

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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ONE DOLLAR

## Astoria schools ponder bond to improve buildings



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria School District has identified \$77 million in long-term facilities needs at its four schools, including (clockwise from top) a \$31 million modernization of Astoria Middle School, \$17 million in improvements at Astoria High School and nearly \$6 million at John Jacob Astor Elementary School.

## Last bond passed in 2000

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Daily Astorian*

The Astoria School District has identified more than \$77 million in long-term facilities needs, with a modernization of Astoria Middle School the highest priority.

The school district has been studying its options and gathering public input before the Astoria School Board decides this spring whether to float a bond for some of the improvements.

Astoria's exploration of a bond measure comes as Warrenton-Hammond School District gauges public reaction to a proposed \$32.4 million bond to buy a new master campus and construct a middle school, part of a longer-term plan to relocate schools out of the tsunami inundation zone. Seaside School District recently passed a \$100 million bond to build a new kindergarten-through-12th grade campus on higher ground.

Submitting the long-range plan this month qualified Astoria for a \$4 million matching grant from the state, should voters pass a bond.

Craig Hoppes, the Astoria superintendent, stressed that the ideas in the plan are preliminary and might not be the ultimate direction. Whatever the school district decides, a primary focus will be on safety and security, he said.

Since last year, the district has convened a facilities committee comprised of district staff and community members



Linda Berger, center, principal of Astoria Middle School, is hoping to modernize parts of the building, including a covered play area near the gym.

looking at facilities needs. This week, the district held tours of its buildings and a public meeting at the middle school to gather feedback.

"Like Warrenton, we're surveying," Hoppes said. "That starts next week. We're going to find out what this community will pay for."

### Bond measure in 2000

Voters in Astoria last approved a \$21.4 million school bond in 2000 for the construction of Lewis and Clark Elementary School; a new science center, gym and student commons at Astoria High School; renovation of the middle school's track; and other improvements. The costs have

See **SCHOOLS**, Page 7A



Although structurally sound, Astoria Middle School faces cracks in its floors.

**'WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT THIS COMMUNITY WILL PAY FOR.'**

Craig Hoppes | Astoria superintendent

## Brown calls for treatment to combat drug abuse

Testimony before Senate panel

By KRISTIAN FODEN-VENCIL  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

Gov. Kate Brown told a congressional committee Thursday that they need to focus on treating people with substance abuse issues instead of punishing them.

Brown appeared at the U.S. Capitol for the Senate health committee's special hearing on opioids.

The governor told the story of her stepson, whose daily routine centered around getting high. Brown said a teacher caught him abusing drugs in high school, but when the family tried to get him help, their health insurance stood in the way.

"He had to go through two separate outpatient and inpatient treatments and relapses before our insurance would cover the residential program he so desperately needed," the governor said.

Brown said the federal government recognizes the problem, but added that the war on drugs has only made the problem worse.

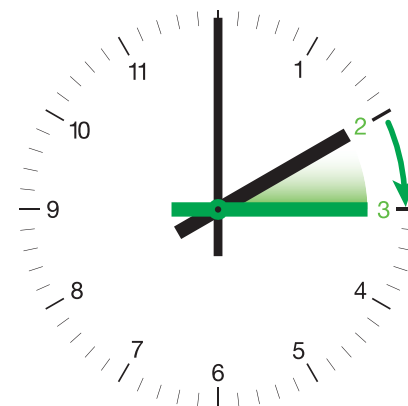
"That leaves us, the states, to right the wrongs of a war on drugs that has done nothing to address the issues that drive this health crisis, while our prisons and our foster care systems are filled to capacity with its victims," said Brown.

"I know that you have held several sessions on the opioid crisis to date, and I applaud this committee for taking such a close, thoughtful look at the issue."

President Donald Trump declared an opioid crisis last year.

See **DRUG USERS**, Page 6A

## SPRING FORWARD



**Daylight saving time** starts on **Sunday at 2 a.m.** when clocks are turned to **3 a.m.** Sunrise and sunset will be about one hour later than the day before, which means there will be more light in the evening.

## Snowy plovers in Gearhart, but will they nest?

### Bird watcher spots threatened species

By R.J. MARX  
*The Daily Astorian*

GEARHART — Just as city officials are preparing to lift restrictions on parts of Gearhart's beaches designed to protect western snowy plover nests, John Green, an amateur bird watcher, spotted five snowy plovers over the past three months.

While the plovers, photographed by Green in December and February, were seen foraging for food, not nesting, the birds "should be looking for places to nest right now," he said.

Western snowy plovers are a threatened spe-

cies under the Endangered Species Act, protected in all West Coast states.

The birds nest in dry open sand, in tiny, shallow, well-camouflaged scrapes, according to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The nests are easy to miss, and plovers will abandon their eggs if disturbed by activities they consider a threat.

Hatching occurs from mid-April to mid-August, and the chicks fledge about 31 days after hatching.

If the birds do nest in Gearhart, "it would be a game changer," Green said.

But because plovers are spotted this time of year does not mean that the birds will choose to nest in Gearhart, Vanessa Blackstone, a wildlife biologist with the Parks and Recreation Department, said.



John Green  
Three western snowy plovers seen foraging in Gearhart in late February.

See **PLOVERS**, Page 7A

