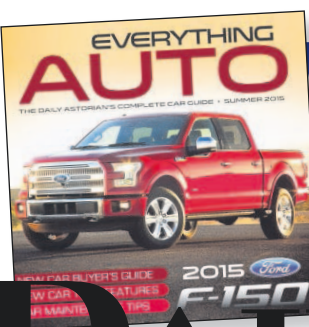


Get your motor runnin',

INSIDE



EVERYTHING AUTO WEEKEND EDITION



Behind the scenes

FRIDAY EXTRA • 1C

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

142nd YEAR, No. 253

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2015

ONE DOLLAR

POVERTY IN FOCUS



Jim Tierney, executive director of the Community Action Team, gives a presentation during the Clatsop County Community Conversation on Poverty at the Barbey Maritime Center Wednesday.

Community conversation looks at barriers, gaps in services

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

The lack of affordable housing, transportation and mental health facilities in Clatsop County are common barriers facing those trying to get out of poverty.

Identifying such barriers was the focus of a community conversation on poverty Wednesday in Astoria's Barbey Maritime Center.

The event, hosted by the nonprofit Clatsop Community Action, gathered more than 50 public officials and nonprofit leaders together to analyze the gaps in services.

Clatsop Community Action is an information and referral service for low-income people throughout the county.

Elaine Bruce, Clatsop Community Action's director of social services, said the conversation was the first of its kind for participants to dissect information and create an awareness of poverty in the community.

"There are a lot of common threads here," Bruce said.

The participants broke off into groups to determine where each of their organizations could fill various needs. The groups then focused on the barriers.



Participants broke into small groups to discuss different aspects of poverty in Clatsop County, including problems in accessing resources, resources available, and ways to help bridge gaps in support.

The availability of affordable housing kept coming up as a major hurdle. Bruce said CCA is reaching out to the Clatsop County Rental Owners Association to help with the shortage of low-income housing.

"We have the funding, but if there is no inventory that is a huge barrier," Bruce said.

Easier access for people with mental health problems was another focal point. Rather than waiting for someone to be in a mental health crisis before helping them,

the participants said, they would like to see more prevention.

One idea was creating mobile crisis teams to meet people out in the community instead of in the emergency room or jail. Progress on a new crisis respite center expected to open in Warrenton later this year was also noted.

State research handed out at the event showed Clatsop County mirrors statewide trends. The poverty rate is 14 percent in Oregon and 13 percent in Clatsop County, according to the data.

Bruce said she saw the event as a first step.

"We all walked away feeling it was worthwhile," Bruce said.

The next step, Bruce said, is having the conversation continue at a monthly grassroots meeting known as, "Connect the Dots," where community partners develop a singular set of goals to increase access and effectiveness of services, and decrease duplication.

See POVERTY, Page 10A

Fired teacher files civil rights charge

Former Tongue Point instructor alleges sex and disability discrimination

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A fired seamanship and culinary arts instructor at Tongue Point Job Corps Center has filed a civil rights complaint alleging sex discrimination, disability discrimination and whistleblower retaliation by Management and Training Corp., which operates the federal career training program.

Deborah Ferguson said she was fired in February for fraternization after giving a student an oar that another instructor had given her. But she claims the reason was specious and she was really dismissed because of issues related to her disability and gender.

In her complaint, Ferguson alleges she was fired about a week after returning to work from knee replacement surgery. She alleges the company maintained a sexually and gender hostile work environment. She also claims she was forced to falsify training records over her objection.

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries received Ferguson's complaint in late May. Charlie Burr, a spokesman for the bureau, confirmed an open investigation. The bureau co-filed the complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which declined to confirm or deny an investigation.

See CHARGE, Page 11A

NOAA adds more scientists to algal bloom research

EO Media Staff Report

Extra scientists have been added to a fisheries survey along the West Coast to chart an extensive harmful algal bloom that has triggered numerous closures of important shellfish fisheries in Washington, Oregon and California and recently the largest-ever closure of a multi-million dollar Dungeness crab fishery on the southern Washington coast.

The bloom stretches from the central California coast to north Washington and possibly Alaska. It involves some of the highest concentrations of the natural toxin domoic acid ever observed in Monterey Bay and off the central Oregon coast.

A survey to assess sardine and hake populations on the West Coast was already scheduled to leave June 15 from Newport, Ore., so the additional scientists will simply join that team. They plan to examine levels of marine toxins and the organisms that produce them. While localized blooms of marine algae that naturally produce domoic acid are common in spring, the bloom that began earlier this year has grown into the largest and most severe in more than a decade. Sardines, anchovy and other fish that feed on the algae and other microorganisms known as plankton

See RESEARCH, Page 7A

Family in law: Like father, like son

Police officer Tyler Johnston follows in dad's big footsteps

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Tyler Johnston knows what to expect by pursuing a career in law enforcement.

The newly hired Warrenton police officer grew up seeing the realities of police work through his father, Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston.

"He has been incredibly supportive and I've always been able to bounce things off of him," Tyler Johnston said. "Being able to go to someone who has done it and be able to talk to them, it's a great resource."

Since being hired in April, Tyler Johnston has been busy with field training where he rides along with experienced

officers. This past week, he started the 16-week police academy in Salem, known as the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

He is one of 40 officers aiming for graduation Oct. 9.

The academy covers everything from firearms and crisis training to how to interact with the community.

"Our job is not always enforcement driven. It is the most customer-driven job you can imagine," Tyler Johnston said. "You are coming to help people in what is the most (difficult) time of their lives. You need to treat it with the utmost respect and care."

Brad Johnston, who started as an Astoria police officer in 1992 before becoming the city's 33rd chief last year, said the police academy has evolved since he completed an eight-week course more than two decades ago.

See JOHNSTON, Page 11A



Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston pins a badge onto his son, Tyler Johnston, during his swearing-in ceremony at a Warrenton City Council meeting earlier this year.

