

Business in Brief

New small business grants available

CLATSOP COUNTY — Small businesses and nonprofits in Clatsop County that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 can apply for a new state grant program.

Grants of \$5,000 and more are now available to small businesses that have received less than \$100,000 in federal relief from programs like the Paycheck Protection Program and EIDL Advance. To be eligible, businesses must have 25 employees or fewer, and either have been ordered by the state to shut down or have had a 25% decrease in gross revenue in a given month between March and August, compared to the same month last year.

The grant application is available through the Clatsop Economic Development Resources website, clatsopcc.edu/cedr until 5 p.m. Oct. 16.

Prior state grant recipients can fill out a separate short-form application at clatsopcc.edu/cedr. Prior recipients may be randomly selected to receive a grant matching their previous grant amount.

For more information, contact cedr@clatsopcc.edu.

Oregon's unemployment claims recovering the quickest

According to financial website WalletHub, Oregon's unemployment claims have recovered the most since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared with all other states. The state also ranks second for the most recovered over the week to Sept. 21. This means the amount of new unemployment claims are decreasing the quickest.

Meanwhile, Washington ranks 32nd for unemployment claims recovered since the start of the pandemic, and 26th for recovery over the week to Sept. 21.

On Sept. 21, there were 13.6 million people in the U.S. who were unemployed due to the pandemic. On that date, there was a total of 837,000 new unemployment claims across the U.S., which is 88% less than the 6.9 million during the peak of the pandemic.

Nominations open for community service awards

Nominations for the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce's George Award and Richard Ford Distinguished Service Award are open until Nov. 30. The awardees will be announced at the chamber's annual meeting and banquet on Jan. 30.

Each year, the George Award goes to a local person known for their community service. Named after the saying, "Let George do it," this award is meant to recognize a person who steps up and gets the job done instead of waiting for someone else to do it.

The Richard Ford Distinguished Service Award is named after the late Richard Ford, who worked as the building inspector and fire chief for the city of Warrenton and volunteered to help the community.

For more information, visit oldoregon.com/about/outstanding-service-awards or pick up a nomination form at the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce or Warrenton City Hall.

Wauna Mill to expand with new line

WAUNA — Georgia-Pacific is planning to invest more than \$25 million in a new Angel Soft bath tissue converting line at the Wauna Mill, according to Kristi Ward, a company spokeswoman.

The new line is expected to come in 2021, with new job opportunities. The mill is currently hiring entry level technicians to help prepare for the new line.

Best Western Long Beach Inn wins Tripadvisor award

LONG BEACH — The Best Western Long Beach Inn won the 2020 Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Award for Southwest Washington, based on the reviews guests wrote after their stays throughout 2019.

The Best Western Long Beach Inn is located close to the center of Long Beach with nearby access to the boardwalk, restaurants and shops.

CJ Opfer joins Windermere Realty

GEARHART — Cathy "CJ" Opfer joined Windermere Realty Trust as a new real estate broker in the agency's Gearhart office in August. Opfer was an art educator in Virginia Beach, VA before starting her real estate career in 2016.



Julia Radditz, left, meets with a former client at the client's home in Warrenton.

Housing market sees influx of remote workers

Story by Emily Lindblom

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As COVID-19 restrictions have led many people to work remotely, real estate agencies in the North Coast and Long Beach Peninsula are seeing a large influx of potential buyers.

Julia Radditz, owner and principal broker of Totem Properties, said her agency has seen an increase in prospective buyers who have indicated that they're considering a move to the coast due to the flexibility of their jobs and the move to online offices.

"For many, the luster of city life has disappeared this year, so people are exploring new housing options in which their income doesn't need to be tied to the local economy," Radditz said. "While housing prices are increasing quickly here at the North Coast, they're still relatively affordable compared to many of the larger metro areas."

Leslie Brophy, owner and broker of Pacific Realty, is also seeing more people looking for homes on the Long Beach Peninsula.

"COVID-19 has proven to them they can work from anywhere and they might as well come to their lifelong dream of living at the beach," Brophy said, adding that many kids have the option to attend school remotely as well. "People want to get out of the city and get into an environment with less craziness."

According to a recent analysis by real estate website

Redfin, pageviews of houses in towns with less than 50,000 residents went up by 87% year over year in May.

Brophy said she's also seeing an uptick in buyers looking for additional living spaces for family members, along with an increase in multiple generations wanting to live together.

Radditz said many of the potential new homeowners on the North Coast are from Seattle, Portland and California. But the increased interest in living on the coast is exacerbating the already-tight housing market, rendering many houses unaffordable for the local population.

According to the Regional Multiple Listing Service, there is high demand for homes in Clatsop, Tillamook and Lincoln counties, and people are willing to pay more. RMLS reported that average residential property sales prices in the North Coast rose by 7.6% to \$395,300 over the year in August.

In Clatsop County alone, the average sale price went up by 16.49% to \$457,856 over the year in September. Meanwhile, the number of houses for sale dropped. In September 2019, there were 310 active listings, but in September 2020, there were only 131.

Bruce Walker, Pacific County assessor, said home prices on the Long Beach Peninsula in general are relatively affordable, but increasing.

"The trend of people moving here from out of the area and paying more than the assessed value has been going on for the past two years and it's sped up since COVID started," Walker said.