaside Signal

AN ANCHOR FOR THE COMMUNITY

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For Seaside Signal

Three days per week, a small company of volunteers travels around Seaside and Cannon Beach, delivering meals to more than four dozen seniors and providing a vital human connection that contributes to their well-being.

“We’re an anchor,” said Chris Duffy, coordinator of the local senior meals and Meals on Wheels program run out of the Bob Chisholm Community Center.

The senior meal program is managed via a contract with NorthWest Seniors and Disability Services, which has meal sites throughout Clatsop, Tillamook, Yamhill, Marion and Polk counties.

For the Meals on Wheels portion of the program, volunteers deliver to clients on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Those 60 and older receive a hot meal as well as a frozen meal for the following day. Clients are also welcome to stop by from 11:30 a.m.

to 12:15 p.m. Monday through Friday for curbside meal pickup, which has become the long-term alternative to meals being served inside the senior center.

Under statewide health protocols and procedures, clients now drive up to the building and indicate from a distance how many meals they need. Volunteers don-

ning masks run the prepackaged food out to the cars, one at a time, and put it in a trunk or pass it through a window.

Increased demand

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the senior meals program has seen an influx of participants. In March, NorthWest Seniors authorized more meals to meet the big spike in demand, according to Duffy. When the state ordered a two-week freeze from Nov. 18 to Dec. 2, Duffy said they anticipated another increase.

“The trend is, when things are more in shutdown mode, our demand increases, especially curbside,” Duffy said.

On the first day of the freeze, they served more than 30 curbside meals, while during the summer — when more businesses were open and COVID-19 cases seemed steady — they were doing about 15 to 20 meals per day. Since the spring, the Meals on Wheels program has served about 40 to 50 clients per week.

At the same time, the program is operating with fewer volunteers, particularly in the kitchen, to accommodate social distancing. While the program usually has about 30 people volunteering in a given month, it now has about 10 volunteers handling meal delivery and two in the kitchen to run curbside pickup.

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HOT LUNCH

Seniors 60 and older can pick up a hot lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Ave. A, Seaside. Drive up Avenue B to pick up at back door. Meals are \$3 each.

For information, call Suzanne Bjaranson at 503-861-4202. For new Meals-on-Wheels inquiries, call 503-304-3420.



Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham.

Seaside police chief takes job in Enterprise

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham has accepted the position of police chief in Enterprise.

“It’s an exciting, mixed emotion type of thing,” Ham said. “It’s not that we were necessarily wanting to leave Seaside, as much as this was an opportunity we decided to take a look at.”

“The city of Seaside, the community, has always treated me very well. It is strictly a personal decision my wife and I have thought about, contemplated and researched for the past several years. If this works out, it’s a good time to make that move.”

Ham will take over for Joel Fish, who was elected sheriff for Willowa County. Ham will lead a department of three full-time officers, significantly smaller than the Seaside Police Department’s 20 full-time officers.

“It seems to be a really good department and very well received in the community,” Ham said.

Ham, 50, was raised in Salem. He started his law enforcement career as a reserve officer in Independence and received his first paid police job in October 1995, when he joined Seaside police as a patrolman.

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Owner opens Gearhart school fields

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The new owner of Gearhart Elementary School responded to calls to keep playing fields open to residents by doing just that.

After meeting with Mayor-elect Paulina Cockrum and City Administrator Chad Sweet, Robert Morey, of Scofi Gearhart LLC, announced last week he will provide parking and temporary access from both the north and south to the more than 3-acre eastern portion of the 8.5-acre site. The field has historically been available as play fields for Gearhart children.

“The western portion of the site will be fenced off while we work to understand building and site conditions and the goals of the broader Gearhart community,” Morey said.

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District receives 30-day middle school purchase extension

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

After public comment and a 90-minute closed executive session, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board members authorized executive director Skyler Archibald to seek a two-month extension before purchase of Broadway Middle School from the

Seaside School District.

The Seaside School District fell short of the 60-day extension, agreeing to a 30-day extension for the completion of due diligence on Broadway Middle School.

The extension request came last week after directors received emails, letters and comments from critics of the purchase, including more than 30 people in the Facebook group “Transparency for SEPRD Taxpayers.”



Carol Lierman, Donna Sunnel and Lindsey Morrison seek a review of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District’s purchase of Broadway Middle School.

Diane Wells

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