

Homelessness: Point-in-time count occurs every two years

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"It's not a true picture of what we have," Alan Evans, director of Seaside's Helping Hands, said of the point-in-time count. Last year, Helping Hands alone served nearly 700 homeless people and is on course to exceed that figure this year, Evans said.

Gaps

The point-in-time count occurs every two years during the last 10 days of January. According to this year's survey, the number of homeless people in Oregon increased by 6 percent, jumping from 13,176 individuals in 2015 to just under 14,000 in 2017.

The survey acknowledges there are gaps in the count, saying the purpose is to provide "a snapshot of homelessness in the United States."

But the difference in numbers from what the survey reports and what Clatsop County organizations see exists in part because of definitions.

The federal government defines homelessness as "sheltered and unsheltered," meaning a homeless person is using a service like a shelter or is living somewhere not typically considered habitable: their car, for instance, or a sleeping bag in a doorway.

Oregon's organizations, and Clatsop Community Action, however, also include people who are "precariously housed," couch surfing or doubled up with friends or family or in danger of losing housing, people who are not "traditionally homeless," in Bruce's words. Clatsop Community Action and Helping Hands also draw on data collected by school districts.

Evans and Bruce say it is difficult to count a population that is constantly shifting. The point-in-time count provides a fairly accurate base number for who is using

services during what is often the coldest time of the year in Oregon.

Causes

Lack of housing, higher rents, decreasing median incomes and a population boom across the state contributed to Oregon's increase in homelessness, this year's point-in-time survey suggests. According to recent Census Bureau data, Oregon was the sixth fastest-growing state in the nation last year, while also experiencing a "critically low housing supply," an Oregon Housing and Community Services summary of the point-in-time findings states.

"Tens of thousands of people are simply unable to afford these rising housing costs and have had to sleep in shelters, in their cars, or on the street," the summary said.

In Clatsop County, this is certainly the case, Bruce and Evans said. They see where this has hit families in the community.

Fifteen years ago, social-service groups served mostly homeless men, Bruce said. "Now you're seeing whole families."

Evans said Helping Hands has also seen an increase in senior citizens needing assistance.

"And those numbers are growing," he said.

Multnomah County tops the list for this year's point-of-time survey with an estimated 4,177 homeless, about 30 percent of the state's entire homeless population.

The majority of the homeless statewide are white, but minorities are overrepresented. "For instance," the survey summary states, "African Americans make up just 2 percent of the population in Oregon, but make up 6 percent of the homeless population in Oregon and Native Americans make up 1.1 percent of the total population and 4.2 percent of the homeless population."

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Areas near the Astoria Riverwalk and the Astoria Transit Center are popular with the homeless during the summer months.

Locater: App will provide almost exact coordinates

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And callers in the county often find themselves not being able to provide dispatch with the address of the emergency, Martindale said.

Often they are out of town, on a beach, at a friend's place, on the water or at an event. Sometimes, he said, they are able to find a piece of mail, look at the house number and street signs or find another way to get the address or help dispatchers locate them quickly. However, that's not always the case.

Several years ago, Martindale said, emergency responders had trouble finding a woman who was in the woods near Grayland. The data they got from her cell-phone had them looking in Nemah, so it took hours to

get help to her, he said.

Extinct technology

The technology improvement for 911 is part of a \$125,915 upgrade the county started in October. The 911 phone system was built for landlines so finding cellular callers who don't have an address to give dispatchers has long been a challenge.

Dispatchers get different information from different carriers. The accuracy of the location provided can also vary widely.

The beacon app will provide 911 dispatch almost the exact longitude and latitude of the caller's location. Martindale said the county is now working on ways to process the information into address or driving directions for emergency response crews.



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Buoy Beer Co.'s Luke Colvin, left, said the expansion at the facility not only allows the company to can its own beer, but has also increased production volume. Find more photos online at DailyAstorian.com

Buoy Beer: The brewery already struggles to keep up with orders

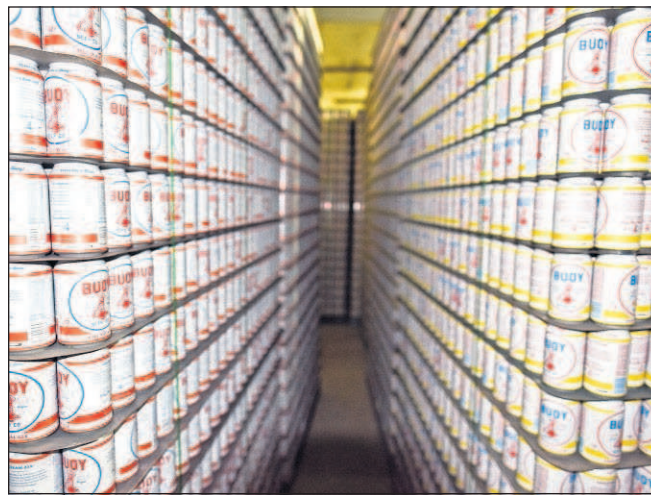
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Buoy Beer still uses the 20-barrel system it started with three years ago. While several brews can be done in a day, Colvin said, beers can take anywhere between two and six weeks to fully condition, limiting production. Since opening, the brewery has expanded three separate times, adding fermenting and bright tanks to increase capacity and taking out much of the former cannery's second floor in the process.

This spring, the brewery installed a canning line, used to export its India pale ale, Pilsner and cream ale. Much of the upstairs in the former cannery is filled with kegs and cans. Buoy Beer orders 200,000 cans at a time for each variety of beer it exports. The brewery also uses a mobile bottler for its India pale ale, Pilsner and Northwest red ale.

State support

Buoy Beer's forgivable loan is part of a \$4.8 million investment announced this month by Business Oregon, whose regional development officers act as liaisons with growing companies. Working with Buoy Beer was Regional Development Officer Melanie Olson.



Pallets of cans stacked from floor to ceiling wait to be fed into the automated canning operation at Buoy Beer Co.

"I met with the company, and we talked about their needs," Olson said. "We decided they were creating jobs and growing their business."

In 2010, Business Oregon provided Astoria's Fort George Brewery a similar forgivable \$150,000 loan to help expand its brewery and install a canning line. The state had hoped to help with Buoy Beer's new canning line, but will instead help buy about eight new storage tanks, Olson said.

Nathan Buehler, a spokesman for Business Oregon, said the loan's forgiveness — still being finalized in a contract

with Buoy Beer — depends on the company creating the equivalent of five more full-time jobs and reaching 20,000 barrels of production annually by June 2020.

Jobs and beer

Buehler said the goals, reached through a negotiation, seemed fair for Buoy Beer, which has exponentially grown its beer production and employment over the past three years.

Kroening said Buoy Beer employed the equivalent of about 34 full-time employees in the summer of 2014. The company now employs about 98 people, with the equiva-

lent of 64 full time. The Oregon Employment Department reported that 220 breweries statewide accounted for more than 6,700 jobs last year.

In its first year, Buoy Beer reported to the state about 940 barrels of beer sold, the 68th highest among Oregon-based breweries. That increased to nearly 2,900 barrels in 2015 and more than 5,300 in 2016. Through June of this year, more than 3,500 barrels have been sold, the 22nd highest among Oregon breweries, and Colvin said the brewery anticipates reaching 10,000 barrels.

Kroening said Buoy Beer can now be found as far north as Castle Rock, Washington, south to the California border and throughout most of Oregon. The brewery already struggles to keep up with orders, he said, and is focusing on going deeper into its existing markets rather than expanding geographically.

Colvin and Kroening said Buoy Beer anticipates maxing out the capacity at its current location within a couple of years, while reaching the 20,000-barrel annual benchmark.

While the rate of growth has been rapid, Colvin said, the company always thought it "had a really good team and product."

Seafood: Water costs with new plant still unclear

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The mayor met with company representatives Wednesday morning to sign documents confirming the partnership between the city and Business Oregon with Pacific Seafood. The Warrenton City Commission Tuesday night approved two related items: a \$3 million lottery bonds grant agreement and a disbursement of the lottery revenue bonds.

Balensifer thanked the company for its commitment to its employees and the broader community, calling Pacific's return "a homecoming."

Investment

"It's an incredible feeling," Brown said as he walked through the skeleton of the new building, the sound of crews at work on the second floor nearly drowning out his words. He has been with the company since the 1990s; Pacific first took over the site in 1983.

Dan Occhipinti, general counsel for Pacific Seafood Group, said the company expects its total investment in the new facility to exceed \$20 million. He credits an "incredible partnership between (Warrenton) and the state of Oregon" for making Pacific's return possible.

Earl Michaelson, the lead for the facility's fillet area, has been with the company for 30 years and said she saw her life go up in flames in the 2013 fire. She was there with other employees Wednesday as fishermen unloaded salmon.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Pacific Seafood Group's Warrenton facility is being rebuilt after the old plant was destroyed by fire in 2013. Representatives from Pacific Seafood Group met with Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer, far left, members of the media and others involved in the process to rebuild the facility on Wednesday to celebrate the partnerships that made the effort possible.

Being back at the site and seeing the old office, which survived the fire, "memories just flew back," she said.

After the fire, Pacific moved its Warrenton plant employees to a temporary facility at Tongue Point in Astoria and operated in a limited capacity out of a hangar there ever since. The company planned to return to Warrenton six months after the fire but the plans were delayed for two years, Occhipinti said.

Pacific's Special Projects Manager Aaron Dierks estimates the new building, including a second story and an addition for crab pro-

cessing, will be about 72,000 square feet. The original building was approximately 33,000 square feet.

"The actual construction work has gone as smooth as it could go," Dierks said.

Warrenton water

The loss of the plant was a blow to Warrenton. Besides losing a major local processor and its largest employer, the city also lost a big water customer. The city had been reluctant to raise water rates for years, and the sudden loss in revenue exacerbated the need for the city to increase rates to address water infrastructure.

Pacific's return will not herald a drop in water rates — the rates needed to go up, regardless, Balensifer said. What it could do, though, is spread out future increases so that residents do not have to experience huge jumps each year.

It isn't clear yet, anyway, what the company's water costs will be when the plant reopens. Pacific will be working with a modern facility, and has no plans to process shrimp there — a huge use of water — like it did in the past. Instead, it will add Dungeness crab processing to a roster that includes whiting and salmon, among other species.