

# County manager found the inventory almost nil

## Moore noticed two challenges when relocating

The lack of housing in Clatsop County impacts every walk of life. Even top executives have difficulty finding suitable places to live.

County Manager Cameron Moore faced the housing struggle this spring when he moved from Illinois. Moore and his wife had a budget in mind to buy a house, and had to spend well above that amount when they eventually found a home in Gearhart.

"It did work out for us," Moore said. "I really recognize we had options a lot of people don't have."

During his search, Moore noticed two challenges.

The first was what to do in the short term. Moore was being relocated by the county and had some funds available for temporary housing, but he was still shocked how expensive short-term rentals are in the county.

"The initial surprise is you are probably going to spend \$1,200 to \$2,500 a month for temporary housing," Moore said. "That's your first surprise."

The second surprise is the challenge finding a long-term home. For those looking to buy, the inventory is almost nil, Moore said.

"I think what you quickly find is there are limited options for per-



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

**Clatsop County Manager Cameron Moore moved earlier this year from Mahomet, Illinois, where he served as the chief executive officer for the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission since 2007.**

manent housing if you are interested in buying," Moore said. "Pretty quickly, you have to start making decisions about what am I willing to live with assuming you can't get something ideal."

The housing market is push-

ing many prospective buyers to the rural parts of the county. What may seem affordable in the rural county will still be expensive with commuting costs.

Moore said the housing market in the county is quite differ-

ent than other places he has lived around the country. In places like Iowa, there are wide open spaces for developments to crop up.

"We have limitations just based on topography and geology," Moore said.



**'I don't know if I've ever been any place that has some of the same market challenges we have here.'**

**Cameron Moore**  
Clatsop County manager

The most similar housing market Moore has seen to Clatsop County is when he lived in Flagstaff, Arizona. Both areas have unique geography and are surrounded by forest. However, Moore said, a lot more building was taking place in Flagstaff.

"I don't know if I've ever been any place that has some of the same market challenges we have here," he said.

— Kyle Spurr

# Senior: 'I think it all boils down to the policies that are in place'

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Senior now lives in a two-bedroom apartment at a newer development near Costco in Warrenton for \$1,000 a month.

"I really wanted to be in newer construction," she said. "I didn't want to deal with house repairs and stuff breaking down because it's too old, or deal with pests, or spiders or roaches."

"I think that works for me. I feel like I'm halfway to Astoria, half-

way to Seaside."

Senior works as an outreach coordinator for Oregon State University's Extension Service, teaching people across the county who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program how to eat healthy on a budget. After earning a Ph.D. in food technology from Clemson University, Senior knew she wanted to work for such a public service program.

She saw some similarities in Oregon to her native Costa Rica.

After a strong interview with Oregon State, a local Extension Service provider, she started looking for a place.

"It was a tough decision, but I was just ready to move," she said. "I knew my time in Clemson was done. I had my friend in Hillsboro, so I felt like I had someone" for support.

Senior said she was also supported by Norma Hernandez, a county health department coordinator who took her in while her

apartment was being cleared.

"I found a place with all the amenities I wanted," she said. "It's a happy story for me."

But Senior hears from the people she serves about their challenges in finding housing, and about the gentrification in Portland and other places. It reminds her somewhat of San Jose, her hometown and capital of Costa Rica. She said the housing market in Costa Rica is being inflated by people moving there who have

more money than locals.

"I think it all boils down to the policies that are in place," she said. "Without any policies, people can come in with money and get whatever they want, and make the price point go up, then others cannot afford it."

"There has to be some policy in place to honor the rights of the people who already live here, but also consider the people" moving here.

— Edward Stratton

# Dyer: Police work 'can eat you up and spit you out'

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"You get exposed to every type of crime you can imagine," he said. "And, by the grace of God, maybe you don't see some of it. But in a long career, you're going to see lots of ugly stuff."

He has seen people burn alive while trapped in a vehicle on a road to Hillsboro. He has pulled bodies from car accidents and other fatal scenes.

"The smells and stuff you just don't forget. You don't forget burning flesh and all those types of things that you come in contact with as a cop," Dyer said.

He has helped remove children from parents who abused and neglected them. (He remembers one household in Knappa where the kids had maggots in their shoes.)

He has never shot anyone, always managed to de-escalate the situation, but he has come close and, he said, would probably have been justified.

In the Portland metro area, he dealt with Crips and Bloods and other gangs.

Subjects have pulled guns and knives on him. He has been punched, bit and spit on. While searching a car in the mid-1980s, Dyer accidentally stuck himself on a needle and developed an autoimmune disease.

He has told dozens of parents, in person, that their child had been killed. One time, he had to break the news to a close friend's family.

Though Dyer said he has never been overcome by post-traumatic stress disorder, he knows what it feels like when an unpleasant memory gets triggered.

"Sometimes it's very delayed, because you get so good at compartmentalizing as an officer that it doesn't hit you when you think it would hit you," he said. "It hits you when you least expect it."

## On the force

And yet ...  
Dyer, a genial, even-tem-



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

**Tom Dyer poses for a portrait next to his former patrol car Friday at the Oregon State Patrol offices in Warrenton. Dyer, who was born and raised in Warrenton, retired earlier this month after 32 years with the force.**

pered 56-year-old, has enjoyed a very rewarding career, one that allowed him to help people in their lowest moments.

"It's been a blessing," he said. "It's been wonderful."

In Clatsop County, those low moments often arise when people are suffering from drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness or both.

"Most people who live here, they'll say, 'Well, we don't have a drug problem,'" he said. "Well, yeah, we do."

The county, he said, does not have enough facilities to house and treat them.

"It's brutal, as an officer, because you know there's no place to put someone where they can get help," Dyer said.

He said the county jail is not the place for some, because their issues are mental, not criminal. "They may have committed a crime, but that's not the underlying problem. And so it's real difficult," he said.

For Dyer, some of the best times have come when subjects he pulled over or detained for reasons related to drugs and alcohol later seek him out, or send a letter, to tell him

that they quit using because of their interaction with him.

"You have an opportunity as an officer to make a difference, if you choose to, because you meet people when they're hurting, and when they're really in need. You can either be part of the solution, or not," he said. "And I had a career where I was able to, most of the time, feel pretty good about making a difference with alcoholics and drug addicts."

His supervisor, Lt. Andrew Merila said Dyer has received many letters of commendation, more than most cops.

"It really makes the job, all the craziness, well worth it," Dyer said.

## 'You're always on guard'

Asked how retirement feels, Dyer said, "It's really weird, after 32 years of putting a uniform on. You almost feel a little bit. I was a little depressed the first week, because I really didn't want to realize it was over."

"Part of me is sad, 'cause I really like my job," he continued. "But part of me knows that it was time for me to go

and let the young guys move up and take their leadership role."

He said his blood pressure has dropped about 20 points because his life is less stressful — "You don't realize you're always on guard," he said — and he doesn't have to wear the heavy equipment.

Dyer, whose older brother died in a plane crash in the early 1980s, has volunteered to continue doing death notifications.

"I felt honored, even though it was tough, to do those types of jobs, because someone has to do it, and do it in a manner that is compassionate," he said.

Folks have asked him why he chose to remain a senior trooper rather than seek a higher position.

"My personality is such that I don't want to tell someone to do something I wouldn't want to do," he said, adding: "I knew where my position should be, and I was content with that, and I would do the same thing over again."

Merila said Dyer often went out of his way to help people, sometimes by giving



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

**Tom Dyer holds a framed photograph of him graduating from the state police academy at Camp Rilea in October 1984.**

**'You're a public servant. If it's a power trip, you shouldn't be doing the job.'**

**Tom Dyer**

retired Oregon State Patrol officer

them a ride or helping them get gas.

"One of our mottos is 'Service first,' Merila said, "and I think that's where Tom shined the most. He exemplifies our tradition of serving the public."

Dyer, a lifelong Christian, graduated valedictorian from Warrenton High School, and, after college, attended the state police academy at Camp Rilea. He lives in Warrenton with his wife, Ginny, of 34 years. They have two daughters and three sons.

## 'You're a public servant'

For people looking to go into law enforcement, Dyer advises them to know exactly what they are getting into.

"Police work is for a certain type of person. Not everyone should do it, because it can eat you up and spit you out," he said.

He recommends that aspiring cops go on ride-alongs, talk to different officers from different agencies, and job shadow someone they respect.

"For someone who has the right temperament and (is) a good fit, it's a great job," he said. "But it could be a terrifying one for someone who doesn't have that fit."

In addition, they should get a sense of what it's like to do the job long-term, how it can wear on a person, how it affects marriages.

"You're not going to make it to some anniversaries. You're not going to make some Christmases. You'll have to break promises, because bad things happen and you get called out," he said.

And, he said, policing is often a lonely job. "You can't talk about a lot of things — or you shouldn't, about cases you have," he said.

Bottom line: Officers who dread going to work should not be on the force, he said. He would not want to work with an officer that's a "Johnny Law-type," he said, "because that's not what police work's about."

"You're a public servant," he said. "If it's a power trip, you shouldn't be doing the job."