

**OREGON COAST, from page 4**

This trend is particularly problematic in Lincoln and Tillamook counties, where even though an above average amount of housing has been built in recent decades, after factoring in new developments targeted specifically as vacation homes and an overall increase in vacation homes in general, the stock of housing for local residents has not kept pace with demand, according to a March 2018 report from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

Newport City Planner Derrick Tokos said the rise in short-term rental numbers has correlated with the advent of Airbnb. More people are considering vacation rentals as an income opportunity because with companies like Vacasa taking care of management and Airbnb taking care of advertising, it's easy to turn a profit on your second home when no one is there.

An independent analysis Tillamook County commissioned painted a bleak picture. It found seasonal units jumped from 4,600 to 7,223 between 2000 and 2014, while the number of non-seasonal homes decreased by 110.

"The number of houses that are selling for cash in this county is just insane," said Erin Skaar, the director of Tillamook's primary social service provider, Community Action Resource Enterprises, Inc. She said according to the consultants who conducted the analysis, cash sales are taking place at "a far higher rate than you see across the nation, and it's because its investors that are coming in and buying houses."

The housing report showed homes priced at \$200,000 or more along Tillamook County's coastline were making up the bulk of those cash sales.

Interviews up and down the coast showed consensus among residents that following the recession, vacation rentals seemed to start taking over.

"Something that happened when that bubble popped," said Elizabeth Reyes, executive director at Family Promise of Lincoln County, "is now there are foreclosures everywhere."

"I can't tell you how many working class people lost their homes. And because of that, people who are already in a position of having collateral or wealth, can snap 'em all up, so you went from people having one or two, to three, four or five."

Some coastal residents aired suspicions that it's Californians and New Yorkers with deep pockets buying much of the land, but the truth lies closer to home.

Street Roots obtained the permanent addresses of those who've bought property in Lincoln and Tillamook counties since the recession.

Of the 3,677 single-family residences purchased in Tillamook County since 2008, just 13 percent have owners confirmed to live out-of-state, and more of those live in Washington than in New York or California. Portlanders own about 600 of the properties. About 27 percent of homes purchased were listed as the owner's permanent address.

In both counties, close to half the purchasers were listed as county residents, which means locals are cashing in on vacation rentals, too.\*

Tillamook County Commissioner Bill Baertlein said 100 new short-term rental permits were issued for the unincorporated



*Behind Aquarium Village (left), a popular Newport destination for tourists, are rows of storage units that have become living quarters for residents with nowhere else to rent (bottom left).*

*Many coastal residents also live in RVs. Idaho Point in Newport (below right) is known as an affordable place to park. Now, it's home to several run-down campers that adjacent to the picturesque bay. The park was recently acquired by a new owner.*

PHOTOS BY EMILY GREEN



areas of his county last year alone. "So we are up close to 900," he said, "and that's just in the rural county, and it's growing."

A similar look at the 1,000 properties purchased in Lincoln City and Newport since the recession revealed that 25 percent of properties purchased were listed as the owner's permanent address.

The data also revealed very few people had purchased more than one property in either county over the past 10 years, and those who had, only purchased two or three.

"We have very few situations where there is a single entity owning multiple properties," said Tokos in reference to Newport's housing market. He said out-of-town purchases are typically people who want a second home on the beach or who bought a second home for use later in anticipation of retirement. The difference is that now, they can easily turn that home into a profit generator.

### Quiet coast to busy beaches

Reyes, 37, remembers Lincoln City as a quieter place growing up. "During the winter, it was like 'our town,'" she said. "There was very little tourism, it was just like a sleepy little coastal town."

Now that tourism has increased, it can help businesses survive the winter months, she said, but summertime has become chaotic, with heavy traffic and swarms of beach-goers.

"At the beach, you can literally see piles of garbage," she said. "There is a push to make sure we get the right type of tourism.

We don't want to be a Jersey Shore where people come, party hard, and leave everything behind."

Reyes is working with the local government and other area residents on a project called "Imagine Lincoln City." She said one objective it has honed-in on is to attract more eco-based tourism by promoting activities such as kayaking, bird-watching photography tours and paddle-boarding.

"When you have that mindset, you are less likely to leave your bag of McDonalds behind on the beach," she said. "We don't want people coming with 20 cars and partying all night long with garbage all over the place and no accountability."

Lincoln City recently joined other coastal cities, such as Manzanita, Seaside and Gearhart, in limiting the number of vacation rentals allowed in residential neighborhoods. Astoria only allows vacation rentals in commercial zones.

In Newport and Tillamook, no regulations currently exist.

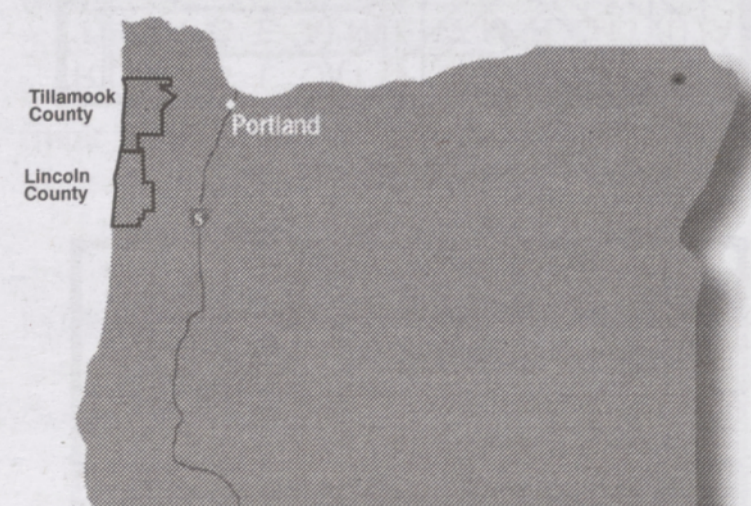
"Until three years ago, there were more cows than people in Tillamook County," said Gary Albright, director of the Tillamook Pioneer Museum. But all that's changed, he said, now that Tillamook has been discovered.

"Everybody owns the beach. It's not just the locals," said Commissioner Baertlein. "It's nice to have them here." But, he said, visitors need to "have a little patience with us and understand that when you have a

## Coastal Crossroads

— Part III Oregon Coast —

Oregon's coastal communities are struggling with a housing crisis all their own – one that's gotten worse every year following the Great Recession. Short-term vacation rentals, generational poverty, an increasingly visible wealth divide and aging populations have all pushed coastal communities to an irrevocable reckoning. For these communities to have a viable future, something has to change, but what?



### About this series

This article is part of Street Roots' Housing Rural Oregon series. Read previous articles from the series at [news.streetroots.org](http://news.streetroots.org).