

A bumpy ride



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A car crashed into the front porch of a residence at Third Street and Lexington Avenue in Astoria Tuesday afternoon. No injuries were reported at the scene of the two-vehicle crash.

Zinke directs more aggressive approach to prevent wildfires

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

save lives, homes and wild-life habitat.

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Tuesday directed all land managers and park superintendents to be more aggressive in cutting down small trees and underbrush to prevent wildfires as the smoke-choked West faces one of the worst fire seasons in a decade.

Wildfires are chewing across dried-out Western forests and grassland. To date, 47,700 wildfires have burned more than 8 million acres across the country, with much of the devastation in California, Oregon and Montana, Zinke said.

The Forest Service and Interior Department have spent more \$2.1 billion so far this year fighting fires — about the same as in all of 2015, the most expensive wildfire season on record.

In a memo, Zinke said the Trump administration will take a new approach and work proactively to prevent fires “through aggressive and scientific fuels reduction management” to

Those figures do not include individual state spending.

Child molester behind bars

Seaview trailer-park day care shut down after fraud and felony

By **AMY NILE**
EO Media Group

SEAVIEW, Wash. — A judge has ordered a babysitter and her live-in boyfriend to serve time behind bars after a girl told authorities she was sexually abused at a day care in the couple’s home at a Seaview trailer park.

Marco Antonio Cortes, 51, pleaded guilty to first-degree child molestation in Pacific County Superior Court. The longtime cannery worker was sentenced on Sept. 1 to 51 months to life in prison.

On the same day, his girlfriend, Roxanne Marie Lytle, 41, was ordered to serve 30 days in the county jail after pleading guilty to four related felonies.

Lytle had been claiming welfare assistance while running an illegal home day care on the 1300 block of 30th Street. That’s where the girl, now 9, said she’d been raped by Cortes on multiple occasions from 2011 to 2014, according to a Pacific County Sheriff’s Office investigation.

The family went to authorities in May after she told them why she’d been crying at night during the past few years. The girl said she was 4 when Cortes started putting “his penis in her private parts.”

The girl said the abuse con-

tinued until she was in first grade. She told the interviewer Cortes would pull up her pants when Lytle would come into the bedroom while he was raping her.

County Prosecutor Mark McClain said Lytle hindered the investigation by telling the children and their families not to cooperate with authorities. He suspects others were abused at the day care but authorities couldn’t get any of about 10 children who were interviewed to talk about it.

“This guy would have zero contact with the boys but he’d have certain contact that I would call grooming with the girls,” McClain said.

Cortes, a Mexico native, denied the allegations against

him. He said he couldn’t believe anything like this could happen to him and that he’s a “good guy.”

He told deputies he has no sexual desire because he has diabetes. Cortes is being held at the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton until he is placed in the appropriate state men’s prison.

If Cortes is paroled after serving his time, the Department of Corrections is expected to supervise him for the rest of his life. Other requirements of release include registering as a sex offender and completing a sexual deviancy treatment program.

Lytle pleaded guilty to witness tampering, theft by welfare fraud, perjury and false verification, all felony convictions. She’ll be on probation for a year after her stint in the county lockup.

McClain said he charged her with crimes because she “clearly took advantage of a disenfranchised population of parents who trusted her and then actively worked against unearthing whether her boyfriend molested their children. She collected money from already cash-strapped families, many of whom are immigrants, while claiming she had no income and needed public assistance, deputies and officials at the state Department of Health and Human Services found.

Lytle will be required to pay about \$3,000 in restitution to the state and will be barred from receiving public assistance for a year. She is banned from operating a day care for life.

“I wanted to make sure she got punished,” McClain said. “All of this is about protecting our community.”

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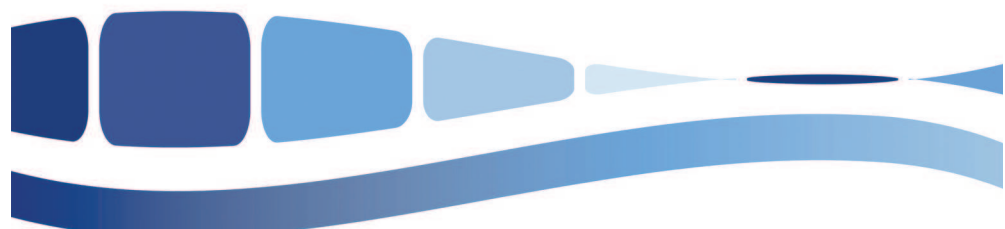
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