

Remote workers find flexibility on the coast

A connection to
the area and their work

By Abbey McDonald

Coast River Business Journal

With a remote job, Sara Zarit can live and work anywhere she wants. She chose Long Beach.

In October, she posted an inquiry to several Facebook rental groups, including one based in Astoria. She said she and her boyfriend were looking for a spot anywhere on the coast from Northern California to Washington state.

"I got so many responses, so I really ended up having a lot of options at the end of the day, which was really nice," Zarit said.

Originally from Port Angeles, Zarit graduated from the University of Washington last year with a goal to own her own home. During her senior year, she researched vans and trailers, wanting something she could move around.

Then, she saw a tiny home on Craigslist with a neat, modern exterior and large windows. It was eco-friendly and relatively self-sufficient, with solar panels and a composting toilet. It was the perfect fit for her, so she bought it.

"I just like that it's mine, really. I've never had such a big, important thing for myself," Zarit said.

After renting yard space, Zarit became one of many workers who have moved to the North Coast while remaining employed in another city.

Zarit works for the University of Washington's disability services department, where she ensures text-to-speech accuracy in documents.

Before, she said her job was pretty isolated in-person. She sat in a nearly empty office surrounded by computers, and rarely saw coworkers.

"Now I get to do it in my pajamas. I have my very own space where there's anything I could want, so on my break if my face is feeling crusty I can do my face routine," she said, laughing. "Now, I'm that much more productive for work."



LYDIA ELY/THE ASTORIAN

Matt Roberts, a mechanical engineer for GE Power, works at his home office in Seaview.

Freedom to work anywhere

Technology has allowed more people to be productive from home, and many businesses across the country went fully remote during the coronavirus pandemic.

Nicholas Strange, whose Astoria-based business

relies entirely on remote workers, said there's more opportunity now than ever before.

"It just gives more autonomy to the individual, which I think is the coolest thing, and a silver lining of the last couple years," he said. "People have the autonomy to live where they want to live, and they can do their day-to-day functions online, no problem."

In November, Strange launched Crypto Talent, a recruiting and human resources consulting agency that specializes in jobs for cryptocurrency and blockchain technology.

The agency helps businesses find and retain talent, and helps job candidates with interview preparation and career coaching. Common jobs in cryptocurrency include data technicians, marketing, advertising and software development.

Strange and a group of friends started the company after seeing space in the market for staffing agencies specializing in crypto. He said they were able to secure clients within the first week.

"We have been so pleased with the way the market has responded to our services. There wasn't

necessarily a big proof of concept when we started this," he said.

The majority of crypto industry jobs are remote, allowing them to search for candidates around the world.

To get things started in-person, Crypto Talent rents space at Open Office Astoria, and the group also works in local coffee shops around town.

A graduate of Astoria High School, Strange said he enjoys being on the coast.

"We've had nightly dinners together at some of our local restaurants, where we all grew up and love to be a part of," he said. "I feel a sense of community backing."

Strange believes that jobs in the crypto industry will increase in time as more businesses invest in decentralized systems.

"It's going to create so much innovation for business, and it's going to allow companies to move a lot faster," he said.

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