

Way to Wellville forum presents preschool expansion

Investors would fund preschool

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An update to a feasibility study on how to provide free access to preschool for hundreds of local children highlighted Clatsop County Way to Wellville's public forum last week.



Dan Gaffney

Dan Gaffney provided an update to Clatsop Kinder Reedy's upcoming study of free preschool for as many as 600 children in Clatsop and Tillamook counties.

Partnered with Clatsop County and Way to Wellville, the program would target preschoolers who qualify for free or reduced lunch — or those just above the threshold — as well as those who are learning to speak English.

The program's "pay for success" model would encourage investors to fund the program. The estimated money saved by the county from the benefits of having local children attend preschool — such as less money spent on juvenile detention centers — would outweigh the costs, Gaffney said. The total money saved would then be awarded to the investor with interest.

The county received a \$350,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education in December to fund the feasibility study.

Last week, University of Utah's Sorenson Impact Center awarded a grant that will provide access to national preschool data. An intermediary will soon analyze the data and present findings to the county as well as potential investors, Gaffney said.

"There's so much to learn from this whole process," Gaffney said. "In order to do that, you need to have the right data."

Gaffney said he hopes to have investors committed to the project by the end of the year.

Thursday's forum, which had an audience of roughly 35 people, was originally scheduled for early January, but it was pushed back due to winter weather conditions.

Clatsop County was one of five areas in the country to be included in the national Way to Wellville challenge. The challenge began as a competition between the areas over five years. Whichever area most successfully met the parameters of the challenge would have received \$5 million. But the challenge participants eventually decided to nix the reward to encourage collaboration, and they extended the program to 10 years.

Members of the local program's strategic council explained Thursday what projects they had worked on in the past year. In its second year, the local program focused primarily on youth health programs that encouraged behaviors such as emotional development, drug avoidance, stress reduction and active lifestyles. They collaborated local with schools, hospitals, parks and other community organizations to execute the projects.

One area that has been lagging for the program, though, has been wellness promotion for elderly citizens in the county, Coordinator Sydney Van Dusen said. The program will seek to create more projects for people of all age groups over the next few years, she said.

Way to Wellville representatives from across the country will meet in Clatsop County in April to hold their third annual meeting, Van Dusen said. It will be the first of such meetings held in Clatsop County.

Man brought into custody after standoff in Cannon Beach

The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A suicidal man on the beach with a gun was taken safely into custody Saturday after a 2 1/2-hour standoff with police, Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said.

Police from Cannon Beach, Gearhart, Seaside and Clatsop County deputies responded to the north end of Cannon Beach Saturday afternoon. Determining the man was suicidal, officers negotiated with him over the phone, via text message and a public address system.

Police cleared the beach

during negotiations before the man surrendered and was brought into protective custody.

The standoff ended at 6:30 p.m.

According to Schermerhorn, the man was taken to Providence Seaside Hospital for treatment and evaluation by mental health professionals.

No one was injured.

"We are thankful for all the assistance from Clatsop County Sheriff's Office, Seaside Police Department, Gearhart Police Department, Medix and Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue," Schermerhorn said in a statement.

Oregon to seek federal OK for interstate tolls

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Oregon transportation officials intend to seek federal approval for interstate tolls.

The Oregonian reported the tolls would fund I-5 work.

Oregon Department of Transportation Assistant Director Travis Brouwer said officials believe there will be open spots in the government's FAST Act program and they are researching next

steps.

No openings have been confirmed by the Federal Highway Administration or the program's manager.

President Donald Trump has yet to fill posts in the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Brouwer said the people who fill these open jobs would be crucial to any decisions about tolling.

He said it would still take years to put tolls in place if federal approval is secured.

Youth camp volunteers work to connect with native culture

Students help with project at Megler Creek

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Students from the Naselle Youth Camp in Washington state planted the final seeds Friday in a restoration project near Dismal Nitch.

Six students and two instructors, partnered with Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, sifted in the rain through the frigid, muddy east bank of Megler Creek to plant native species such as thimbleberry, red twig dogwood and tufted hairgrass.

The youth camp houses 80 students who have progressed through the juvenile justice program. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources funds a program that allows about 30 of them to be paid for outdoor projects. Students at the camp work 40 hours per week on similar projects in the area and also attend 20 hours of night classes. Some also participate in a Native American culture group at the camp and volunteered for the six-hour project on Friday, instructor Rudi Rudolph said.

"This kind of fits with the idea of restorative justice and giving back to the community," Rudolph said.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Naselle Youth Camp student Derrick McCraigie, center, shares a laugh with others while digging and planting along the Megler Creek restoration project on Friday near Dismal Nitch.

Friday's endeavor was the final wedge in a months-long, \$1 million project funded equally by CREST and the park to restore the creek. After Washington State Route 401 was built in the early 1900s, the creek was largely cut off from tidal flow from the Columbia River. A 48-inch pipe under the road — only accessible to fish during high tides — was the sole connection to the larger river.

Part of the project included building a 25-foot culvert under the road. More water flowed through the area, allow-

ing project workers to redirect the stream and allow more fish to swim, feed and span. The roadwork phase of the project likely will be completed by March, said Jason Smith, a CREST habitat restoration project manager.

Derrick McCraigie, 18, is from Omak, where he lived on the Colville Indian Reservation. While at the camp, he said he has been able to share aspects of his tribe's culture such as the Salish language and specific games the tribes play.

"I wanted to teach people

about Native Americans with my knowledge and experience," he said.

Other students — like Ronald Lenderman, 18, of Vancouver, Washington — joined the group to learn about and become more involved with Native American culture. As a recreational fisherman, Lenderman said he could relate to Native Americans' close connections to the environment and any projects that allow more access for fish.

"I just really like the culture," he said. "I feel really connected with it."

Advocates want Oregon to tighten up rules for tiny house construction

Updates needed to health and safety standards

By TRACY LOEW
Statesman Journal

SALEM — Tiny house advocates want the state Legislature to crack down on "bootleg" construction and make it easier to build the units legally.

The move comes as cities across Oregon, including Salem, are eyeing tiny houses as a way to ease tight rental markets and address growing problems with homelessness.

"Many communities are struggling with, how do we get people out from underneath bridges," state Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene said. "We've been forced into looking at this in a new way."

Holvey is chairman of the House Committee on Business and Labor, which is considering two bills dealing with tiny home construction.

There's no real definition for tiny houses, also called accessory dwelling units. They can range from garage conversions to backyard cottages to small homes on wheels.

In all forms, tiny houses have become wildly popular with people looking to reduce their environmental footprint or embrace minimalist principals, as well as those just looking to save money. Owners also list them on short-term rental sites such as Airbnb as a way to augment their incomes.

But many tiny houses aren't built to current health and safety standards, said



Wikimedia Commons

Regulators are scrambling to keep pace with the tiny house movement.

Mark Long, Oregon Building Codes Division administrator.

House Bill 2737 would establish special construction codes for homes that are 250 square feet or less. Among other things, it would allow narrow ladders or stairways for lofts; eliminate requirements for minimum ceiling height and room size; and exempt the home from required electrical service and water supply.

House Bill 2165 would require tiny homes that are not permanently sited or intended for use as a residence to fall

under the standards for recreational vehicles.

Although the state sets building codes, inspections are carried out by local municipalities. Representatives from several of those testified against the proposals at two hearings over the past week.

"Allowing tiny homes to be built to a lesser standard and occupied on a permanent basis could be interpreted that it's acceptable for anyone

who occupies them to have a lesser minimum standard for life safety than those that have a traditional home," said Eric Schmidt, Gresham's community development director and president of the board of the Oregon Building Officials Association.

And regulating some small homes as RV's would require cities to hire extra staff and train them on new standards, opponents said.

"Having local officials suddenly become inspectors for the recreational vehicle standard would be difficult. That's traditionally been done at the state level, by the state," said Erin Doyle of the League of Oregon Cities.

In written testimony, Lou Pereyra, owner of Tiny Mountain Houses, told the committee he was moving manufacturing from Oregon to Idaho because of the Building Codes Division's "hard line" on regulations. The company said it builds its tiny houses to national RV codes.

"I just don't have the patience or the funds to battle the state," Pereyra wrote.

Both bills remain in committee. Holvey said both likely will be revised before moving on.

"They're a long way from being done," he said.

Salem is the only major city in Oregon that does not allow accessory dwelling units. City officials have been working for the past couple of years to develop a policy that would permit them.

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