

## Marijuana regulators will do spot inspections

Practice had been mostly complaint-driven

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
*Capital Bureau*

SALEM — State regulators will soon start doing random inspections of cannabis businesses, starting with retailers, according to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

Until now, inspections of legal cannabis businesses have largely been complaint-driven, Mark Pettinger, a commission spokesman, said. In December, the agency started checking whether businesses were selling marijuana to minors through “minor decoy” stings.

Although marijuana became legal under Oregon law in July 2015, the state did not start issuing retail licenses for recreational marijuana until October 2016.

The commission now has a baseline of information in its seed-to-sale Cannabis Tracking System to analyze deviations from the norm and ensure compliance.

Random inspections of businesses could be described as audits, Pettinger said, in the sense inspectors will compare what’s in the state’s tracking system to what’s on the shelves.

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## Sen. Johnson was critical of librarian

Senator faulted state library’s performance

By **MOLLY HARBARGER**  
*The Oregonian*

At a routine meeting of an Oregon legislative subcommittee, state Sen. Betsy Johnson unleashed the ire she’s fostered for six years over the state library’s performance.

“We have spent I don’t know how many untold hours trying to figure out how to cure a hundred years of tradition unhampered by progress and it hasn’t gotten better,” she told fellow lawmakers weighing the library’s proposed budget.

Less than a year later, Gov. Kate Brown ousted State Librarian MaryKay Dahlgreen, surprising and disappointing Dahlgreen’s many supporters among librarians and library supporters.

Brown’s office declined to explain the move beyond saying “Dahlgreen fell short of clear and timely expectations from legislators.” But the librarian’s ouster on Tuesday appears to have been driven by the discontent of one person: Johnson.

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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Volunteers are essential to the Astoria Warming Center.

## Astoria Warming Center closes for the season

Some see progress at the homeless shelter, but concerns remain

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

The Astoria Warming Center closed its doors for the season on Thursday.

The shelter, the focus of a larger debate last year about where services for the homeless should be located, opened for 82 night since mid-November. Numbers available through February show volunteers and staff served an average of 23 people each of those nights, down from last year and under the city’s cap of 30 people per night.

Concerns still linger about the warming center’s presence in the basement of First United Methodist Church on 11th Street and Franklin Avenue, just outside the commercial downtown zone and where a residential zone begins.

The Planning Commission has begun to consider more detailed city rules to guide where shelters like the warming center might be located, but until those rules are finalized and implemented, the Astoria Warming Center board will need to apply for a conditional use permit with the city. Last summer, that process resulted in lengthy, mediated meetings between the warming center, people who live in the immediate neighborhood and the business community.

Two men were at the warming center’s final neighborhood meeting Saturday, saying they represented broader neighborhood concerns. One of them, Kris Haefker, said he had ongoing con-



Bags of laundry are sorted by volunteers at the Astoria Warming Center prior to closing for the season.

cerns about the ability of the center staff and volunteers to deal with violent or dangerous incidents.

Center staff said they have not felt unsafe, but noted there is now training about how to verbally de-escalate such situations. Haefker also continued to disagree about the center’s location in the neighborhood, though not its mission to provide shelter to people on cold and rainy nights.

Jesse Berdine, who lives in the neighborhood, asked what the center does to connect people to other resources. Cheryl Paul, the warming center coordinator, said the shelter conducts an intake process where people must answer a series of questions as they come through the door to identify what kinds of services they might need or might qualify

to receive. The center has established partnerships with local social service organizations, and often refers people to organizations like Helping Hands.

Haefker also asked about the warming center’s goals for the future, specifically if the board plans to keep the facility at the church.

The answer was “yes,” for now.

### Church support

The First United Methodist Church remains supportive of the warming center, with members commenting that providing space for the shelter is in line with the church’s ministry and the congregation’s duty as Christians. Dan Parkison, warming center board president,

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**‘THE ANCHORING WE DO HELPS PEOPLE WHO ARE LOST ON THE STREETS.’**

Dan Parkison | warming center board president



Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Jason Pollack moved to Astoria as part of the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program.

## His daytimes are disasters

Pollack helps Astoria prepare for the worst

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Jason Pollack spends his work days contemplating disasters — large and small — in Astoria. But he still likes it here.

Astoria was a familiar place even before he moved here as a member of the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program. A native Oregonian, Pollack grew up in Beaverton



and attended the University of Oregon. He visited the Astoria River Column and the Columbia River Maritime Museum when he was in elementary school.

RARE, as the program that brought Pollack to Astoria is often referred to, is part of AmeriCorps and administered through the University of Oregon. RARE members are placed in participating communities and have assisted Astoria

in particular with a number of projects over the years. They have helped the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association with the Main Street program to promote and rebuild the city’s downtown area. They have also helped inventory park sites and facilities, meeting with the community to figure out current and future needs. In return, the city and organizations have provided training and experience.

Pollack was brought on to help the city with internal emergency planning and other objectives related to disaster

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