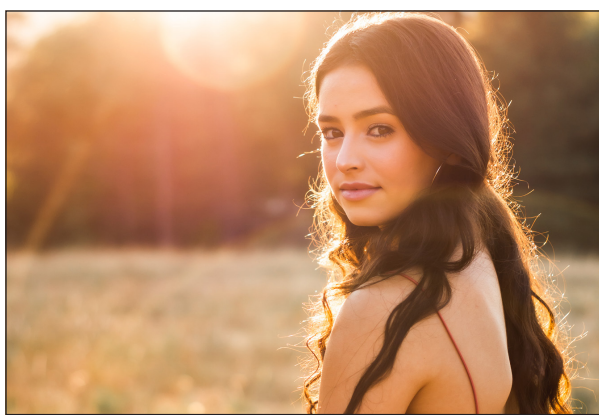


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Weather
Hot weather to stay awhile - pack sunscreen. Marginal to slight chance of thunderstorms Tues. 108 on Sat.



HRVHS graduate headed to Stanford on full ride
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Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

Wednesday, June 23, 2021 Volume 2, Issue 12

\$1.00

Annie Jr.



Live theater returned to The Dalles over the weekend with performance of *Annie Jr.*, presented by The Dalles Civic Auditorium's Civic Kids Spring production. Above, Annie (Tenley Taylor), at center stage, celebrates her adoption Christmas with her fellow orphans and her adopted family. More photos online and B14. Additional performances are next weekend, 7 p.m. June 25 and 2 p.m. June 27. Photo courtesy Flora Gibson

Chlorine shortage closes TD pool

■ By Alana Lackner
Columbia Gorge News

THE DALLES — The Northern Wasco County Aquatic Center in The Dalles will be closed until further notice pending a liquid chlorine delivery.

The Dalles is one of many cities in the Pacific Northwest to be affected by regional chlorine shortages. According to a post on the NWC Aquatic Center Facebook page, the liquid chlorine manufacturer they use experienced an explosion on June 1. According to a press release by Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation, this disruption in chlorine production has caused suppliers to ration their stock, which means canceling deliveries to services that are considered "non-essential," such as swimming pools.

Currently, the pool in Hood River is still open. This is because they just received a delivery before being cut off at the same time as The

Dalles, according to the Facebook post, meaning their holding tank is full, whereas the NWC Aquatic Center was expecting their delivery June 16. As such, their holding tank is empty. Additionally, the Hood River pool is smaller and uses less chlorine, according to the post.

The closure of the NWC Aquatic Center means that swimming lessons and meets are canceled until further notice. As dates of lessons arrive, the aquatic center will issue refunds, but is holding off in case supplies arrive before start dates.

The center has been able to schedule some deliveries from sources such as janitorial supply companies, according to the post. However, it will not be as much as they would usually get, so they plan to reserve opening for weekends and the hottest days of the summer.

According to the post, NWC Parks and Recreation has no estimate of when they will receive another full shipment of chlorine.

Second solar farm planned

■ By Jacob Bertram
Columbia Gorge News

Aurora Solar is planning for development of a second solar farm in the Bickleton area of Klickitat County.

According to an application submitted through the Klickitat County Planning Department, the subsidiary of Portland-based energy company Avangrid Renewables is proposing the construction of a 100-megawatt solar energy facility, titled Bluebird Solar Project, within the county's Energy Overlay Zone (EOZ).

Klickitat County Planning Director Mo-chi Lindblad emphasized that the application, obtained by *Columbia Gorge News*, has not yet been reviewed or deemed

complete by the planning department, but said she has "all the info I need to start the review process."

Aurora Solar obtained land leases with private landowners and Washington Department of Natural Resources on a 1,728-acre tract of land between Bickleton and Roosevelt, according to the application. A portion of the leased land overlaps with the Big Horn Wind Facility, owned by another Avangrid subsidiary. According to the application, current use of the land includes agriculture, rangeland, undeveloped open space, and wind energy facilities.

The application reveals that the company is planning for use of 1,638 acres of the land to install an array of solar panels, inverters, a collector substation, access roads,

and a transmission line connecting the substation to an existing line at the Big Horn Wind Facility. The company plans to review whether the project site would require installation of a maintenance building or if they could use an existing structure on the Big Horn Wind Facility site, according to the application.

Through connection of the transmission line between the proposed energy facility and an adjacent existing wind facility, the project would supply its output to the larger energy grid through a Bonneville Power Administration-owned switchyard near the project area, the applicants note.

According to the application, 12 homeowners live within three miles of the proposed project, including

one a mile away from the project site.

Because of the proposed project site's location within the county's EOZ, the applicant would be required to either provide information required in an expanded checklist or undergo an environmental impact statement, such as site-specific studies for impacts relating to habitat and wildlife, roads, cultural resources, and grading and stormwater management.

A SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) checklist would also be required under state law.

The county planning director would be responsible for approval or denial of the EOZ application, under county code, and has the

See **SOLAR**, page 6

Warm Springs fire at 0% containment

■ By Alana Lackner
Columbia Gorge News

WARM SPRINGS — A fire burning on the Warm Springs reservation is currently at 0% containment and had burned 6,200 acres as of press time on Monday.

According to a press release from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, dry conditions, high temperatures and high winds could contribute to the spread of the fire, dubbed S-503.

There is currently a level 2 "Get Ready" evacuation order for Walters Corners and Pine Grove, both in south Wasco County near Highway 26, as well as residences west of the intersection of Back Walters Road and Kelly Springs, which are at a level 3 "Go Now" evacuation order as of Saturday.

Javin Dimmick, Warm Springs Wildland Fire public information officer, said that the weather has provided challenges, especially as temperatures rise and the humidity drops, but they have received more reinforcements in fighting the fire. "We are continually getting more resources in, which is good," he said.

The fire was initially reported at 4:57 p.m. on Friday, June 18, Dimmick said. The cause of the fire is unknown and under investigation.

The official containment level and size of the fire will be updated at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily. Official updates can be found on inciweb.nwcg.gov, while both official and community-provided updates can be found on the Columbia Gorge Wildland & Fire Information Facebook Page.

Additional updates to this developing story will be available at columbiagorgenews.com.

Wastewater improvements near completion

■ By Jacob Bertram
Columbia Gorge News

BINGEN — The Bingen Wastewater Treatment Plant improvement project is nearly complete, with about a month to go on the rest of the updates planned for the plant, which services the cities of Bingen and White Salmon.

Approved last year, the improvements include the addition of a few components, as well as replacements and maintenance of old components which have degraded over decades of use.

"This is a good thing for both Bingen and White Salmon," said Bingen Mayor Betty Barnes. The improvements should allow for 20 years of use into the future and expand capacity for future gradual growth in the two cities.

Crews from TEK Construction, Inc., are preparing to install the remaining pieces of the improvements project, such as a recirculation pump, which would complete the addition of what is called a bio-selector, an instrument that will help to control the process of mixing bacteria into the wastewater within the oxidation ditch — a large, racetrack looking structure that mixes sludge with the wastewater. Within the sludge is oxygen-starved bacteria, which, when mixed in with wastewater, feast on the oxygen found in the wastewater delivered to the plant. The process, known as aeration, provides for rapid growth of the bacteria and allows for an easier and more thorough separation of the water and the bacteria as they get run through clarifiers.



Treatment plant operator Tom Hons stands outside his office at the Bingen Wastewater Treatment Plant on Marina Way. The plant, he said, "works not only for treating sewage, but for treating people." Jacob Bertram photo

Once the water is separated from the solids, it then runs through a disinfection process done through ultraviolet light shining through the water, and then runs off into the Columbia River.

The solids are collected and stored in tanks where they enter a drying process that lasts between three and four months, culminating in a nitrogen compound that is collected and spread in a field in central Klickitat County.

"The water we send out to the river is really, very clean," plant

operator Tom Hons said in an interview last Friday.

Hons, along with fellow operator James "Buck" Buckland, have worked to ensure operation of the plant runs 24 hours a day.

At the end of the month, Hons will be retiring from his job at the plant, marking more than three decades of working to ensure Bingen and White Salmon's wastewater coming into the plant leaves in a clean and pollutant-free fashion. The improvements project marks the second major upgrade he has

seen at the plant since his entry into the field; in 1996, the Bingen Wastewater Treatment Plant upgraded its plant to include the current larger oxidation ditch as well as the UV disinfection component, which replaced the previous component that used chlorine to clean the water — "much better for the fish," said Hons.

Along with the bio-selector, most recent improvements to the wastewater system include a more

See **PROJECT**, page 2

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