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ONE DOLLAR

Vaccination exemptions reach a record high

Some parents see risks for their children

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Despite a 2013 law aimed at boosting immunization, the statewide rate for nonmedical exemptions to mandatory kindergarten vaccinations hit a record high this school year, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

The nonmedical exemption rate rose to 7.5 percent this year, higher than the 7 percent rate during the 2013-2014 school year when the law was passed to address declining vaccination rates among the state's nearly 700,000 schoolchildren.

'MOST PARENTS AND GUARDIANS KNOW THAT IMMUNIZATION IS STILL THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT CHILDREN AGAINST VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES.'

Stacy de Assis Matthews | immunization law coordinator for the health authority's Oregon Immunization Program

Health care providers play a crucial role in educating parents about the need for vaccinations, said Stacy de Assis Matthews, immunization law coordinator for the health authority's Oregon Immunization Program.

Yet education efforts face a daunting popular culture belief that immunizations can cause autism and other problems.

The 2013 law — which required parents to jump through more hoops to obtain a non-medical exemption — initially decreased the nonmedical exemption rate from 7 percent to 5.8 percent in 2015. But the following year, the rate began to climb again, first to 6.2 percent in 2016, then to 6.5 percent in 2017 and, finally, to 7.5 percent this year.

Nonmedical exemption rates for students in grades K-12 this year ranged from a low of 1 percent in Morrow County to a high of 10 percent in Josephine County.

"While more nonmedical exemptions mean fewer children are being immunized, the vast majority of Oregon parents and guardians still choose to fully immunize their children," de Assis Matthews said. "Most parents and guardians know that immunization is still the best way to protect children against vaccine-preventable diseases such as whooping cough and measles."

But the decline in vaccinations has coincided with outbreaks of vaccine-preventable

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Port mulls wetlands bank on the Skipanon Peninsula



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Tessa Scheller, a member of the Skipanon River Watershed Council, envisions a 75-acre rehabilitated wetland throughout unused Port of Astoria property at the base of the Skipanon Peninsula.

Potential development would be a challenge

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

In 2016, the Port of Astoria gave up its lease with the state of more than 90 acres at the eastern tip of the Skipanon Peninsula, the site of a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal that was never built.

Now the Port is contemplating whether to flood more than 70 acres of dunes and shrublands it owns at the base of the peninsula for use as a wetland mitigation bank.

Many projects affecting watersheds require the creation of new wetlands or the purchase of credits to offset the adverse impacts of development. Banks are large wetland restoration projects approved by the state to sell credits within a certain area.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, said the project makes sense



People have used the Port of Astoria's property on the Skipanon Peninsula for hunting, shooting, off-roading and dumping trash.

given the development challenges of the Skipanon Peninsula and its location in an earthquake-prone flood plain inside a tsunami inundation zone.

"The infrastructure development would be in the millions," Knight said. "We're not in a very strong financial position to invest in potential projects without an understanding we'll have customers."

The Port owns much of the southern base of the peninsula, built largely from historic dredge spoils. Small portions are owned by Warrenton and Clatsop County. Warrenton also controls the dikes separating the property from the Columbia and Skipanon rivers. The state owns the eastern tip of the peninsula.

The base of the peninsula has been platted for streets and was once proposed as a golf course and, later, part of

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The remains of cars and other garbage litter the Skipanon Peninsula, the site of a proposed wetland restoration.



Discovery Channel

Blake Painter, a crab fisherman once featured on the television show 'Deadliest Catch' has died.

'Deadliest Catch' fisherman found dead in Astoria home

Painter was a skipper during the show

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An Astoria crab fisherman featured on the "Deadliest Catch" was found dead in his home last week.

Blake Painter, 38, was found Friday on the 90530 block of Rip Christensen Road. The cause of death is still being investigated, but foul play was not a factor, Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin said.

Authorities are awaiting the results of a toxicology report, which likely will take weeks, before confirming the cause

of death.

"He had some issues and hopefully we'll be able to find out more in the weeks to come," Bergin said.

A friend became concerned last week after Painter did not respond to phone calls, Bergin said. After trying to find him at his home and looking through the window, the friend saw what he believed to be a body.

The friend then called authorities, who discovered his body Friday afternoon. Painter likely had died within 48 hours of his body being discovered, Bergin said.

Painter had cases pending in Circuit Court involving drug-related charges.

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