

POURING ON THE COAST

COAST WEEKEND



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Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Sea lions and harbor seals dive off the docks of the East End Mooring Basin after crews from the Port of Astoria inflated air dancers in an attempt to scare the pinnipeds this morning.

JUST DANCE!

Port employs air dancers to drive away sea lion squatters

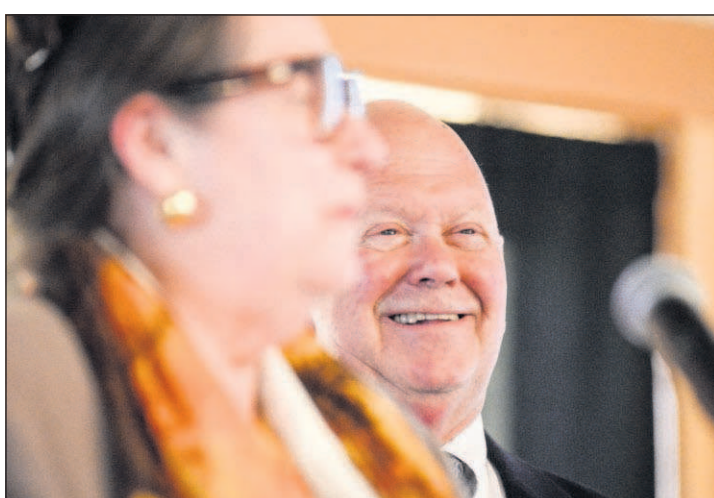
The Daily Astorian

Inflatable air dancers, staples of used car lots and mattress stores nationwide, were given new a purpose along the docks of the East End Mooring Basin. ¶ The Port of Astoria used a handful of the nylon, tube-shaped dancers to scare sea lions and harbor seals off the dock Thursday morning. ¶ As the colorful cartoonish creatures filled with air, sea lions and harbor seals in the immediate vicinity quickly took to the water while other sea lions, just one dock over, stayed put. ¶ “Our suspicion is that this is just temporary,” said Jim Knight, executive director of the Port, standing on the east basin causeway overlooking the air dancers. “But off to my left is Knappa High School students installing the first section of rails, which will be the permanent solution.” ¶ Student welders from Knappa will fabricate steel railings to line the Port docks, which Knight said has proven effective in other ports at keeping sea lions off docks. ¶ Video online at www.dailyastorian.com



ABOVE: Jose Delgado, with the Port of Astoria, sets up an inflatable air dancer on a dock in the East End Mooring Basin today. LEFT: Sea Lions and harbor seals hang out on the docks of the East End Mooring Basin before crews from the Port of Astoria inflated air dancers in an attempt to scare them away this morning.

These people are taking care of business



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Skip Hauke smiles during a speech by state Sen. Betsy Johnson at the Clatsop Economic Development Resources Awards banquet at The Loft in Astoria on Wednesday. Hauke was recognized for his work for CEDR during this year's banquet.

CEDR awards honor Clatsop businesses

By CYNTHIA WASHICKO
EO Media Group

In a room crowded with business owners, elected officials and local leaders, the winners of the Clatsop County Outstanding Businesses awards took the stage to accept their plaques Wednesday.

The fourth annual ceremony honored businesses in 10 categories ranging from customer service to entrepreneurship and economic impact. Each winner was nominated by a letter sent to Clatsop Economic Development Resources.

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Warming center goes on hiatus

Volunteer-run shelter reopens in November; weekly showers on tap

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Warming Center, which houses the homeless overnight during cold or inclement weather in the First United Methodist Church basement, closed for the season Wednesday morning after four months in operation.

But they were a busy and eventful four months: From mid-November through Tuesday, the center operated 66 nights, put up 98 people — including 77 men, 21 women and 15 veterans — and averaged 17 per night, and provided a total of 1,098 overnight stays, according to center tallies.

Volunteers served more than 2,000 meals — furnished mostly by the North Coast Food Web and Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro — and logged more than 2,000 volunteer hours.

“We served at least three times as many of our homeless population this year as we served last year,” City Councilor Drew Herzig, a warming center founder and organizer, said.

The center also added a shower, a washer and two dryers in January, acquired a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in February and secured the same space for another four-month period beginning in November.

But for now, “they’re going to have to be back out on the street again, and that really breaks my heart,” Herzig said of the homeless.

To keep the center open beyond its scheduled closing date, let alone year-round, would require more volunteers, greater capacity and more community partnerships, he said.

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Home health care shifts to Seaside

Providence takes on CMH's caseload

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Columbia Memorial Hospital is ending home health care services at the end of April after 25 years of operation, citing decreased Medicare reimbursements amid increasing costs.

The hospital serves 22 people through the program, but expects the number of affected patients to drop to 17 by the time the program closes. Patients will be notified starting today.

Providence Seaside Hospital, the only other hospital-based home health provider in Clatsop County, will incorporate those patients in its larger home health program.

“CMH has explored all options to keep this program open, however, the necessary reduction in costs to keep the program financially viable would significantly jeopardize the overall quality of service,” Erik Thorsen, the hospital's CEO, said in a statement.

Paul Mitchell, a hospital spokesman, said home health patients are people needing post-surgery monitoring, therapy and medication management. They include people with chronic health conditions or disabilities who need continued monitoring and have trouble leaving their home, but don't need to live in a nursing home.

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