

Appeal Tribune

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Boating permit fee brings in \$1.29M in 1st year

Funds boat ramps, parking and facilities for non-motorized boating

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A new permit required to paddle Oregon's lakes, rivers and waterways brought in \$1.29 million during 2020, the first year of a program intended to improve access to the state's water-born recreation.

Anyone paddling a raft, drift boat or kayak longer than 10 feet was required to purchase a Waterway Access Permit following the passage of Senate Bill 47 in the 2019 Oregon Legislature.

The permits were \$7 for a week, \$17 for a year, or \$30 for two years, plus a \$2 service fee in many cases. A total of 85,473 were sold, bringing the first infusion of cash into a fund intended to improve boat ramps, park-

ing and facilities for non-motorized boating.

Previously, motorized boat registration fees paid for many boating facilities in the state.

The program also funds a previous program to combat the spread of invasive species in water and funds educational or boating safety programs for underserved communities.

How has the money been spent?

The Oregon State Marine Board said it already distributed or has dedicated \$700,000 to \$800,000 of the \$1.29 million taken in.

The money is awarded using a grant system in which cities, counties, nonprofits or other groups sub-

mit applications. Each proposal is judged on 28 points of criteria by the Oregon State Marine Board.

"There's a very broad range of projects that are eligible," Marine Board boating program manager Janine Belleque said. "The bottom line is we want people out there recreating safely and loving everything Oregon has to offer."

In its first round of grants awarded last August, the Marine Board distributed funds to a range of projects, including:

- A kayak dock at the Port of Alsea in Waldport (\$28,000 in waterway access permit dollars).
- Acquisition of the former Bumblebee Cannery site in Reedsport for Umpqua River access (\$50,000).
- Funding to assist permitting for the future instal-

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Breezy Aguirre with The ARCHES Project works to count unsheltered people during the Point-in-Time survey in West Salem. PHOTOS BY BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL

POINT-IN-TIME

Annual homeless count underway despite pandemic

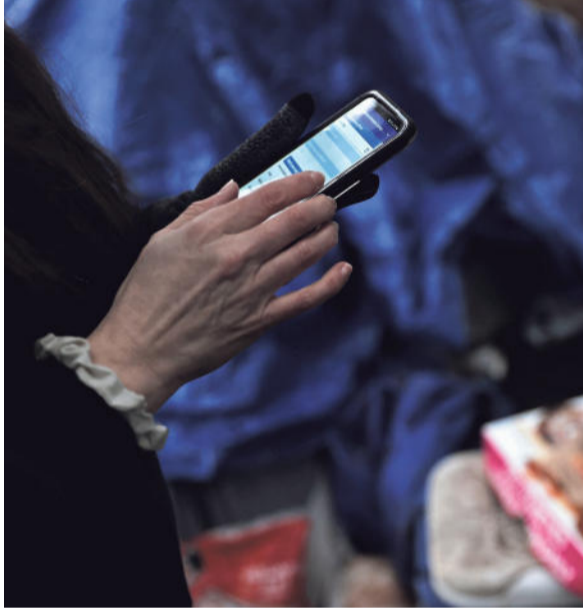
Whitney Woodworth
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

On Jan. 26, after morning lows in Salem dipped to freezing, volunteers and advocates filtered through shelters, park encampments and parking lots with the goal of interviewing and meeting every homeless person living in Marion and Polk counties.

With fewer volunteers, increased safety protocol due to the pandemic and more people living in city parks, the annual Point-in-Time count is looking different from previous years, said Ashley Hamilton, program director for the ARCHES Project.

Those experiencing homelessness are surveyed each year to collect data for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The data is used to determine the need in each region and is directly tied to how much federal money is given to help.

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Volunteers use an app to survey unsheltered people during the Point-in-Time count of the area's homeless population.

OLCC fines Mt. Angel bar for violating mask rule

Emily Teel
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission has fined Mt. Angel's Bierhaus. The bar, 315 N Main Street, was charged with violating Oregon Health Authority's statewide mask mandate aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19.

The business will either pay a \$2,970 civil penalty and serve a five-day OLCC license suspension or serve a 23-day license suspension.

Business owners are entitled to appeal OLCC decisions through an administrative process. The Bierhaus' owners, Ben Rash and Ryan Gengler, have requested a hearing and the issue remains ongoing. They declined to comment on the situation at this time.

Open for a decade, Bierhaus is the first restaurant opened by entrepreneurs Gengler and Rash. The pair also own North Third in Stayton, The White Horse in Molalla, and The Gallon House in Silverton.

OLCC documents indicate the restaurant violated the policy "when it failed to require its patrons and employees to wear appropriate face masks, face shields, or face coverings at the premises." They also indicate that the violation involved more than one employee or patron.

The charges were made via notice on Nov. 4, 2020 following an investigation by OLCC inspectors who observed non-compliance with the orders.

Documents state "after receiving a warning" about non-compliance with Gov. Brown's Executive Orders regarding face coverings and social distancing "from OLCC inspectors during a previous site inspection, inspectors observed continued non-compliance and multiple patrons not wearing masks."

OLCC Inspectors observed a bartender "not making an effort to get the patrons to comply with the guidelines."

When the Inspectors contacted the business owners "they described the difficulty of enforcing the mask requirements, but have since instituted multiple measures in the premises and with their employees to ensure future compliance."

At the same January OLCC meeting wherein the Bierhaus stipulated settlement was discussed, two other Oregon eateries were also mentioned as having violated the statewide mask mandate. Cabaret II in Portland and Seven Nightclub in Bend are also charged with fines.

Emily Teel is the Food & Drink Editor at the Statesman Journal. Contact her at eteel@statesmanjournal.com, Facebook, or Twitter. See what she's cooking and where she's eating this week on Instagram: [@emily_teel](https://www.instagram.com/emily_teel)

Some still waiting for extended benefits

State says it is working on fixing backlog of unemployment checks

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Peter Fenton went from a tough but rewarding job to spending his days struggling through a frustrating tangle of bureaucracy.

For the past seven years, he worked for companies that helped people transition from institutionalized settings to living independently.

Since leaving his job in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he's had to focus on trying to access the unemployment benefits the law says he should be getting.

A month ago, he faced his unemployment benefits running out before a new stimulus package was passed into law that gave him an additional 11 weeks of coverage.

After receiving unemployment for the first week of January, the payments stopped, and he's received rejection letters despite the Oregon Employment Department's messaging to keep applying.

"Some people might think unemployment, you're on easy street, you just get these checks," Fenton said. "I've found that it's as stressful or more stressful than work."

Multiple problems have caused delays in unemployment benefits for thousands in Oregon.

When benefits under the CARES Act expired in December 2020 and the Continued Assistance Act took its place, the U.S. Bureau of Labor struggled to get information to states about how to administer them. And the new law came with some new requirements, which further delayed unemployment payments, especially for states with outdated computer systems like Oregon's.

On Wednesday, Oregon Employment Department acting director David Gerstenfeld said the department is starting to pay the backlog of unemployment to people in Fenton's situation ahead of its Jan. 29 goal.

Gerstenfeld said the department is also trying to catch up on unemployment payments to self-employed and gig workers by Feb. 5.

"As with (the benefit extension), it's possible we could pay that ahead of schedule," Gerstenfeld said.

He reminded people that payments will be paid retroactively for both programs "so people should continue to file weekly."

Leaving a job due to high-risk status

Fenton, who has lived in Eugene for the past 30 years, spent much of his life as a writer, including a stint as chief paranormal correspondent for the National Enquirer.

For the past seven years, he has worked in home healthcare.

"I actually enjoyed it a lot. For me, it was like doing an adventure, but I didn't have to leave town," Fenton said. "And there were very, very interesting individuals, once you get to know them."

He worked about 20 hours per week at a location in Springfield for the past four years, cooking and playing games with residents, and dispensing medications.

When the pandemic hit in March, Fenton consulted with his doctor and was instructed to leave the position as he is in the highest risk category for illness for COVID-19 due to his age of 71.

"As soon as I read about this ban in March, I used up all my vacation time and my sick time. I found out I could do this unemployment thing. I was guided that way by the company," Fenton said.

Fenton first filed for unemployment in late March. After a couple weeks of receiving nothing, he contacted the offices of Congressman Peter Defazio and State Representative Paul Holdley and in a few weeks was receiving unemployment benefits, which was much faster than many of the other hundreds of thousands of people in Oregon who applied for unemployment benefits.

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