

BLUE HIGHWAY



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Cars are seen parked on the beach near Del Ray Beach Recreation Site on Monday in Gearhart.

Homeowners say traffic on the beach 'out of control'

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

Acherished right for Oregonians, or an environmental and safety nuisance? Homeowners in Gearhart and Warrenton are taking their complaints about unsafe drivers on the beach to local and state officials. They want to see the elimination, reduction or increased enforcement of traffic.

"Driving on the beach may have made sense back in the days before Highway 101, but by now we should know better than to allow our natural areas to be desecrated by this kind of use," a group of Surf Pines homeowners wrote the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department office in Fort Stevens.

The homeowners met with Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin and U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici at a Seaside town hall meeting early this month to voice concerns about unsafe driving, fireworks and bad behavior.

"Our trails leading to the beach from our neighborhoods are left with human and dog feces, vomit, trash and toilet paper," they told officials. "Reckless and careless driving abounds with cars and trucks spinning around on the sand, attempts to drive up the trailheads, driving in the sand dunes and driving through the tide pools. Many of these illegal activities go on year round."

Fourth of July drama

"They felt the Fourth of July was out of control," Fort Stevens State Park Manager Teri Wing said after meeting with residents. "They wanted to find out: 'What do we do? Who do we call? We don't feel like there's anybody watching.'"

Bergin said closing the Clatsop County beach to vehicles is an idea floated "every other year or two."

While the sheriff acknowledged enforcement problems every Independence Day, including this past one, closing off the beaches would be a mistake.

See **BEACH TRAFFIC**, Page 10A Vehicles are not permitted along the beach in Seaside.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Signage near the beach at Fort Stevens State Park.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

'It's a very small group of people who complain. ... They own these homes along the beach and want their own private little walking space. It's not going to happen.'

Tom Bergin
Clatsop County sheriff

PGA pro seeks Gearhart's top spot

Brown sees role to 'calm waters'

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — PGA professional Matt Brown declared his candidacy Tuesday for Gearhart's mayor to replace Dianne Widdop, who announced her retirement early this year.

Brown said his passion for the city was developed growing up, when he and friends enjoyed the residential nature of the community, walking on the Ridge Path — what he calls "the soul of Gearhart" — and shopping at the local grocery.

"I always knew Gearhart was a

residential community and we all loved it, but I didn't know why," Brown said. "I learned about the comprehensive plan and learned Gearhart was designed to be a residential community. In community planning, if your city is not always planning, outside influences are going to plan the city for you. That vision is always at risk."

Brown, 41, attended Gearhart Elementary School, Seaside High School and Linfield College, where he graduated with a degree in business. As a PGA professional, Brown served at Astoria Golf & Country Club, Bandon Dunes Golf Resort



Matt Brown

and Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club before returning to his hometown in 2006, where he lives with his longtime girlfriend, Julie Visser, also a native.

In July, as general manager and PGA head professional at the Highlands Golf Club, Brown was honored with a national award as Merchandiser of the Year.

Beginning in 2006, Brown served on the Planning Commission, including time as president. "When I first got on the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission and the City Council were at odds with

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Conservation groups sue to protect salmon

Warm water in Columbia and Snake rivers could be deadly

By JES BURNS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Conservation groups have announced plans to sue the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They say the agency isn't doing enough to protect salmon from high water temperatures on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Warm water can be deadly for salmon. Just last year, 250,000 sockeye died on the Columbia because of high temperatures.

The EPA started addressing the issue more than a decade ago, but that process stalled.

Miles Johnson of Columbia Riverkeeper said he hopes the lawsuit will jump-start federal efforts to lower river temperatures.

"We want the EPA to take a holistic approach, to look at all the sources of temperature. But when EPA did that between

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Rich Landers/Spokesman Review

A fall Chinook salmon is shown after it was caught on the Columbia River near Desert Aire, Wash., in 2014.

High lead levels at schools isolated

Seaside School District taking swift action

By LYRA FONTAINE
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — High lead levels were found at a sink faucet at Seaside High School and a hose at Gearhart Elementary School after testing in June.

The two problem spots were among 39 locations tested for lead.

The sink faucet was at the Seaside High School concessions stand and has since been replaced, district maintenance supervisor Glendon Ely said. The water is undergoing retesting and results are expected in several months.

The faucet was not used for drinking but was tested because of potential food preparation or dishwashing use.

Above-limit lead levels were also found in a hose in the Gearhart Elementary boiler room. No action was needed because it was a control sample, Ely said. The water is used to clean the boiler room.

"I think we were really relieved and surprised at the results," Superintendent Sheila Roley said at a district board meeting Tuesday.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends schools collect 250 milliliter first-draw samples of stagnant water from outlets used for consumption, taking them out of service if the lead level exceeds 20 parts per billion. The trigger for treatment in a public water system is 15 parts per billion.



Sheila Roley

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