

Cronin

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ary, hiring a private company to conduct the nationwide search and netting nine applicants just as the country closed down. Suddenly, all the usual tools for evaluation were off the table. Mt. Angel's council typically brings candidates to town to meet the community and staff at City Hall before a final decision is made. But this year, phone calls and Zoom meetings had to suffice.

"I was skeptical going into a virtual search because that isn't how you do it," Wall said. "I'm a big believer in non-verbal communication, and all you get online is facial expressions."

"It was a weird feeling for all of us, not just me as a candidate," Cronin said. "I would much rather have come in person. We were trying to get through this virtual hiring process together, just like we're all trying to get through this tough time together."

After spending a full Saturday in May virtually interviewing the top seven candidates, Mt. Angel's search committee narrowed its picks to three. These were "qualified and talented people, which made it difficult for us," Wall said, but Cronin finally emerged as the leading choice.

His speciality is community development. Among his other jobs, he spent nine years working to revitalize the Lents District in northeast Portland. His employer, now dubbed Pros-

per Portland, promotes housing, economic development and other improvements in the city's 11 urban renewal districts.

"Working in city planning, I've been allowed to work on the thing I love," he said. "I knew I wanted to work on improving the environment from the time I was young."

Cronin grew up on the East Coast, in a borough 25 miles north of Philadelphia. The county seat, Doylestown, remains a small town today, with a population just over 8,000. As a high school student, he still remembers being excited when curbside recycling finally arrived in his town.

"I was one of those kids who was saving up glass bottles when I heard a statewide recycling initiative had passed," he said.

Free in environmental studies from Penn State, moved to Oregon in 1996, and was awarded a master's degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon. Over the years, he's worked mainly in the Portland area, with the last five being on the Oregon Coast.

Working in Mt. Angel now allows him to live full-time in Portland, where he owns a home and his children live.

"Even though the commute is now 80 miles per day, I can sleep in my own bed at night," he said.

Cronin replaces Gene Green, interim city manager since last October, who was hired to fill in for City Manager Amber Mathisen, who resigned last fall after three years on the job.

Appeal Tribune

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Float

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Luckily, there have been no deaths this year, despite a number of close calls. That prompted the Marine Board and local sheriff's office to look at removal.

"There are just so many trees in the river, and behind them are many more waiting to come down. It's a minefield of fallen trees and root balls that are very difficult for floaters to avoid," Henry said. "Removal would require heavy equipment getting access to, and going out in the river at relatively high flows. I would want to engage ODFW and other agencies before putting heavy equipment in the river like that and removing that many trees."

"Some trees could probably be trimmed by people with chainsaws in drift boats lining down to the trees and cutting from the boats, but this can be quite dangerous."

The Marine Board has some options for removing blockages in exceptional circumstances, but they don't actually have funding or authority to manage inner tubes or swimmers, only motorboats or paddlecrafts 10 feet and longer, which pay into the agency's budget.



Signs have been placed at Greens Bridge access warning floaters about the danger on the North Santiam River due to downed trees.
 ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

The agency isn't totally opposed to tree removal and will look at options once river flows begin to drop in July. But they also don't want to create the false impression that the river is ever that safe for inner tubes.

"As flows drop and the channel condenses, it could also become more hazardous because there may be less water around the obstructions and you'll be pushed right into them," Henry said. "Sometimes lower water helps, sometimes it makes it worse."

Where are the hazards?

There are two main hazard areas, both on the North Santiam River, upstream of its confluence with the South Santiam.

The first danger area is in a new channel, about halfway between Greens Bridge and the confluence of the two rivers.

"The water has created a new channel on the right side of the river, and people are getting sucked into that new channel that is filled with a bunch of root wads and strainers," Jefferson Fire division chief Louis Gisler said. "We've had some very close calls there and people have been very lucky to get washed through."

The second dangerous area is just upstream of the confluence. It often has downed trees, but recently at least two large trees have fallen into the river while the river carves new channels, creating more danger.

"The majority of people are not wearing life jackets," Gisler said. "There has also been a gentleman out there in a private boat warning people, even putting up his own signs about the danger, telling people to get out and walk around, and people are not listening, so that's been frustrating."

The man in the private boat rescued a number of people as well, Gisler said, meaning well over a dozen needed help.

Man charged with multiple thefts in Marion and Linn counties

Virginia Barreda
 Salem Statesman Journal
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Deputies were able to identify the male associated with the vehicle as Fennimore.

A Stayton man was charged Tuesday for connection with several thefts and burglaries in Marion and Linn counties — including a hydroelectric plant near Sweet Home and the Santiam Ski Lodge near Hoodoo.

Linn County Sheriff's detectives served a search warrant Tuesday in the 700 block of Virginia Street in Stayton, where they recovered nearly 200 items they believe were stolen from both counties.

Anthony Fennimore, 30, and Brittany Davidson, 32, were arrested and taken to the Linn County Jail.



Fennimore

Officials said thousands of dollars worth of items were stolen during these thefts, including a firearm.

The investigation began in early May when the sheriff's office received several reports of a man using a face covering to steal from remote areas in Linn County.



Davidson

Deputies responded to a hydroelectric plant east of Sweet Home where multiple items were stolen from the United States Forest Service.

In June, officials took a burglary report at the Santiam Ski Lodge near Hoodoo where a male and female broke into the ski lodge.

A Nissan Pathfinder was used at both locations.

On June 28, deputies investigated several reports of vehicles that had been broken into in the Marion Lakes area of Linn County. That same day, deputies also investigated a report of a vehicle stolen from the Pacific Crest Trailhead off Highway 20 near Hoodoo.

On Tuesday, deputies found the Nissan Pathfinder and the vehicle stolen from the Pacific Crest Trailhead, parked at a residence on Virginia Street.

Deputies served a search warrant and recovered the stolen vehicle, in addition to nearly 200 items believed to be stolen from both Marion and Linn counties.

Fennimore faces charges of possession of a stolen vehicle, unauthorized use of a vehicle, second-degree burglary, unlawful entry into a motor vehicle, two counts of first-degree theft, first-degree theft of a firearm and two counts of second-degree criminal mischief.

Brittany Davidson was charged with second-degree burglary and second-degree criminal mischief.

Officials said additional charges are expected as the investigation continues.

The Stayton Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff's Office assisted Linn County Sheriff's office.

Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact Det. Steve Frambes at 541-967-3950.

Virginia Barreda is the breaking news and public safety reporter for the Statesman Journal. She can be reached at 503-399-6657 or at vbarreda@statesman-journal.com. Follow her on Twitter at @vbarreda2.

History of problems

This isn't the first time the area just above the confluence of the North and South Santiam Rivers has been a problem.

Henry said there was at least one kayak fatality, and a large number of inner tube rescues, in 2014 around the same location. At the time, a local landowner provided access and a contractor who donated time and heavy equipment helped remove a single log jam.

"The difference then was the largest problem was in one concentrated area with land access," Henry said. "This year's situation is much more scattered."

So for now, the stretch of river should be avoided, especially by those using boats without paddles. And, he said, while this specific problem might improve sometime in the future, the danger, especially near the confluence, is unlikely to dissipate.

"I would expect this to remain dangerous for the foreseeable future," Henry said. "The North Santiam is actively cutting into forested banks all the time, it's kind of the nature of the river. The bank adjacent to the large grouping of fallen trees has a continuous supply of large cottonwood trees that will continually fall into the river with each high-water event."

Zach Urness has been an outdoors reporter, photographer and videographer in Oregon for 12 years. Urness is the author of "Best Hikes with Kids: Oregon" and "Hiking Southern Oregon." He can be reached at zurness@StatesmanJournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

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Schools

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ceiving this revenue to complete this project."

Perrydale uses its old gym, which dates to the 1940s, as a cafeteria since building its new gym in the early 2000s.

The district had a \$3.4 million bond in the May ballot, but it failed after the district asked voters not to vote for the bond after the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Now it will receive \$2,342,562 for improvements to keep the old gym usable.

"The grant itself will be a huge deal for our school," Perrydale

Principal Dan Dugan said. "When we found out we got that money, it's just great. It's exciting for our school and our community."

The Scio School District will receive \$1,547,940 for improvements on the Scio Middle School gym.

It also received a \$2.4 million grant in 2018 for seismic work on its high school gym.

The Sheridan Fire District will receive \$2,092,758 for the Sheridan Fire Station.

On many occasions when public institutions are dealing with older buildings and considering putting out bonds, they frequently choose to build new buildings as it's more financially feasible.

This grant assures those historic buildings will survive and serve

their intended purpose for decades to come.

"You can't go wrong," Drill said. "A ton of forethought goes into this in partners that are looking at K-12 education. It's safety for kids."

"Before we did the work with Turner (Elementary School), that was 100% coming down in an earthquake. Now that building can withstand a major earthquake."

Bill Poehler covers Marion County for the Statesman Journal. Contact him at bpoehler@statesmanjournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoehler](https://twitter.com/bpoehler)

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