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Commissioners hear new county jail options

Cost to taxpayers is a lingering issue

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County commissioners appear open to relocating the county jail to Warrenton. The lingering ques-

tion, though, is which design they — and taxpayers — can stomach financially. In a September work session, the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office and DLR Group presented two proposals for an expanded jail at the site of the closed North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton. But at a second work session Wednesday, the

sheriff's office offered several other options. One renovation plan introduced in September would create space for 140 beds and cost more than \$12 million. The other plan calls for a new structure in the middle of the youth facility to house 200 inmates, at a cost of more than \$28 million.

The larger plan would accommodate future expansion of up to 252 beds. Less staff supervision of inmates — 36 employees required compared to 46 in the smaller plan — would be required due to the design. Architects predict fewer staff would save the county 18 percent in staffing costs, offsetting the construction cost difference after 10 years.

Though the larger plan is his favorite option, Sheriff Tom Bergin recognized it would be a heavy ask from taxpayers. "This is absolutely the most efficient in both construction and operations costs. However, it's a Cadillac," Bergin said.

See JAIL, Page 5A

STAYING WARM

Warming centers for homeless prepare to open for winter



Dan Parkison walks by a rack of donated coats and other clothes as he brings in supplies to the Astoria Warming Center.

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

If temperatures dip low enough, warming centers in Astoria and Warrenton will open for the winter season on Wednesday, providing a place out of the elements for homeless people to spend the night. The continued operation of the Astoria Warming Center in the basement of the First United Methodist Church — up the hill from the downtown core — was a contentious topic this summer. People on both sides of the debate dedicated hours to hashing out a good-neighbor agreement, a series of commitments by warming center staff to reduce the real and perceived impacts on the neighborhood. No one contested the necessity of the warming center given the increasingly visible homeless population downtown, but some said a residential neighborhood was the wrong location. Astoria and Warrenton are trying to answer what social service groups say can seem like unanswerable questions about how to balance community concerns and the needs of

See HOMELESS, Page 7A



Ramon Navarrete prepares a spot at the First United Methodist Church in Astoria for a new bike rack for patrons of the warming center.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Commission chews over Thompson's expenses

Discussion ended with calls for civility

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

After a discussion on what has become a heated issue, Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson will be reimbursed for travel and other expenses she has incurred so far this year, though she may have to pay her own way on some future trips. Thompson has claimed \$3,640 in expenses in the first three months of the fiscal year, which began in July. Under the county budget, the five commissioners are allowed a combined \$17,500 for the year. Thompson has been criticized repeatedly by commissioners for claiming nearly \$20,000 in travel and education expenses since 2015. At an October meeting, Scott Lee, the board's chairman, placed an item on Wednesday's agenda centered on whether many of Thompson's expenses should be approved and to discuss how to manage expenses for the remainder of the year. "As the commission chair, it is my responsibility to ensure that my fellow commissioners adhere to the policies established by them and for them," Lee wrote Thompson in a Nov. 1 letter. "Unfortunately my efforts in this regard have been met with hostility from you in the past. As a result I have been remiss in not enforcing the travel policy more stringently but must insist that, in the future, all Clatsop County commissioners follow this policy until it is changed or amended by a majority of the commissioners." Lee also referenced limitations placed on commissioners, who are volunteers under the county charter.



Lianne Thompson

See THOMPSON, Page 7A

Cannon Beach chooses new city manager

St. Denis was a town manager in Florida

By BRENNIA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — After a four-month hiring process, Cannon Beach has selected Bruce St. Denis as the new city manager. St. Denis, a manager at a private development company, is a former town manager for the coastal city of Longboat Key, Florida, and holds a master's degree in management from the University of South Florida. He was chosen over two other finalists — Peter M. Jankowski, former city manager of Cave Creek, Ariz., and Kevin Greenwood, former general manager of the Port of Newport. Thirty-three people applied for the position. "We are confident that he will do an excellent job," Mayor Sam Steidel said in

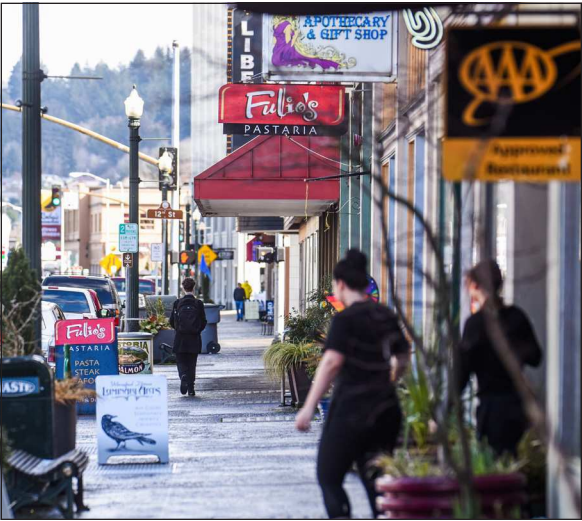
See MANAGER, Page 8A

Gun concerns prompt talk of pawn shop ban

Worries about gun sales in downtown Astoria

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council may consider a ban on pawn shops amid concerns about gun sales downtown. Councilor Cindy Price and Mayor Arline LaMear, at a work session Wednesday, voiced their unease about a new pawn shop slated to move into a vacant storefront on Commercial Street. The council was meeting to discuss its overall vision for Astoria's future development and where the vision intersects with city policies and codes. Councilors Bruce Jones and Zetty Nemlowill said the council needs to approach a potential ban on pawn shops carefully. Jones said he doesn't want to ban pawn



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Some city councilors are concerned about the potential for gun sales if pawn shops move downtown.

See PAWN SHOPS, Page 5A

