

Wyden pushes for coastal, social issues

Town hall was senator's 869th in Oregon

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden told the crowd at an Astoria town hall Saturday that he would continue pushing the federal government to take seriously Oregon coastal issues such as the coming Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, tsunamis and offshore drilling.

Wyden, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, last week urged U.S. Geological Survey Deputy Director David Applegate to support funding for ShakeAlert, a federal early warning system being developed for the West Coast. President Donald Trump last year proposed eliminating funding for the system.

"I think that we need to get all the Democrats, all of the Republicans, all over the West, all up and down the coast, to say to Mr. (Mick) Mulvaney, the head of the Office of Management and Budget, 'Earthquakes and tsunamis are serious, deadly business for our part of the world,'" the Oregon Democrat said.

Wyden took a moment near the beginning of the town hall to honor state Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, who recently announced she would retire from the state House when her term expires in January. Boone's late husband, Bill, had been battling brain cancer the last two years until his death in November.

"One of his last requests of me was to retire and take some time for me ... to do some things that we didn't get to do together," she said, adding she plans to visit relatives in Sweden.

Boone's tenure has largely been defined by her focus on coastal issues such as natural disaster resiliency.

Melissa Ousley, one of sev-



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, stopped for photos with attendees at the end of his town hall Saturday at Astoria High School.

eral Democratic candidates who have filed for the primary to replace Boone, asked for Wyden's take on the proposal by Trump to expand offshore drilling on the West Coast. The senator promised to help block attempts at offshore drilling and the return to the natural resource-based economics of yesteryear, and to shift the conversation on economic prosperity to include emerging industries like recreation and tourism.

Wyden accused the president of committing legislative malpractice by publicly pushing for a large infrastructure package, then passing a tax bill that saps federal money.

"He didn't want to have money for roads and bridges," Wyden said. "He wanted to have money for tax cuts, for his friends, for the multinational companies."

He also decried the tax bill for weakening the low-income housing tax credit, linking homelessness with the need for affordable housing, expanded Medicaid and more coverage of mental health services by insurance companies. He recounted his late brother Jeff's struggle with schizophre-

'Earthquakes and tsunamis are serious, deadly business for our part of the world.'

Sen. Ron Wyden

nia and bouts of homelessness before his death in 2002.

"Don't for a second let anybody off the hook on this homeless issue right now," he said.

Republicans recently made public a memo by U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, accusing the FBI and U.S. Department of Justice of abusing surveillance tools. Wyden called the memo a smokescreen to distract from recent arrests and guilty pleas in the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller into Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election. He called Nunes hypocritical for criticiz-

ing federal officials' use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act he recently voted to reauthorize.

Asked about the threats to Mueller's investigation, Wyden said firing the special counsel would start a constitutional crisis and lead some members of the U.S. House to push for Trump's impeachment.

Wyden renewed his push to have Trump's tax returns released and restrict the president's ability to unilaterally launch a nuclear missile.

When people feel discouraged, they should look to more promising developments, such as Doug Jones becoming the first Democrat elected to the Senate in Alabama in more than 20 years, Wyden said.

"There's a lot going on in America, and you ought to keep it in perspective, along with the record number of young people running for office," he said.

Wyden also held town halls in Columbia, Multnomah, Tillamook and Washington counties over the weekend, bringing him to 871 since he was elected to the Senate in 1996 and promised to visit each of Oregon's 36 counties at least once a year.



City of Seaside
Seaside Fire and Rescue respond to a house fire on Holladay Drive in Seaside Thursday.

Seaside home destroyed after catching fire twice

By BRENNNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — A fire destroyed a Seaside home early Friday morning just hours after another blaze caused significant damage.

The single-family home at 412 N. Holladay was engulfed in flames around 12:35 a.m. The owner, Robert Boucher, evacuated and was not injured.

"This is a unique situation," Seaside Fire Marshal Chris Dugan said in a press release. "The cause of the original fire was undetermined, but most likely appears to have started near an actively burning wood stove."

Several hours after crews had left the scene of the original fire on Thursday, a neighbor reported another fire at the same address.

The fire caused about

\$10,000 in damage to the exterior of multifamily housing to the north and five families were evacuated, according to a press release. A single-family home to the south has about \$30,000 worth of exterior damage and the family was forced to evacuate.

Everyone evacuated has since returned to their homes.

The cause of the second blaze is under investigation. Officials say the rapid growth of the second fire can be attributed to suppression efforts from the first fire that significantly damaged the structure and left the home without some windows and put some holes in the roof. Moderate to high winds also contributed to the fire.

Anyone with information about the fires can contact Dugan at Seaside Fire and Rescue at 503-738-5420.

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