

On the edge: Federal funding is on shaky ground

Continued from Page 1A

housing, they are talking about housing a bartender, barista, server or landscaper — the average worker — can afford.

Such housing is greatly needed, City Councilor Zetty Nemlowill has emphasized, pointing to the employees at the Astoria Co-op where she works and the Fort George Brewery her husband, Chris Nemlowill, co-owns. Councilors worry short-term rentals and Airbnb-type vacation rental arrangements take houses and apartments away from potential long-term renters.

Mayor Arline LaMear, however, has pointed to some instances where the ability to rent out a room on a short-term basis has allowed retirees to continue to live in historic homes that can be costly to maintain.

The waiting list for low-income, Section 8 housing was between three- and four-years long in Clatsop County, but has since been closed to everyone except the elderly, disabled and homeless for now. The North West Oregon Housing Authority board made the decision “out of a desire to serve the most vulnerable populations out there,” said Todd Johnston, the executive director.

But federal funding is on shaky ground. Instead of issuing new vouchers for the federal Housing and Urban Development affordable housing programs as people qualify, local groups say they are being advised to only fill openings created when people move out of HUD housing or leave the program entirely.

Limiting the waiting list doesn't mean more apartments are suddenly available, though. Some people who recently moved into the Owens-Adair Apartments in Astoria, a building restricted to low-income seniors, said they were told the waiting list was nearly two years long. Some of them got in earlier than expected as residents moved away or died, but Glaser — who lives in an apartment on Harrison Avenue — doesn't feel like she can afford to wait.

“I don't know if they can bump somebody to get me in, but I'm worried about getting in before the rent goes up,” she said.

Some friends have offered her rooms in their own homes, but those are only temporary options. Some are located far from downtown.

“I don't want to depend on



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Marge Glaser says she likes walking places to keep herself active, but access to the bus is vital.



Marge Glaser spends the remaining time she has in her home with her beloved dog, Dorothy, and packing before she has to move due to a rent increase.

the bus,” Glaser said. “And,” she added, “how far would I have to walk to catch the bus?”

At this point, few of her options are appealing. She could find a roommate. She could set aside money for taxis and buses and prepare to move to a temporary home beyond easy walking distance from downtown. She could get rid of her dog. She could cut back what she spends on food. She

could use less water and less electricity. She could move out of the city, maybe live with her daughter. She could stay put and try to swallow a rent increase that would leave her with exactly \$37 of her Social Security check each month, the only income she receives.

‘Stuck where they’re at’

Every Tuesday, up to a

dozen members of the Astoria Senior Center board the center's bus and go shopping at Fred Meyer. Every Friday, they have the option to go to Safeway. Once a month, the bus travels to Longview, Washington, to hit Walmart and lunch at Izzy's. The trips are open to anybody who is a member of the senior center but are usually taken by seniors who don't have cars or

who no longer drive. Many are people who live at the Owens-Adair Apartments up the road or in the immediate two- or three-block radius around the center.

“The challenges are basically there's no affordable housing and most of them have limited transportation,” said Larry Miller, the senior center's director.

Fifty-two units across three apartment complexes in Warrenton form more than half the affordable housing available in that city. In the same neighborhood as one of the complexes, market price rental rates for two-bedroom apartments are \$1,200.

Local organizations offer several forms of assistance, including loans for people who may be able to afford a higher monthly rent but, because of a fixed income, would have a harder time moving to a new place because they can't bring in the extra money for move-in costs like a security deposit or first and last month's rent.

“Generally the rents here are a little bit higher than they would be in more rural areas because of the tourism and the second homes we have here,” Johnston said. “The rents compared to the wages here, there's a big gap there. Even folks who do work have trouble affording the rents here

... People who work or have other means can find other ways to make do, but (seniors on fixed incomes) are kind of stuck where they're at.”

Threat of poverty

Astoria can be a difficult place to get old. Major grocery stores are located on the outskirts, with Safeway on the eastern edge of the city and Fred Meyer across the New Youngs Bay Bridge in Warrenton. Taxis can be used as a more flexible mode of transportation, but cost slightly more than the bus. For some elderly people, it has made sense to try to stick as close to downtown as possible and walk.

According to data collected in the 2010 U.S. Census, people 65 years and over represented 17 percent of Astoria's population, while people considered to live in poverty made up just under 20 percent.

The National Council on Aging estimates that more than 25 million Americans aged 60 years and over live at or below the federal poverty level. Twenty-one percent of Social Security recipients aged 65 years old or over who are married and 43 percent of those who are single depend on Social Security for the bulk of their income.

On the rise

New data released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development this week showed homelessness was up slightly across the nation for the first time since 2010. The numbers were driven in part by shortages of affordable housing on the West Coast.

The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are weighing steep cuts to affordable housing programs and housing assistance vouchers for low-income, elderly and disabled people. Advocates for low-income housing also worry a Republican tax plan in the works could worsen the problem, taking away incentives for developers to build new affordable housing.

Elaine Bruce, executive director of Clatsop Community Action, isn't necessarily seeing more elderly people coming through the door locally, but she does see a landscape that is particularly difficult for anyone who might be on the edge right now.

People who are one bad day away from being homeless, she said.

Gillnetter: Museum eyeing other vessels

Continued from Page 1A

55 boats — Coast Guard vessels, duck boats, canoes and other historical vessels. The Endeavor joins a line of gillnetters spanning the 1910s through 1960s.

“We just want to try and capture as many good examples of that type of boat for future generations,” said Jeff Smith, the museum's curator.

The Endeavor is a square-sterned bowpicker built in 1948 by shipwright Gunnar Hermiston in Altoona, Washington, for the Columbia River Packers Association. The vessel has gone through several owners and several names.

‘It's all an evolution of the fishery, finding ways to efficiently collect fish.’

Jeff Smith

Columbia River Maritime Museum's curator

“John Tarabochia had it when it was brand new,” David Fastabend said.

The Fastabends acquired the boat in the mid-1970s from Larry Olson when he upgraded to a larger boat. A gillnetter since he was a teen, Olson said he gravitated toward the boat after returning from serving in the Vietnam War. He wanted isolation, was

invited to fish with a father and son and eventually bought their boat.

Back then the boat was called Auwa, Finnish slang for baby, and before that Piru, or devil, Olson said. He estimated four owners over the boat's history.

The Endeavor was recently added to a growing compendium of vessels in the Library

of Congress. The maritime museum's boat warehouse is more storage than an exhibit, but Smith said the collection attracts special-interest groups and families with a personal connection to the vessels.

The museum still has its eye on some of the latest wooden Columbia gillnetters built in the 1960s, Smith said. The museum would also like to eventually document the fiberglass and aluminum vessels on the water now.

“It's all an evolution of the fishery, finding ways to efficiently collect fish and get them to canneries and get them to market,” Smith said.

Dungeness: Season could be delayed again

Continued from Page 1A

Besides Oregon, the delay also applies to parts of California and Washington state that fall under the tri-state agreement that allows the states to manage the commercial Dungeness fishery on the ocean together.

Ongoing testing will determine whether or not the season will open Dec. 31. It's possible the season could be further delayed or be split into two areas with different opening dates. Commercial harvest of Dungeness crab is

closed in Oregon bays for the rest of the year. Elevated levels of the marine toxin domoic acid are the only thing affecting recreational crabbing closures in some areas of the coast.

Last year, commercial crabbers landed 20.4 million pounds of crab — well above the 10-year average — into Oregon with a record ex-vessel value of \$62.7 million. Dungeness crab remains the state's most valuable fishery. In Washington state, commercial crabbers landed 16.4 million pounds last year.



COAST WEEKEND

2017 Photo Contest

Official Rules:

Who can enter?

- Photographers of all ages; must be residents of Oregon or Washington state.

What photographs are eligible?

- All subjects are welcome.
- Digital entries: Digital photographs may be color or black-and-white and must be JPEGs, maximum of 5MB, 300 dpi resolution and at least 5"x7" in image size.

Submission deadline:

- Entries will be accepted Friday, Nov. 17 through Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017

Results:

- Top 10 photographs will be published in the Coast Weekend print edition on Thursday, Jan. 4, 2018.
- Top 25 photographs will be published online at CoastWeekend.com on Thursday, Jan. 4, 2018.
- Gift cards will be awarded for first-, second- and third-place winners, plus a People's Choice winner voted for online Dec. 18 to Dec. 24.

Other contest rules:

- All photographs entered may be used in future publications by the EO Media Group
- Each entry must include the entrant's name, home address, age, a description of the photograph and email address.

Submit all photos online at: www.coastweekend.com/cwphotocontest