



ANXIETY, RELIEF MARK

ELECTION DAY

More than 60 percent of county voters cast their ballots early

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
For The Daily Astorian

Every election, officials see several types of voters: The ones who get their ballots in early and the ones who rush their ballots in at the last minute.

In Clatsop County, with more early ballot returns this election than in the last two presidential elections, there is a third category.



Valerie Crafard

"We heard from several early voters that they 'just wanted to get it over with,'" said County Clerk Valerie Crafard.

In fact, across the state, the contentious race between Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican candidate Donald Trump seems to have prompted a wave of early voting.

Early ballot returns in Oregon exceeded 1 million, according to the Secretary of State's Office. This number — 1.29 million — accounts for roughly half of Oregonians eligible to vote.

At this same point in the 2012 presidential election, 1.1 million — or 50.6 percent — of Oregon voters had cast their ballots.

In Clatsop County, the Elections Division had received 15,135 ballots as of Monday, representing just over 60 percent of county voters.

"Now the push is on to process all those ballots," said Crafard.

Catching up

Early turnout and high numbers of voters in general are to be expected during a presidential race, election officials said.

In the first four days after Clatsop County voters received ballots, residents turned in more than 5,000 ballots, representing 20 percent of the county's eligible voters. At this same time in the past two presidential elections — in 2008 and 2012 — the office hadn't even hit the 1,000 ballot mark yet.

The sheer number of early returns was not completely unexpected, but still came as a surprise to

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Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
Sheryl Holcom, Clatsop County elections technician, prepares to scan ballots for counting at the county Elections Office Monday in downtown Astoria.



Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard
A visitor to the Lane County Election offices in Eugene helps herself to a "I voted" sticker after casting her ballot Monday.

HOW TO VOTE

All ballots must be turned in by 8 tonight. It is too late to mail them. Clatsop County voters should instead turn completed ballots in at the Elections Division or drop them off at designated drop boxes. These are located in the following areas:

- **Clatsop County Clerk's Office**, 820 Exchange St., Astoria
7 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots
- **24-hour drive-up dropbox**, outside 820 Exchange St., Astoria
Up to 8 p.m. to receive ballots
- **Cannon Beach City Hall**, 163 E. Gower
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots
- **Gearhart City Hall**, 698 Pacific Way
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots (closed noon-1 p.m. for lunch)
- **Seaside City Hall**, 989 Broadway
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots
- **Warrenton City Hall**, 225 S. Main Ave.
8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots
- **Knappa High School**, 41535 Old Highway 30
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to receive ballots

Astoria pursues judgment against Smithart

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The city has lost patience with Brad Smithart.

The former operator of the Astoria Riverwalk Inn agreed in June to a payment plan on nearly \$120,000 in back hotel-room taxes. But Smithart has fallen behind on the installments and has not returned the city's calls.



Brad Smithart

The City Council voted Monday night to authorize City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard to seek a judgment against Smithart in Circuit Court.

"It's been going on for so long, and we can't even reach him now. Numerous attempts have been made to talk with him," Mayor Arline LaMear said after the vote. "We bent over backward to give him terms that we felt he could handle, and he agreed to that when we did it."

"So he's just, at this point, ignoring the City Council and that sets a very bad precedent."

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Pool fees sink after complaints

Swim club shocked by lane charges

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council on Monday night sank a plan to enforce lane rental fees at the Astoria Aquatic Center after the North Coast Swim Club warned that it might have to fold or scale back lap time for young swimmers.

The Aquatic Center is supposed to charge \$25 an hour per lane, but the swim club and Astoria High School have not been paying rental fees under arrangements with previous parks administrators. Angela Cosby, the director of the Parks and Recreation Department, recommended that the swim club pay \$5 an hour per lane effective today and \$10 an hour per lane starting in November 2017.

The youth discount did not go over well with the swim club, which estimated that the rental fees would cost an extra \$9,000 this fiscal year and \$18,000 next year. The nonprofit's annual expenses are around \$30,000.

"We were shocked," Patrick Wingard, the swim club's president, told the City Council.

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Bond Street to reopen to two-way traffic

Street limited after 2007 slide

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Bond Street, limited to one westbound lane after a 2007 landslide near Uniontown, will open to two-way traffic again by next September.

The narrow street will be widened and a retaining wall will help stabilize the hillside. The project, which will restore an alternative east-west route through the city, is one of several as the city expands the Astor West Urban Renewal Area.

The city intends to fold 12

acres and 43 tax lots into the redevelopment zone. The city will make money available for redevelopment assistance, affordable housing, storefront improvements and the retaining wall.

A conference center, which was a key element of the urban renewal plan for Uniontown when it was first adopted by the city in 2002, will drop out of the plan. A task force recommended a decade ago that the idea be scrapped.

Kevin Cronin, the city's community development director, said Bond Street should be ready for two-way traffic again by next September.

He said the street will be

widened in the area of the landslide near Hume Avenue from about 12 feet to about 20 feet, still narrow but wide enough for two-way traffic.

The City Council gave initial approval Monday night to expand the Astor West Urban Renewal Area. A final vote is expected later this month.

"I think that the reopening of Bond Street to two-way traffic is very important, not only from a livability standpoint, but also as an alternate route in emergencies or times of high congestion," City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill said. "Expanding the urban renewal district boundaries to improve housing in Astoria is also an added benefit."



Alex Pajunas/The Daily Astorian

Mud trickles onto Bond Street from the landslide that occurred in 2007. The city hopes to open the street to two-way traffic again by next September.